

# **A critical assessment of the key success factors of social media as a marketing tool in the South African tourism industry**

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It all starts here <sup>TM</sup>

## DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO INDEPENDENT WORK

I, Clarise Letitia Mostert, identity number 8704030181084 and student number 20033435, hereby declare that this research submitted to the North-West University, for the PhD study: **A critical assessment of the key success factors of social media as a marketing tool in the South African tourism industry**, is my own independent work and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the North-West University; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

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MRS CLARISE MOSTERT

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DATE

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## SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to critically assess the key success factors of social media as a marketing tool in the South African tourism industry. Numerous studies have been done on social media, but none of them were focused on optimising the success of social media in the South African tourism industry.

Relationship marketing and social media is interrelated, where relationships form the foundation of social media. Social media has become the world's latest marketing marvel, disseminating the lives of its users. Social media also plays a crucial role in the marketing efforts of organisations in the service sector, such as the tourism industry. However, it has become evident that there are still a number of tourism organisations that are currently not optimally utilising social media in their marketing strategies and this gap needs to be addressed.

This study was aimed at three empirical objectives which were addressed with data gathered by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed by fieldworkers at the O.R. Tambo International Airport. Stratified sampling was used in order to ensure a representative sampling size. 450 questionnaires were distributed, of which 446 completed questionnaires could be used for statistical data analysis.

Firstly, for article one the factors inhibiting the use of social media were determined, as well as whether it differ for international and national tourists. Factor analysis was done in order to determine the main factors inhibiting the use of social media, and an independent samples *t*-test was applied to determine similarities/differences between international and national tourists. The results indicated that the main factors inhibiting the use of social media included *Content Challenges*, *Privacy Issues*, and *Personal Perceptions*. No significant differences were found on the factors inhibiting the use of social media by international tourists versus national tourists. Novel to this study is the fact that from the results it was clear that tourists who are currently not participating in social media do have access to social media sites and have the technical skills and competency to use social media, and are well informed about the different types of social media. Even though social media users spend almost one third of their time on social media sites, there are also a number of people who are not participating in social

media. This part of the market is totally untapped. Thus, it is also important for tourism organisations to give attention to the factors inhibiting the use of social media.

In article two, the purpose was twofold: firstly to determine how and why tourists used social media for travel and tourism purposes, and secondly to determine whether there was a correlation between the tourists attitudes towards social media and the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. In this article a factor analysis for the reasons for participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes, correlations between the attitude of tourists toward the use of social media and the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes were done. It was evident that three factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes existed: *Information Gathering, Interaction and Communication* and *Content Sharing*. Novel to this study, it was clear that significant correlations exist between the attitudes of tourists towards the use of social media and the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. However, it was significantly identified that strategies that focus on information gathering and content sharing should enjoy primary attention and resource allocation.

In the third article, the purpose was to assess whether tourists' attitudes and their opinions regarding the success factors for social media can contribute to increased tourism social media activity. A summary of the factor analysis of the reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes, a factor analysis of the critical success aspects for the use of social media and standard multiple regression of the attitudes and most important aspects influencing the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes were discussed. The results indicated that tourists' attitudes toward the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes were dependent on the *Degree of Trust* and *Willingness to Participate* in social media. These respondents utilised social media specifically for *Information Gathering, Interaction and Communication* as well as *Content Sharing*. The results also revealed that tourists' *Degree of Trust* and *Willingness to Participate* in social media are predictors for *Information Gathering* for travel and tourism purposes; tourists' *Willingness to Participate* in social media and the *Perceived Beneficial Aspects* they can gain from using social media are predictors for *Interaction and Communication* through social media for travel and tourism purposes; and tourists' *Willingness to Participate* in social media and *Content Accessibility and*

*Sharing* are predictors for *Content Sharing* on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes.

Conclusions, contributions and recommendations regarding the outcome of the study were made. The main contributions of the study include contributions to the theory of the field, methodological contributions, as well as practical application contributions. With regard to the theoretical contributions, a framework was developed to optimise and explain the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media. This framework can be adopted by researchers and scholars to understand and argue that social media is closely related to the principle of building relationships. Also, due to a lack of a universally accepted definition for the term 'social media', an analysis was done in order to assess the most common principles of the term, to develop a definition that can be regarded as universally acceptable by tourism researchers and scholars.

Contributions in terms of the methodology entail the development of a suitable questionnaire to gather the necessary information for the data analysis of this study. This questionnaire was developed due to a lack of a suitable questionnaire to gather the necessary information for data analysis for the outcome of the research study. The high internal consistency of the questionnaire allows for it to be adopted by other researchers in the field of social media and the tourism industry.

Lastly, the main contribution of the study to practical application of the results, a framework was developed to optimise the use of social media as a marketing tool in the South African tourism industry. This framework can be practically implemented by tourism organisations for International and National tourism markets within the South African tourism industry to ensure the optimisation of online social media marketing efforts. The framework was developed in a way that will ensure it is easily understandable, as well as the fact that it will comprise the minimum amount of effort when implementing the framework in the development of social media marketing strategies of tourism organisations.

Adequate knowledge and information regarding the above-mentioned aspects can contribute to more effective marketing strategies, increased brand awareness and increased market share. This study also contributes to the existing literature of social

media, the effective and successful implementation of social media marketing strategies and has a positive impact on future research with regard to the application of social media as marketing tool in the South African tourism industry.

**Key words:** social media, marketing, South Africa, tourism, tourists

## OPSOMMING

Die doel van die navorsingstudie was om die sleutelsuksesfaktore vir die gebruik van sosiale media as bemarkingsmedium in die Suid-Afrikaanse toerismebedryf krities te assesseer. Verskeie studies rakende sosiale media is al vantevore gedoen, maar geen van die studies was egter spesifiek gefokus op die sukses van sosiale media in die Suid-Afrikaanse toerismebedryf nie.

Verhoudingsbemarking en sosiale media is twee interafhanklike konsepte, waar verhoudings die grondslag vorm van sosiale media. Sosiale media het die wêreld se nuutste bemarkingswonder geword, wat die lewens van sy gebruikers verryk. Sosiale media speel ook 'n deurslaggewende rol in die bemarkingspogings van organisasies in die dienstesektor, soos die toerismebedryf. Dit het egter duidelik geword dat daar nog 'n aantal toerisme organisasies is wat tans nie sosiale media optimaal benut in hul bemarkingstrategieë nie, en hierdie gaping moet aangespreek word.

Hierdie studie het drie empiriese doelwitte aangespreek deur data wat ingesamel is deur middel van 'n vraelys. Die vraelys is versprei by die O.R. Tambo Internasionale Lughawe deur veldwerkers. Gestratifiseerde steekproefneming is gebruik om 'n verteenwoordigende steekproef grootte verseker. Vier-honderd-en-vyftig vraelyste is versprei, waarvan 446 voltooide vraelyste gebruik kon word vir statistiese data-ontleding.

Eerstens, vir die doel van artikel een, is die faktore wat die gebruik van sosiale media verhoed bepaal, en om te bepaal of daar verskille is tussen internasionale en nasionale toeriste. Vir die eerste artikel is faktoranalise gedoen om die belangrikste faktore wat die gebruik van sosiale media verhoed te bepaal, en 'n onafhanklike t-toets is toegepas om ooreenkomste / verskille tussen die internasionale en nasionale toeriste te bepaal. Die resultate dui daarop dat die belangrikste faktore wat die gebruik van sosiale media verhoed Inhoud Uitdagings, Privaatheid Kwessies, en Persoonlike Persepsies insluit. Geen beduidende verskille is gevind op die faktore wat die gebruik van sosiale media deur internasionale toeriste versus nasionale toeriste verhoed nie. Nuut tot die studie is die feit dat dit duidelik was uit die resultate dat toeriste wat tans nie deelneem aan sosiale media nie het wel toegang tot sosiale media en die tegniese vaardighede en bevoegdheid om sosiale media te gebruik, en is goed ingelig oor die verskillende tipes



sosiale media. Hierdie aspekte word egter oorskadu deur die Inhoud Uitdagings, Privaatheid Kwessies, en Persoonlike Persepsies. Selfs al is dit duidelik dat sosiale media gebruikers byna 'n derde van hul tyd op sosiale media spandeer, is daar ook 'n aantal mense wat nie deel neem aan sosiale media nie. Hierdie deel van die mark is totaal onaangeraak. Daarom is dit ook belangrik vir toerisme organisasies om aandag te gee aan die faktore wat die gebruik van sosiale media verhoed.

Die doel van artikel twee was tweeledig: eerstens om te bepaal hoe en waarom toeriste sosiale media gebruik vir reis en toerisme doeleindes, en tweedens om te bepaal of daar 'n korrelasie tussen die toeriste se houdings teenoor die gebruik van sosiale media en die faktore wat geïdentifiseer is vir die gebruik van sosiale media vir die reis- en toerisme doeleindes bestaan. In hierdie artikel is 'n faktoranalise vir die redes vir deelname in die sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes toegepas, korrelasies tussen die houding van toeriste teenoor die gebruik van sosiale media en die faktore van die gebruik van sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes bepaal is gedoen. Dit was duidelik dat drie faktore vir die gebruik van sosiale media vir reis en toerisme doeleindes bestaan: om inligting te versamel, interaksie en kommunikasie en om inhoud te deel. Nuut tot die studie, was dit duidelik dat betekenisvolle korrelasies bestaan tussen die houdings van toeriste ten opsigte van die gebruik van sosiale media en die faktore wat geïdentifiseer is vir die gebruik van sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes. Die bevindinge is egter beduidend dat strategieë ontwikkel moet word wat fokus op die versameling en deel van inligting aandag moet geniet ten opsigte van die toekenning van hulpbronne.

In die derde artikel was die doel was om te bepaal of toeriste se houdings en hul menings oor die suksesfaktore vir sosiale media kan bydra tot verhoogde toerisme sosiale media aktiwiteit. Hier word 'n opsomming van die faktoranalise van die redes vir die gebruik van sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes weergegee, 'n faktoranalise van die kritiese sukses aspekte vir die gebruik van sosiale media en standaard meervoudige regressie van die houdings en belangrikste aspekte wat die gebruik van sosiale media vir die reis- en toerisme doeleindes is ook weergegee. Die resultate dui daarop dat toeriste se houdings teenoor die gebruik van sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes afhanklik van die mate van vertroue en bereidwilligheid om deel te neem in die sosiale media was. Hierdie respondente benut sosiale media

spesifiek vir die insameling van inligting, interaksie en kommunikasie, sowel as om inhoud te deel. Die resultate het ook getoon dat toeriste se vlak van vertroue en bereidheid om deel te neem aan sosiale media dien as voorspellers vir die versameling van inligting vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes; toeriste se bereidwilligheid om deel te neem aan sosiale en die voordele wat hul waarneem ten opsigte van die gebruik van sosiale media dien as voorspellers vir interaksie en kommunikasie deur sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes; en toeriste se bereidwilligheid om deel te neem aan sosiale media en die toeganklikheid van inhoud en die deel daarvan is voorspellers vir die deel van inhoud op sosiale media vir reis- en toerisme doeleindes.

Gevolgtrekkings, bydraes en aanbevelings ten opsigte van die uitkoms van die studie word ook gemaak. Die belangrikste bydraes van die studie sluit bydraes tot die teorie van die veld, metodologiese bydraes, sowel as praktiese toepassing bydraes in. Met betrekking tot die teoretiese bydraes, was 'n raamwerk ontwikkel om die optimalisering en verduideliking van die onderlinge verhouding tussen verhoudingsbemarking en sosiale media te illustreer. Hierdie raamwerk kan deur navorsers en geleerdes aanvaar word om te verstaan en te argumenteer dat sosiale media nou-verwant is aan die beginsel van die bou van verhoudings. Ook, as gevolg van 'n gebrek aan 'n universeel aanvaarde definisie vir die term 'sosiale media', is ontleding van die huidige definisies gedoen om die mees algemene beginsels van die term te bepaal, om 'n definisie wat deur toerisme navorsers as universeel aanvaarbaar beskou kan word te ontwikkel.

Bydraes in terme van die metodologie behels die ontwikkeling van geskikte vraelys om die nodige inligting vir die data-analise van hierdie studie in te samel. Hierdie vraelys is ontwikkel as gevolg van 'n gebrek aan 'n geskikte vraelys om die nodige inligting vir data-ontleding vir die uitslag van die navorsingstudie in te samel. Deur die hoë interne konsekwentheid van die vraelys kan dit deur ander navorsers op die gebied van sosiale media en die toerismebedryf aanvaar en gebruik word.

Laastens word die ontwikkeling van 'n raamwerk om die gebruik van sosiale media as 'n bemarkingsmedium in die Suid-Afrikaanse toerismebedryf te optimaliseer, as die belangrikste bydrae van die studie beskou rakende die praktiese toepassing van die resultate. Hierdie raamwerk kan prakties deur toerisme-organisasies geïmplementeer word vir Internasionale en Nasionale toerisme markte binne die Suid-Afrikaanse

toerismebedryf om die optimalisering van aanlyn sosiale media bemarkingspogings te verseker. Die raamwerk is ontwikkel op 'n wyse wat sal verseker dat dit maklik verstaanbaar is, asook die feit dat dit die minimum moeite en koste sal verg ten opsigte van die implementering van die raamwerk in die ontwikkeling van sosiale media bemarkingstrategieë van toerisme-organisasies.

Voldoende kennis en inligting oor die bogenoemde aspekte kan bydra tot meer effektiewe bemarkingstrategieë, verhoogde bewustheid en verhoogde markaandeel vir toerisme-organisasies. Hierdie studie dra ook by tot die bestaande literatuur van sosiale media, die effektiewe en suksesvolle implementering van sosiale media bemarkingstrategieë en het 'n positiewe impak op toekomstige navorsing met betrekking tot die toepassing van die sosiale media as bemarkingshulpmiddel in die Suid-Afrikaanse toerismebedryf.

**Sleutel woorde:** sosiale media, bemarking, Suid-Afrika, toerisme, toeriste

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION & PROBLEM STATEMENT

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Due to the continued expansion and diversification of the tourism industry over the past sixty years, many new destinations have emerged. This contributes to the tourism industry being one of the fastest growing industries in the world, offering endless and exciting opportunities (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2008:4; World Tourism Organisation, 2012). This industry is labelled as a global phenomenon, which plays a very significant role in the service sector and the rapid growth over the past few years have contributed to tourism being one of the leading sectors in world economy (Page, Brunt, Busby & Connell, 2001:1; Ninemeier & Purdue, 2008:4). In 2011, the international tourism industry maintained momentum (Anon, 2012b) and enabled the industry to show uninterrupted growth in 2012, despite global economic instability. This proved that the tourism industry has the ability to adjust to the changing market environment (Anon, 2013d). Growth in the marketing sphere is fuelling this growth path of the industry.

This is also related to the growing phenomenon: Social Media (Lund, 2011:3). According to Sigala and Marinidis (2009:1) there was a tremendous growth in the use of user-generated content on the World Wide Web over the past few years. The use of a series of user-generated internet tools, such as blogs and micro blogs, social photo and video sharing, social sharing of knowledge through websites such as Wikipedia and social bookmarking as forms of user-generated content are all described by using the term 'Social Media' (Sigala & Marinidis, 2009:1; Parra-López, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutiérrez-Taño & Díaz-Armas, 2011:640; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:105).

Holzner (as cited by Hsu, 2012:1) stated that social media has advanced into an effective marketing tool. By including the use of social media in marketing strategies, it allows businesses easy access to the market opportunities, to learn about trends in their

target market, and enable them to communicate and build relationships with their consumers. Managing relationships with consumers could ultimately lead to bigger market share, revenue and higher levels of loyalty. Social media as marketing tool can also be explained as the process where a social group, who shares the same value systems and identity, exchange product knowledge and opinions (Amerland, 2012:13).

Tourism has proved itself an industry characterised by immense innovativeness (Hjalager, 2010:1). As a result, it is no surprise that the use of digital media as an information resource and platform for effective communication in the tourism industry, has become more popular (Divinagracia, Divinagracia & Divinagracia, 2012:85). Parra-López *et al.* (2011:640) indicate that it is of utmost importance for the managers of tourism organisations, as well as destination policy makers to understand the involvement of the tourists' use of social media and the way in which they adapt to social media before, during and after trips.

Even with the importance of social media for the tourism industry, very little is known about the factors influencing tourists to partake in social media, as well as their perceptions, which will determine the success of the use of social media in the tourism industry. The fact that there is a lack of direct experience with a tourism product in the industry has been an important issue for a long period of time (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:100). This lack of experience and the fact that the use of social media marketing is such a new and fast growing phenomenon are reasons that the industry does not yet comprehend how effective and successful social media marketing can be. However, research regarding social media can bridge this gap (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:100). It is not clear what strategies tourism marketing managers should implement to improve the success of social media marketing and exactly how this should be done.

In the following section of the study, a short overview of the background to the study, based on the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media as marketing tool, is given. Afterwards the problem for this study is stated followed by the goal of the study and method of research. Thereafter the defining concepts, and finally the chapter classification are discussed.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social media forms an important part of relationship marketing. Gummesson (2002:3) explains that relationship marketing is aimed at relations and communication within different networks of relationships between the consumer and the supplier. According to Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas (2009:102), relationships form the foundation for social media (see Figure 1.1). Before one can understand the importance of social media as marketing tool, it is important to comprehend the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media (see Figure 1.1) as theoretical framework for this study. Social media as marketing tool holds a number of benefits for organisations, which correlates to a certain extend with the importance and benefits of focussing on relationship marketing within organisations.

Relationship marketing is a partnership within a network where the customer/consumer is viewed as the entity that contributes to value creation (Gummesson, 2002:310; Petrof, 1997:26). Thus, relationships between the organisation and its customers are built when the consumer is convinced that the organisation is able to provide satisfaction and value to the consumers on a consistent basis (Gummesson, 2002:310; Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, Terblanche, Elliott & Klopper, 2010:14; Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:64). In turn, this will result in customers that become loyal to the organisation through repeat transactions with the organisation, and by recommending the organisation to other parties. Thus, the outcome of this is an increase in sales, market share and profit for the organisation (Gummesson, 2002:3; Lamb, *et al.*, 2010:14; Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:64; Adjei, Griffith & Noble, 2009:493).

Thus, it is clear that all the involved parties (supplier and consumer) share responsibility for the creation and forging of a long-term relationship between like-minded people (Gummesson, 2002:310; Lamb, *et al.*, 2010:14). Furthermore, relationship marketing brings along certain advantages for both the organisation and society, citizens and customers (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1:**        ***The advantages of relationship marketing***

<b>Advantages of relationship marketing for the organisation</b>	<b>Advantages of relationship marketing for society, citizens and customers</b>
Increased customer retention and duration.	Relationship marketing is the marketing of

Increased marketing productivity which leads to increased profitability.	the value and network society with increased focus on customised production and marketing to the individual.
Increased stability and certainty in terms of customer loyalty.	The value and network society with reduced focus on standardised mass production and mass marketing forms part of relationship marketing.
Successful implementation of relationship marketing will lead to repeat sales (loyalty) and referrals, which in turn lead to increase in sales, market share and profits.	

Sources: Gummesson (2002:310) & Lamb *et al.* (2010:14)

By focussing on building relationships and networks, and the interaction between the organisation and its consumers in the marketing strategy of the organisation, it will help the organisation to develop a more realistic approach to marketing management. A prerequisite for a relationship is that at least two people should be in constant, active interaction with each other (see Figure 1.1) (Gummesson, 2002:3). Relationship marketing entails marketing primarily focused on the interaction within networks of relationships (Gummesson, 2002:3). This form of marketing emphasises the importance of putting effort into building long-term relationships with customers, through offering value and successfully satisfying customer needs on a consistent basis (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:14). The term 'social media' is usually used to describe people interacting and connecting with others through online software or any other accessible electronic technology (Iacobucci, 2008:173). Relationships thus form the foundation for social media (see Figure 1.1), and former research conducted on Online Relationship Development can assist organisations and their marketing managers in determining how social media sites can be applied to raise relationship growth, by for example focussing on immediate feedback and real-time interaction with consumers (Waters *et al.*, 2009:102).

Currently, the most popular category of Internet practice for the majority of people is social media (Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011:1153, Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez & Luna-Reyes, 2012:1, Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin, 2011:37, Dunay, Krueger & Elad, 2011:9; Pesonen, 2012:67). Tools which fall under the label of 'social media' include social media websites (such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), blogs, video and photo sharing (YouTube, Flickr and Vimeo), chat rooms and message

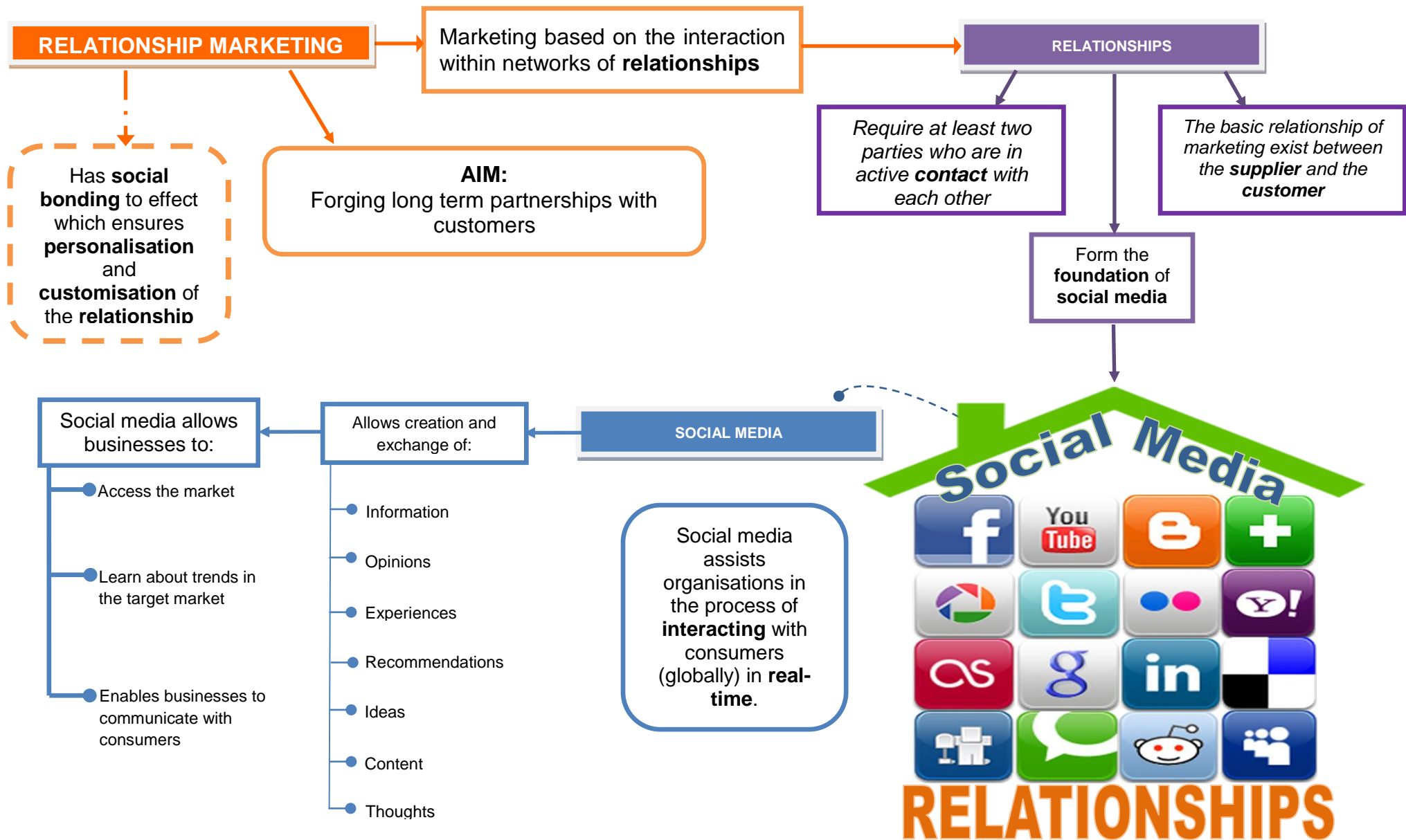


boards, listservs (comparable to chatrooms), wikis, and social bookmarking sites (Scott, 2010:37; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:60; Hsu, 2012:3; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:106; Peters, 2011:53).

In 2010, Kaplan and Haenlein defined social media as ‘a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content’ (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254). Scott (2010:38) explains in more comprehensible terms that social media offers the manner in which people share ideas, content, thoughts and relationships online (see Figure 1.1). The difference between social media and so-called mainstream media lies in the fact that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content on social media sites (Scott, 2010:38). People use social media for the purpose of communicating and staying connected with friends and co-workers (Dunay *et al.*, 2011:9; Hsu, 2012:3). Scott (2010:173) states that social media enables people to create an online profile in order to use it to form a cyber-network where they can associate their offline friends with their online friends. This shares a very close link with relationship marketing.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:67) and Thevenot (2007:287) claim that in today’s world everything revolves around social media. The world has become a place where people no longer solely rely on traditional types of media for information, but through social media individuals have become the media (Thevenot, 2007:287). Social media serves as a tool for public marketers to have interactive relations with consumers, while accepting the latest forms of technology and integrating these forms into the daily lives of consumers. Picazo-Vela *et al.* (2012:1) believe that social media has the ability to convert the ways in which people and organisations relate to one another. When marketers consider the reach of influential people on social media sites, they should rethink their views with regard to identifying the people who can best spread their ideas.

In other words, marketers should consider who really has the power when trying to reach their audience, and how they can be reached (Scott, 2010:173). According to Hsu (2012:3) social media sites assist organisations in the process of interacting with their global consumers in real-time.



**Figure 1.1: Framework of the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media**

**Sources:** Akehurst, 2009:54; Adjei, et al., 2009:493; Dunay, Krueger & Elad, 2011:9; Gummesson, 2002:3; Hsu, 2012:3; Iacobucci, 2008:173; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:60; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:106; Lamb et al., 2010:14; Madhavaiah & Rao., 2007:64; Miguéns, Baggio & Costa, 2008:1; Petrof, 1997:26; Peters, 2011:53; Picazo-Vela et al., 2012:1; Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:99; Scott, 2010:37; Stankov, Lazić & Dragičević, 2010:106; Waters et al., 2009:102.

Lamb *et al.* (2010:143) state that key success factors for traditional marketing include information which is accurate, relevant and timely and can be accessed easily. Other factors include interactivity, flexibility; it should be based on specific trends and accessibility of the information. It is of utmost importance for marketers to understand how they can benefit from each type of social media tool by making use of these tools and relating them to their activities, as more forms of social media arise (Curtis, Edwards, Fraser, Gudelsky, Holmquist, Thornton & Sweetser, 2010:90). Social media has developed to such an extent that it can have a significant influence on the travel and tourism industry (Stankov *et al.*, 2010:106; Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1). If marketers can comprehend the benefits of the key success factors influencing the effectiveness of the use of social media as marketing tool, it can lead to increase in sales, loyal customers who will partake in repeat visits and customers who will recommend the organisation to other parties. This will ensure growth of the organisations, higher levels of competitiveness and ultimately contributing to enhance the growth of the tourism industry.

The use of social media in the tourism industry holds several benefits for tourism organisations (Akehurst, 2009:54; Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:104; Lund, 2011:23). The benefits of the use of social media as marketing strategy for both the organisation and the tourist include:

- Tourists can share personal travel stories and opinions (Stankov *et al.*, 2010:106; Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1).
- Social media provides personal thoughts and commentaries on a specific destination (Akehurst, 2009:54).
- Content on social media sites can be directly added by the tourist. This result in frequently updated and displayed information for other tourists.
- Helps to inform tourism and marketing managers (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:104; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:262).
- Social media interaction educates the tourist.
- Tourism transactions between the tourist and the organisation are facilitated by social media (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:104).

- Organisations can generate positive publicity through social media through providing responses and counter arguments to negative comments.
- Social media infers a low communication cost (Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:260).
- The use of social media eliminates the impact of location. Thus, it does not matter where the tourists or organisations are located, they can easily communicate with each other (Lund, 2011:23).
- Marketing managers can use social media to predict tourists' behaviour.
- Social media adds value to the creation of the experience which was always difficult to achieve with the traditional forms of media.

Thus, social media enables tourists to share information, opinions and recommendations with regard to different destinations, tourism products and services (Akehurst, 2009:54; Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:99). However, social media can also hold a negative impact for tourism organisations. Recent research have indicated that travel products and services are the sector in the industry to be most at risk when it comes to social media marketing. This sector is prone to negative comments (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:105; Leung, Law, Van Hoof & Buhalis, 2013:17). Amerland (2012:35) states that social media and the use of the internet as marketing strategy can be a platform where criminals have the opportunity to corrupt individuals and intrude on individuals' privacy. Social media demands responsiveness and this can lead to being a time consuming and demanding effort if organisations are not efficient. The effect of this barrier is the limited availability of human resources. Organisations might not have enough staff members or time to keep a conversation going with the tourists through social media (Amerland, 2012:70; Fouts, 2009:23; Briones *et al.*, 2011:41).

Thevenot (2007:289) indicates that the use of social media may result in an increase in the power of the tourist communities, whilst the power of the organisations or marketers will decrease. He also states that the use of social media can result as a source of negative influence from dissatisfied clients. This implies that the marketers or managers of tourism organisations have limited control over the influence of these unsatisfied customers on other tourists. Related to the above, social media

marketing can have a negative effect on organisations' image, if not managed effectively. The lack of resources, staff members with inadequate technical competencies and slow-moving management will lead to distrust, suspicion and the unwillingness to share information, comments or experiences on social media sites (Milano, Baggio & Piatelli, 2011:10).

Therefore, from the above it is clear that social media can be seen as an important and recent significant development in tourism marketing. The use of social media as marketing strategy (or part of a marketing strategy) holds several benefits for tourism organisations. However, it also implies a negative impact if it is not used and managed effectively.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Social networking sites, more specifically social media, have an immense impact on tourism and the tourism industry, especially in terms of marketing (Milano *et al.*, 2011:1). According to Pesonen (2012:67) social media marketing has definitely impacted the tourism industry. Given the positive impact of social media marketing, it has however also been found that it is difficult to control and can lead to negative word-of-mouth messages of an establishment/destination. Therefore, even though social media has an immense positive impact, tourism organisations should also be greatly aware of the negative side of the use of social media that can directly harm the organisation. Although there are various studies that focused on social media (see Table 1.2), including: the challenges and opportunities of social media (Kaplan & Hearnlein, 2010:59-68), the impact of social media on the consumer decision process in the tourism industry (Hudson & Thal, 2013:156-160), Facebook as international e-marketing strategy for hotels in Taiwan (Hsu, 2012:1-9), digital media-induced nature-based tourism in Indonesia (Divinagracia *et al.*, 2012:85-94) and the use of blogs for tourism organisations and tourism consumers (Akehurst, 2009:51-61), it is clear that the tourism industry still struggles to get it right. More specifically, factors influencing the success of social media marketing have not yet been critically evaluated for the tourism industry. Table 1.2 indicates the list of some of the previous studies done on social media and the use of social media in the tourism industry.

**Table 1.2: Previous research on social media and the use of social media in the tourism industry**

Benefits and Barriers to the Use of Social Media	Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009; Bowman, Westerman & Claus, 2012; Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez & Luna-Reyes, 2012.
Social Media and Relationship Marketing	Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin, 2011; Curtis, Edwards, Fraser, Gudelsky, Holmquist, Thornton & Sweetser, 2010.
Social Media and the Tourism Industry	Miguéns, Baggio & Costa, 2008; Akehurst, 2009; Pesonen, 2012; Stankov, Lazić & Dragičević, 2010; Milano, Baggio & Piattelli, 2011; Thevenot, 2007; Schmallegger & Carson, 2007; Divinagracia, Divinagracia & Divinagracia, 2012.

It is clear from the above literature that social media is a phenomenon which develops at a tremendous speed. It also has the effect that marketing managers has very little control over the vast pace of this development. When one considers the previous studies conducted in the field of social media and the tourism industry, it is clear that very little research has been done on the use of social media as marketing tool in the South African tourism industry.

Key success factors for traditional marketing (such as accessibility, type of message, frequency, relevance, interactivity and trend-related information) are generally known, and have been for many years. However, it is still uncertain what the key factors influencing the success of social media in the tourism industry are. Given the importance of social media and the lack of related studies in the South African tourism industry, this problem should be critically assessed and addressed. More specifically it is important to critically assess the key success factors determining why and how people (suppliers and tourists) use social media for travel and tourism purposes. This will ensure that marketers have a complete understanding of what they need to do differently in their marketing strategies to accommodate the use of social media as marketing tool to effectively reach their target market. Should this

gap in the research field not be addressed, it will become increasingly difficult for tourism organisations to control their online marketing efforts. It will also have to effect that a seemingly untouched part of the market (for example those tourists who are currently not participating in social media, but has the potential to become loyal customers of the organisation) stays beyond the reach of the tourism organisation.

The lack of a framework guiding the utilisation and success of social media strategies was evident. Therefore, the question remains: Which key factors influence the success of social media as a marketing tool in the South African tourism industry?

## **1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.4.1 Main goal**

The main goal of this study is to critically assess the key factors influencing the success of social media marketing in the tourism industry by developing a framework which can lead to optimisation of this medium.

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

The following objectives have been identified in order to reach the main goal of this study:

- To contextualise social media as marketing tool as part of relationship marketing by means of a literature review (chapter 2);
- To determine and evaluate the factors influencing the success of social media marketing in the tourism industry by means of a literature review (chapter 2);
- To determine the application and usage of social media by tourists with reference to factors inhibiting the use of social media (chapter 3; article 1), the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes (chapter 4; article 2), the relationship between the use of social media and travel behaviour, the identification of aspects that can contribute to the increased use social media in travel and tourism industry (chapter 5; article 3);
- To develop a framework that can be implemented to assist tourism organisations in improving the effective and successful use of social media as marketing tool (chapter 6); and

- To draw conclusions and make recommendations that will assist marketing managers in optimising the use of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry (chapter 6).

## **1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The research methodology of this study is two-fold: a literature review and an empirical survey. Figure 1.2 serves as an indication of the research path followed in order to collect and analyse all the relevant data. The research path is discussed in the following sections.

### **1.5.1 Literature study**

A literature study was done based on the following keywords: *Tourism, social networking, social media, marketing, Internet, World Wide Web, tourism destinations, media, tourism industry, tourism organisations, tourists, visitors, tourist behaviour, relationship marketing.*

During this study, resources such as books, articles, annual reports, journals, dissertations, theses, textbooks and other topic-related literature were used to gather adequate information. Due to the novelty and rapid development of this research field, the World Wide Web also served as an important source of information. Search-engines that were used included Google Scholar, and international and national databases such as Science Direct, SAePublications and Emerald. Some of the important journal articles on research undertaken by authors such as Hsu (2012); Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, 2011); Parra-López *et al.* (2011); Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010); and Sigala & Marinidis (2009) were also consulted for the purpose of this study.

It was important through the literature review to determine the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media. The main goal was to search for literature regarding the concept of relationship marketing, as well as social media, in order to prove that the two concepts co-exist and that, by focusing on the use of social media, ultimately leads to better and enhanced long-term relationships, which is the direct result of increased sales, market share and market growth. From an analysis of the theoretical framework for this study, it was clear that relationships (between

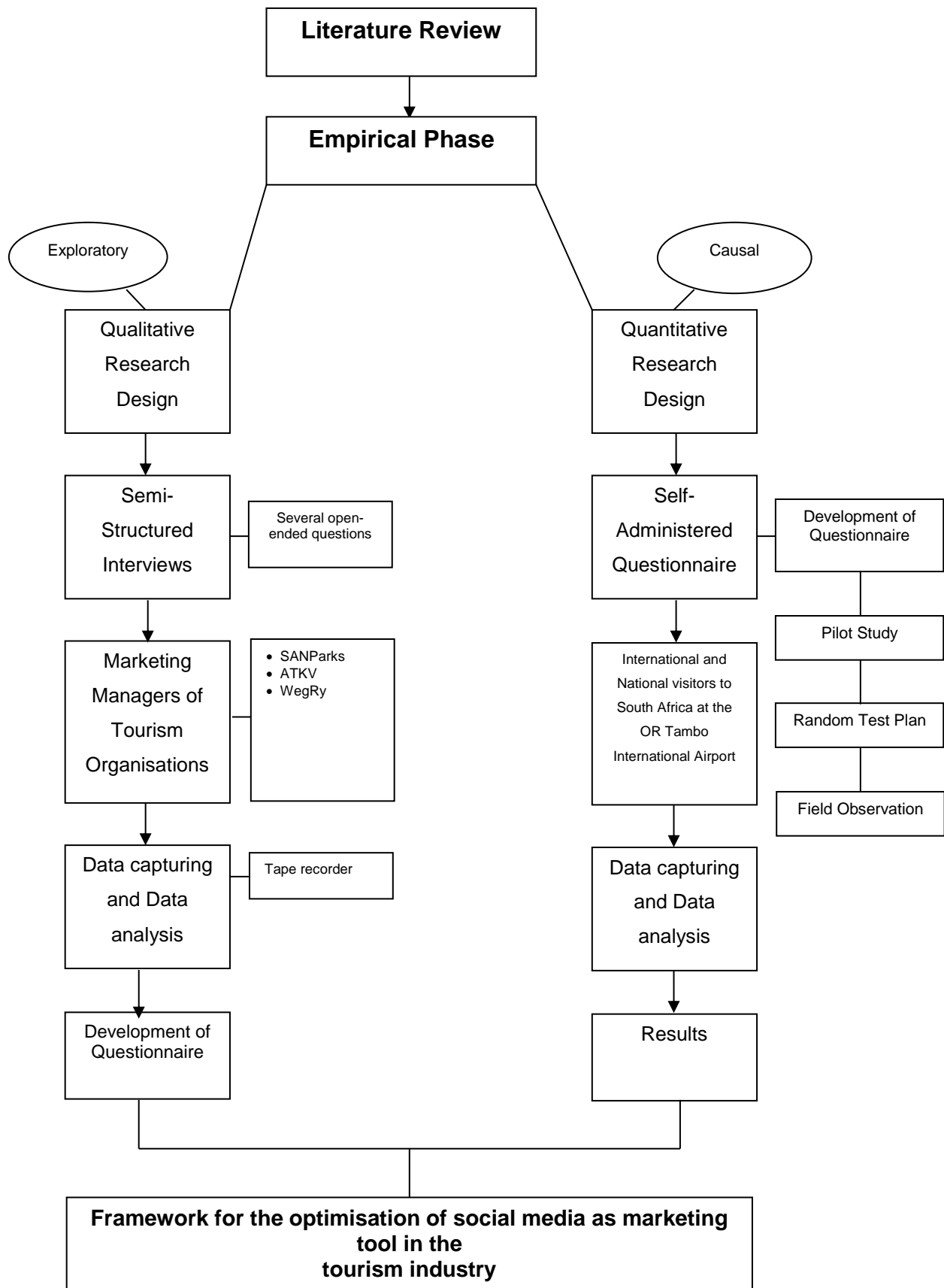


the organisation and the user) form the foundation for social media. Thus, the use of social media facilitates the growth of the relationship (between the organisation and the user) form the foundation for social media, and therefore fosters a relationship built on mutual trust between the parties involved. It was also very clear that both relationship marketing and social media can be and should be adopted by and become the focus of organisations in the service sector, such as the tourism industry. The use of social media boasts several benefits for tourism organisations that can assist them in the successful and effective implementation of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry. From the literature review, it was found that little to no research has been conducted on the use of social media in the South African tourism industry. Given the growth of both the domestic and international market in South Africa this tool should be optimised in marketing strategies and efforts.

Thus, the literature review was considered as the starting point for this study. The thorough literature analyses set the path for the practical execution of the empirical research, especially in identifying the important aspects to be included in the development of the questionnaire. It also assisted in the analysis and interpretation of the data of the empirical survey.

### **1.5.2 Empirical research**

This section highlights the methods that were used to conduct the empirical analysis of the study. The research design was mainly causal in nature, although an introductory exploratory research path was also followed in the empirical phase, to conduct interviews that assisted in the development of the questionnaire, and ultimately, the framework for the optimisation of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry. This form of research was undertaken in order to determine a cause and effect relationship of different variables. It involves the identification of a variable causing certain behaviour and, in turn, the effect of the behavioural variable. Causal research is a complicated form of research, seeing that it can be difficult to establish the relationship between the observed variable and the variable of interest (Singh, 2007:66; Maree, 2007:263).



**Figure 1.2: Research Path**  
**Source: Author's own compilation**

Furthermore, the empirical research of this study followed a mixed-method research approach. The rationale for this approach was to draw accurate conclusions based on the empirical findings of the study and the research from the literature review on social media marketing, in order to assist in the development of the questionnaire used in the quantitative section of the research study. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative research was deemed necessary to solve the identified problem.

#### **1.5.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research was conducted to determine the perceptions of tourism marketing managers in their use of social media and their opinions on the effectiveness and how the use of social media influence the success of the implemented marketing strategies. Qualitative research can be defined as “Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things.” (Berg, 2001:3). This research methods holds the following benefits: it enables the researcher to seek answers to questions, it implies a methodical procedure of predefined subsets to answer the questions asked, it assists in the process of collecting evidence, and produces findings that were not predetermined.

This approach was exploratory in nature due to the lack of scholarly information on this specific topic. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions where the respondents had the opportunity to answer the questions based on their own opinions, expectations and experiences.

Interviews were held with marketing managers of tourism and/or other organisations which operate social media sites. The tourism organisations identified are three of the major tourism organisations in South Africa, with a high level of online presence and social media activity. These organisations include:

- South-African National Parks (SANParks)
- Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuur Vereniging (ATKV)
- Wegry

The interviews held with the subjects under study were recorded by means of a tape recorder. This ensured that the documentation of the data is independent of the perspectives of the researcher. The process of arranging interviews with the marketing managers of the above mentioned organisations included writing a letter asking permission to conduct the interview and making an appointment that suited the respondents' respective of time and location. Each interview was approximately 20 minutes, and was held during the month of March, 2014.

#### **1.5.2.2 Responses to inform the quantitative research**

Examples of questions and a summary of the specific themes that surfaced in the answers from the questions included the following (See Appendix 1 for the complete list of the questions):

- What types of social media do your organisation currently make use of for marketing purposes and why?
  - Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram
  - These sites provide the opportunity for communication, brand awareness, advertising, building an online community and public relations.
- Do you think social media is an effective and useful marketing tool?
  - Social media is imperative, but cannot be used solely as direct marketing strategy
  - It is necessary to have different strategies in terms of communication, content and resources
  - The use of social media should ensure that users become passionate about the brand, it should facilitate and make travel decision-making easier, and reciprocal reaction and communication should be initiated through social media as marketing activity.
- List some of the difficulties or challenges that you currently experience in making use of social media as marketing tool.
  - Limited bandwidth restrict the accessibility of social media

- The whole organisation should buy-in the adoption of social media as marketing strategy
- Consumers are not well-informed about the power and impact of social media
- Social media is too time-consuming
- Cannot control the content shared on social media sites
- Frequent and timely response to content shared on social media sites.
- What, in your opinion, are some of the critical aspects for the success of social media as marketing strategy?
  - The type of content shared
  - To have a specific social media strategy
  - Real-time response
  - Direct contact with the market.
- What do you think are some of the main factors that inhibit the use of social media?
  - Consumers do not necessarily know about social media
  - Consumers do not have the skills to use social media
  - They do not understand the power and impact of social media
  - There are a certain level of trust issues and privacy concerns in terms of the use of social media
  - Users are not informed about the use of social media.

The above questions and answers provided insight into the opinions from the supply side of industry. As previously stated, this information informed the development of the questionnaire. The main themes from the interviews were analysed and used to identify the different items for different sections in the questionnaire. The results and/or outcome of the qualitative research were then used to finalise the questionnaire for the quantitative research design together with the in-depth literature review.

### **1.5.2.3 Quantitative research design**

Quantitative research was used to gather information with regard to the main aspects of the respondents' behaviour (such as demographic information and travel

behaviour) and/or social media marketing utilisation (such as the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes). Quantitative research can be defined as 'the process where variables are defined operationally and are commonly divided into independent variables (active or attribute), dependent variables, and extraneous variables.' (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2005:1). The benefits of this research method includes the fact that it is not as time consuming, it tests and validates existing theories about the occurrence of phenomenon, and it enables the researcher to generalise research findings, if the situation implies that the random samples prove to be sufficient.

The quantitative research method was causal in nature. This enabled the researcher to critically assess the relationship between the use of social media as marketing strategy for tourism organisations, more specifically the case of both international and national visitors to/in South Africa at the O.R. Tambo International Airport, and the tourists' behaviour with regard to their reaction to social media sites, in order to identify the success factors of social media marketing. Data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire (developed from the in-depth literature review and qualitative interviews). Information with regard to, for example, the following aspects was gathered (see Appendix 2):

- Demographic variables of the respondents;
- Respondents' use of social media sites (both if they do or do not partake in social media);
- Respondents' specific reasons for using social media sites for travel and tourism purposes; and
- Respondents' behaviour, attitude and responsiveness to content on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes.

#### **1.5.2.3.1 Population and Sampling method**

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2006:162) state that the size of the population will have a direct influence on the generalisation of the results. Thus, the larger the size of the population, the smaller the likely error of generalisation will be. There are mainly four aspects that will influence the choice of the sample size, which include:

- The certainty-level that the collected data serves as an accurate reflection of the characteristics of the population;
- The required precision for any estimates made from the collected data of the sample;
- The statistical techniques with a minimum verge of data cases for each variable; and
- The sample size of the population from which the data has been collected.

A stratification sampling method was used to determine the sample size. This method was used due to the fact that it provides a high level of precision in relation to a random or systematic sample. Thus, a stratified sample delivers an increased probability that the sample is properly represented (Bryman & Cramer, 2005:125). Therefore, the aim was to distribute the questionnaires equally between the arrivals and departure halls of the International and Domestic tourists at the airport.

#### **1.5.2.3.2 Development of the questionnaire**

Due to the absence of a suitable questionnaire to capture the relevant and necessary data for the purpose of this study, a new questionnaire, based on the literature review and the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with the marketing managers of tourism organisations was developed. The questionnaire mainly consisted of open-ended, closed and likert scale questions. In the case of this questionnaire, some of the close-ended questions were based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Completely Disagree' being 1 to 'Completely Agree', being 5 and used to capture respondents' opinions.

Previous questionnaires used for similar studies conducted by the Tourism Research for Economic Environs and Society (TREES) of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) also served as guideline of the type of questions that was developed/asked for the purpose of the development of the questionnaire for this study. Furthermore, studies conducted by Kaplan & Haenlein (2009), Bowman *et al.* (2012), Briones *et al.* (2011; Sigala & Marinidis (2009); Schmallegger & Carson (2007) and Miguéns *et al.* (2008) amongst others, served as baseline studies for the

development of the questionnaire. Selected themes from the qualitative research were also included in the questionnaire.

Table 1.3 provide insights into the different sections of the questionnaire, what was measured in the sections, as well as the sources (if any applicable) that was consulted to aid in the development of the questionnaire (see Annexure 3):

**Table 1.3:** *Layout of the development of the questionnaire*

SECTION	WHAT WAS MEASURED	SOURCES CONSULTED
<b>Section A: Demographic Information</b>	Variables such as gender, age, level of education, country/province of residence, and marital status were measured in order to draw an accurate descriptive profile of respondents  Types of questions: Close-ended and open-ended questions	Van Vuuren, 2010; Viviers, & Slabbert, 2014; Geldenhuys, Van Der Merwe & Slabbert, 2014;  Slabbert & Du Plessis, 2013.
<b>Section B: Travel Behaviour</b>	Open-ended questions regarding the frequency of breakaway weekends over the past 12 months, the average number of holidays over the past 12 months, as well as the average length of stay in terms of nights spend at the destination to draw an accurate conclusion regarding the travel behaviour of respondents.  Types of questions: Close-ended and open-ended questions	Van Vuuren, 2010; Viviers, & Slabbert, 2014; Geldenhuys, Van Der Merwe & Slabbert, 2014; Slabbert & Du Plessis, 2013.
<b>Section C: Social Media Usage</b>	Close-ended questions were asked to determine if respondents are participating in social media or not. If the respondents did not participate in social media, close-ended questions based on 5-point Likert scale were asked to determine the reasons for not participating in social media. If respondents answered 'yes', close-ended questions were asked to	Qualitative Research; Badawy, 2009; Evans, 2010; Curtis <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Parra-López <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Briones <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Michaelidou <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Pitt & Berthon, 2011;



	<p>determine the social media sites they currently engage with, the average amount of time they spend on social media on a weekly basis, the site they spend most time on, as well as the general reasons for the use of social media.</p> <p>Types of questions: Close-ended questions</p>	<p>Milano <i>et al.</i>, 2011; LaRoche, Habibi &amp; Richard, 2012; Kim &amp; Ko, 2012; Bowman <i>et al.</i>, 2012; DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfeld &amp; Fiore, 2012; Leung <i>et al.</i>, 2013; Cant &amp; Van Heerden, 2013</p>
<p><b>Section D: Social Media &amp; Tourism</b></p>	<p>In this section, close-ended questions were asked to determine the social media sites used for travel and tourism purposes, the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, and respondents' attitudes toward the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.</p> <p>Types of questions: Close-ended questions</p>	<p>Qualitative research; Buhalis &amp; Law, 2008; Miguens <i>et al.</i>, 2008; Schmallegger &amp; Carson, 2007; Badawy, 2009; Litvin, Goldsmith &amp; Pan, 2008; Lamb <i>et al.</i>, 2010; Hjalager, 2010; Milano <i>et al.</i>, 2011; Parra-López <i>et al.</i>, 2011; Kirtiř &amp; Karahan, 2011; SanMartín &amp; Herrero, 2012; Leung <i>et al.</i>, 2013</p>
<p><b>Section E: Critical Success Factors of Social Media Use</b></p>	<p>Close-ended questions were asked to determine the aspects respondents' considered critical for the effective use of social media.</p> <p>Types of questions: Close-ended questions</p>	<p>Qualitative research; Miguens <i>et al.</i>, 2008; Evans, 2010; Langheinrich &amp; Karjoth, 2010; Briones <i>et al.</i>, 2011; Parra-López <i>et al.</i>, 2011; Kirtiř &amp; Karahan, 2011; Pitt &amp; Berthon, 2011; Kang, 2011; Bowman <i>et al.</i>, 2012; DeAndrea <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Leung <i>et al.</i>, 2013</p>

The questionnaire focused on capturing data based on the opinions of respondents concerning the different aspects. Pre-evaluation of the questionnaire took place in order to identify any errors or problems that might arise in answering the questions and analysing the data. The questionnaire was distributed to selected experts in the

field to make suggestions, and changes to the questionnaire were made accordingly, before the questionnaire was finalised. These changes were only technical in nature.

#### **1.5.2.3.3 Distribution of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was distributed by fieldworkers at the O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, Gauteng. The airport was chosen due to access to travellers as well as a mix of national and international visitors. In 2013, 171 087 tourists at the O.R. Tambo International Airport visited South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Krejcie and Morgan (1960:99) state that for every 1 000 000 people, 384 questionnaires will be representative. However the aim for this research study was to distribute a total of 450 questionnaires to make provision for unusable questionnaires. Thus, the sample for this study is representative, seeing that even if 100 000 questionnaires were distributed, 384 questionnaires will deliver the same representative results.

It was expected of respondents to complete the questionnaire by answering all questions to their own accord. The use of close-ended questions limited the variety of responses in order to determine an accurate reflection of the opinions of the population, and indirectly prevented or reduced the number of coding errors in the data set (Thomas, 2004:41).

Thus in total, 450 questionnaires were distributed, of which 446 questionnaires were used to for statistical data analysis. Thus, by considering the sample size, the number of questionnaires, and the stratification sampling method, the results of the data prove to be representative.

#### **1.5.2.3.4 Data capturing and statistical data analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaires were captured in Microsoft Excel and processed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 15.0. This program was also used to draw necessary graphs and figures related to the outcome and results of each section of the study. For the purpose of this study, several types of statistical analysis were used. Frequency distribution, exploratory factor analysis, independent-samples *t*-tests, and standard multiple regression was used to reach the outcome of this study, in order to make accurate and effective conclusions and

recommendations based on the results of the study. The statistical data analysis methods are described below.

#### **1.5.3.2.4.1 Frequency distribution**

To obtain an overview of the demographic profile of the respondents, frequency distribution was used. A graphical representation of the data summarising variables by means of frequency tables and figures was used. Frequency distributions are viewed as useful for the assessment of properties of the distribution of scores. Thus, for frequency distribution, the different response categories of the respondents for a specific variable were analysed according to the number of respondents (frequency), as well as the percentage of the sample size (Maree, 2007:184). The advantage of the use of the frequency tables in a descriptive analysis includes that one could immediately identify the most prominent response of the respondents to a specific variable in the questionnaire (Maree, 2007:184; Field, 2009:18).

#### **1.5.3.2.4.2 Factor Analysis**

To analyse aspects inhibiting the use of social media, respondents' use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, and to determine the key success factors of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry, factor analyses were applied. A factor analysis refers to the identification of items that are answered 'similarly' by the respondents and therefore are categorised in the same dimension or factor. Exploratory factor analysis will be used in cases of early research, where information is needed regarding the interrelationships among a set of variables. The purpose is to determine which items in the section of the questionnaire belong together. Due to the fact that the items in the questionnaire were based on a 5-point Likert scale and the number of completed questionnaires, it was deemed well suited for a factor analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin are two statistical measures that assist in the assessment of the factorability of the data. For the factor analysis to be considered appropriate, the Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ( $p < .05$ ), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index suggest that a .6 value should be considered the minimum value for a good factor analysis. Furthermore, all factors with eigenvalues of more than 0.7 should be retained in an exploratory factor analysis (Pallant, 2005:172; Maree, 2007:220; Field, 2009:628).

A scree plot illustrates the presence of the number of factors identified in terms of the eigenvalues for each factor. Thereafter a factor loading matrix is drawn, to indicate the factor loadings, Cronbach Alpha's, and mean values and standard deviation for each identified factor. The factor loading matrix is used to clearly identify all the items that belong to the different factors respectively. The Cronbach Alpha's are used to identify the reliability of each factor and the mean values assisted in identifying the factors that played the most important role in the essence of the question asked. Cronbach Alpha's with a value of 0.7 to 0.8 are considered acceptable, whereas values substantially lower than 0.7 indicates an unreliable scale (Pallant, 2005:172; Maree, 2007:220; Field, 2009:628).

#### **1.5.3.2.4.3 Independent-samples *t*-tests.**

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the differences between the reasons for not participating in social media between International and National visitors to South Africa. The independent-samples *t*-test is used under three different circumstances. In the first instance, it will be used when two independent groups need to be compared based on their average score in a quantitative variable. Secondly, this type of analysis will be done when the average scores on two quantitative variables need to be compared in a single sample. Lastly, independent-samples *t*-test will be used when the average of quantitative variable needs to be compared with a specified constant value in a single sample. Seeing that the aim was to compare two independent groups (the first circumstance), where the condition was experimental and different participants have been used in each circumstance, the independent-samples *t*-test was fit for this analysis (Pallant, 2005:205; Maree, 2007:225; Field, 2009:334).

#### **1.5.3.2.4.4 Standard multiple regression**

In order to assist in the development of the framework for the successful use of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry and identifying the key success factors, standard multiple regression was used. Standard multiple regression is relevant for situations where more than one independent variable is used to predict a single dependent variable. In other words, this type of analysis is used to identify which factors act as predictors for other factors. From the standard multiple regression, attention was given to the dependent variable, as well as the

independent variable, by means of analysing the *r*-square, the standard coefficients (Beta) and the significant values of each variable. This was then used to determine the independent variables that acted as predictors of the dependent variables, in order to develop a framework aimed at optimising the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes (Pallant, 2005:146; Maree, 2007:246; Field, 2009:210).

## **1.6 DEFINING CONCEPTS**

The concepts critical assessment, success, marketing, factors, relationship marketing, social media and tourism industry are defined, seeing that these terms are used subsequently in this study.

### **1.6.1 Critical assessment**

The term critical assessment can also be referred to as critical analysis. The Macmillan Dictionary (Anon, 2013c) refers to the term 'critical' as carefully looking at something, in order to judge what the good and bad aspects of that particular subject are. The same dictionary defines assessment as 'the process of making a judgment or forming an opinion, after considering something or someone carefully'. Thus, from this it is clear that one can define the term 'critical assessment' as the process of carefully examining a subject in order to form an opinion or make a judgement based on the good and bad aspects of that specific subject.

### **1.6.2 Success**

Cost, time and performance are described as the three ultimate constraints when defining the term success. These three constraints should be measured against the quality, scope and technical performance of business functions. This process must then be concluded by determining the value added or gained after the completion of the business activities or functions, hence determining success (Kerzner, 2010:26).

### **1.6.3 Marketing**

Marketing entails a number of management tasks and decisions implemented to meet opportunities and threats in the external environment of the business. This is done by evolving and conveying an offering to the chosen market which will satisfy the needs of the consumers in order to achieve the set business objectives in terms

of the consumer and society (Cronjé, Du Toit, Marais & Motlatla, 2004:283; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:5; Iacobucci, 2008:3).

#### **1.6.4 Factor/s**

A factor can be defined (according to the Macmillan Dictionary) as a single variable that influences the occurrence of an event in two ways: if it will happen and/or how it will happen (Anon, 2013c).

#### **1.6.5 Relationship Marketing**

Relationship marketing recognises the vital importance of the customer through attracting, maintaining and enhancing long-term relationships with customers and other role-players through value creation and providing customer satisfaction on a consistent basis in order to stay abreast of ever-changing demand (Grönroos, 1991:7; Gummesson, 1997:267; Sin, Tse, Yau, Lee & Chow, 2002:657; Longenecker, Moore, Petty & Palich, 2006:1218; Iglesias, Suaquet & Montaña, 2011:631).

#### **1.6.6 Social Media**

Social media is a profoundly forceful field that incorporates social networks and the technology that connects them. Social media cannot be condensed to content or platforms, seeing that these two factors are artefacts that serve no importance outside of the dynamic and interactive setting of the intermediate (for example Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+) of which they are part (Lund, 2011:22; Amerland, 2012:13; Fouts, 2009:7).

#### **1.6.7 Tourism Industry**

Tourism refers to all inbound and outbound trips, made by the citizens of a country, for reasons other than immigration. When considering this, one can thus define the term 'tourism industry' as all the firms, organisations or facilities offered to tourists in order to satisfy specific wants and needs of these tourists (Beaver, 2005:314).

## **1.7 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION**

This thesis consists of six chapters and is based on the article format for a thesis.

### **Chapter one: Introduction and Problem Statement**

This chapter presents the introduction and problem statement of the research study. The main goal and objectives of the study are also given and explained. Furthermore, the research methods that were used (which include frequency distribution, factor analysis, independent-samples *t*-test, and standard multiple regressions) are discussed, along with the defining concepts, in order to reach the outcome of the study.

### **Chapter two: Understanding the concepts of Relationship Marketing and Social Media**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse social media and the function thereof in relationship marketing. The interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media is discussed as well as the importance of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry. Thus, it is imperative to determine and evaluate the factors influencing the successful use of social media marketing by means of the literature study.

### **Chapter three (Article 1): Factors inhibiting the use of Social Media**

Chapter three serves the purpose to ultimately determine the factors inhibiting the use of social media. A descriptive analysis is done in order to provide an overview of the demographic profile of the respondents. In the process of determining the factors inhibiting the use of social media, a factor analysis revealed the reasons for not participating in social media. Furthermore, the chapter also focuses on the difference between the use of social media by both international and national visitors to South Africa.

### **Chapter four (Article 2): The use of Social Media for Travel and Tourism purposes**

The main purpose of this chapter is to determine the application and usage of social media for travel and tourism purposes by tourists. This will be done with reference to the relationship between the factors influencing success and certain demographic

variables, the type of social media sites used, and their travel behaviour in order to determine these factors.

### **Chapter five (Article 3): Aspects contributing to the increased use of social media in the travel and tourism industry**

The ultimate goal of chapter five is to determine the aspects contributing to the increased use of social media in the travel and tourism industry. The chapter focusses on the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes in relation to the influence of attitudes towards social media. Attention is also given to the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, and the attitudes towards social media in order to identify the critical success factors that play a crucial role in the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.

### **Chapter six: Conclusions, Contributions and Recommendations**

Chapter 6 aims to provide and discuss effective and accurate conclusions and recommendations for organisations in the tourism industry who wish to follow marketing strategies based on social media. Furthermore, the main contributions and limitations of the study are discussed and the social media framework presented.



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# CHAPTER 2

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTS RELATIONSHIP MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

For centuries businesses – both large and small – have focussed their marketing activities and goals on production and sales. However, this focus has taken a progressive shift to the consumers (Longenecker *et al.*, 2006:128; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:14; Iglesias *et al.*, 2011:632; Duncan & Moriarity, 1998:3). Longenecker *et al.* (2006:128) recognise that customer satisfaction should be the ultimate goal of any business in order to guarantee long-term success. This long-term success is based on five imperative elements: sales growth, market share, profits, return on investment and customer retention (Hau & Ngo, 2012:222). In order for businesses to focus on customer satisfaction as an ultimate goal, it is of utmost importance that they should build a long-term relationship with their consumers. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise social media as marketing tool as part of relationship marketing and to determine and evaluate the factors influencing the success of social media marketing by means of a literature review.

### 2.2 DEFINING RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Relationship marketing has grown significantly and has become one of the most important marketing strategies. There has been a major shift from transactional marketing (where the main focus of marketing activities is the sale) to relationship marketing (where the main focus of marketing activities is customer retention through building long-term relationships). Marketing managers realise the importance of building long-term relationships with customers, which implies that the marketing effort becomes highly mutually beneficial for both the organisation and the customers over the long term (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:125). However, before

one can comprehend the importance of relationship marketing, it is vital to understand the concept of relationship marketing, by grasping the definition of relationship marketing. Madhavaiah and Rao (2007:64) state that the fact that everyone perceives the concept of relationship marketing differently, in terms of its key conceptualisations, caused the situation where there is no universally accepted definition for relationship marketing. Table 2.1 summarises some of the main theoretical definitions of the term 'relationship marketing':

**Table 2.1:           Theoretical definitions of relationship marketing**

<b>Author/s</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Berry (1983:25)</b>	"Relationship marketing entails attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships."
<b>Grönroos (1991:7)</b>	"Establishing relationships with customers and other parties at a profit by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises."
<b>Morgan &amp; Hunt (1994:23)</b>	"Relationship marketing can be defined as all marketing efforts directed towards establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges"
<b>Gummesson (1997:267)</b>	"Relationship marketing is seen as relationships and network interactions in which two or more parties (supplier, consumer, competitor, and so on) create value for each other through joint effort."
<b>Petrof (1997:26)</b>	"Relationship marketing is typically described as being oriented toward a long time horizon in contrast to the short-term orientation that existed in marketing before 1983."
<b>Peppers, Rogers &amp; Dorf (1999:151)</b>	"Relationship marketing, also called one-to-one marketing, focuses on establishing a learning relationship with each customer, rather than a dominant focus on sales."
<b>Kotler (2000:13)</b>	"The building of long-term satisfying relations with key parties - clients, suppliers, distributors -

	in order to earn and retain their long-term preference and business"
<b>Sin, Tse, Yau, Lee &amp; Chow (2002:657)</b>	"In short, from a firm's perspective, the relationship marketing concept can be viewed as a philosophy of doing business successfully or as a distinct organisational culture/value that puts the buyer-seller relationship at the center of the firm's strategic or operational thinking."
<b>Gummesson (2002:3)</b>	"Relationship marketing is marketing based on interaction within networks of relationships."
<b>Hollenson (2003:10)</b>	"Relationship marketing involves the understanding, focusing and management of ongoing collaboration between suppliers and selected clients for mutual value creation and sharing through interdependence and organisational alignment".
<b>Longenecker et al., (2006:218)</b>	"Relationship marketing believes that everything, including production and sales, centres around the consumer and his or her needs. The result: all marketing efforts begin and end with the consumer."
<b>Iglesias et al., (2011:631)</b>	"Relationship marketing emphasises the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships between customers and buyers, in comparison to the transactional orientation of the classical marketing paradigm."
<b>Lamb et al., (2010:14)</b>	"The relationship marketing philosophy emphasises forging long-term partnerships with customers. Firms build relationships with customers by offering value and providing satisfaction on a consistent basis."
<b>Strydom (2011:348)</b>	"A perspective on marketing where the importance of maintaining long-term relationships with customers and other role-players in the environment is stressed."
<b>Spinelli &amp; Adams (2012:284)</b>	"A drive to build a relationship with customers

	and reacting to changing demand.”
<b>Cant &amp; Van Heerden (2013:16)</b>	“Relationship marketing can be defined as a form of marketing that includes marketing activities that are aimed at developing and maintaining trust and at seeking to build long-term relationships with customers by providing consistent satisfaction and, in the process, meeting the company’s objectives.”

The analysis of the definitions reveals that Madhavaiah and Rao (2007:64) are right when they state that there is no universally accepted definition for the concept of relationship marketing. However, considering all these definitions, as well as the most important elements of the definitions, it is clear that the following elements are imperative for the concept of relationship marketing (deduced from Table 2.1):

- Relationship marketing efforts begin and end with the consumer through attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships.
- Relationship marketing is based on the interaction within networks of relationships that leads to long-term relationships with both customers and other role-players;
- Relationship marketing is focussed on building relationships with customers by offering value and providing satisfaction on a consistent basis, which will enable the organisation to react to a changing demand.

After considering the different definitions of relationship marketing and the fact that there is no universally accepted definition for the concept, the following definition will account for the concept for the purpose of this study:

Relationship marketing recognises the vital importance of the customer through attracting, maintaining and enhancing long-term relationships with customers and other role-players, through value creation, and providing customer satisfaction on a consistent basis in order to stay abreast of an ever-changing demand.

From the above it can be concluded that all the parties involved in the relationship (usually the consumer and the supplier) share responsibility for creating and forging a long-term relationship between like-minded people (Gummesson, 2002:310; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:14; Strydom, 2011:305).

Relationship marketing efforts should ultimately focus on identifying the core customers of the organisation in order to establish, develop, maintain, enhance and expand long-term relationships between the organisation, its customers and other stakeholders, so that, when and if necessary, the relationship can be terminated to meet the objectives of all parties involved. This focus shift is of great importance in order for the organisation to survive and grow in the current uncertain economic situation, with increased competition in markets and the tremendous power of technology (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:15; Richey, Kiessling, Tokman & Dalela, 2008:395; Sin *et al.*, 2002:658).

According to Cant and Van Heerden (2013:15) all the efforts of an organisation should be focused on building relationships with customers. Sin *et al.* (2002:58) confirm this statement by adding that service organisations should focus on building a long-term relationship with their customers in order to acquire and maintain a competitive edge. However, in order to establish a fully functional relationship, it is imperative to give attention to the six generally identified components of relationship marketing.

### **2.3 COMPONENTS OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING**

Relationship marketing is viewed as a multidimensional paradigm which comprises of six generally identified components (see Figure 2.1) (Iglesias *et al.*, 2011:633; Hau & Ngo, 2012:224; Sin *et al.*, 2002:658; Richey *et al.*, 2008:394; Adjei *et al.*, 2009:494; Morgan & Hunt, 1994:22; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:715).

The six components of relationship marketing entail:

- Trust:

This component of relationship marketing involves the inclination of the customer to have confidence in their exchange partner (business). With regard to the business relationship it aims at the dimension of determining the

level of assurance that one party (business or customer) can have faith in the truthfulness of the promise offered by the other party (customer  $\leftrightarrow$  business; business  $\leftrightarrow$  customer) (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:26; Sin *et al.*, 2002:659; Richey *et al.*, 2008:395; Adjei *et al.*, 2009:494; Iglesias *et al.*, 2011:638; Hau & Ngo, 2012:225; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:716).

- Bonding:

Bonding is the dimension of the business relationship where the customer and the business act in a federated mode towards a sought-after goal. Thus, the customer and the business will unite in reaching the same goal. Bonding includes social interaction, closeness, friendship and performance interaction (Sin *et al.*, 2002:659; Hau & Ngo, 2012:225).

- Communication:

Communication plays an imperative role as a dimension of the business relationship. Communication focuses on the exchange of information between the consumer and the business (buyer and seller) in a formal as well as informal manner. It is of utmost importance that this information should be meaningful and timely. Timely communication assists in solving frictions/disagreements and accommodates the alignment of perceptions and expectations of both the consumer and the business (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:25; Duncan & Moriarity, 1998:2; Sin *et al.*, 2002:660; Adjei *et al.*, 2009:494; Hau & Ngo, 2012:225; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:715).

- Shared values:

This component of relationship marketing refers to the extent to which all relevant parties share opinions, viewpoints, sentiment and beliefs about certain aspects such as behaviours, goals and policies in terms of whether it is important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:25; Sin *et al.*, 2002:660; Hau & Ngo, 2012:226; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:715).



**Figure 2.1: Six components of relationship marketing**

Sources: Iglesias *et al.*, 2011:633; Hau & Ngo, 2012:224; Sin *et al.*, 2002:658; Richey *et al.*, 2008:394; Adjei *et al.*, 2009:494; Morgan & Hunt, 1994:22; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:715.

- Empathy:

This component enables the consumer and the business to put themselves in the other parties' shoes (seeing the situation from their perspective). This will assist the two parties in understanding the shared or different desires and goals. This component forms a vital part of the business relationship, seeing that the absence of empathy may hinder the success of the selling process (Sin *et al.*, 2002:661; Hau & Ngo, 2012:226).

- Reciprocity:

Reciprocity is summarised by three unified facets of social interaction between the consumer and the business, namely: bilateral contingency (affecting two sides of a possible situation which can be predicted, but there is no certainty that it will occur), interdependence for mutual benefit (both the consumer and the business realise that they depend on mutual benefits from each other), and equality of exchanged values (the fairly balanced exchange

of the values both parties share). This component enables/allows both parties (the consumer as well as the business) to deliver favours and/or make certain contributions for the other party in return for similar favours or allowances at a later stage in the business relationship (Sin *et al.*, 2002:661; Hau & Ngo, 2012:226).

These six components of relationship marketing within the business relationship form the foundation for the success of relationship marketing for the business. This also applies to forming long-term relationships with tourists, especially in the current competitive tourism environment.

However, Morgan and Hunt (1994:22) argue that although there are a number of contextual factors that influence the success of certain relationship marketing efforts (or even the failure of these efforts), central to the success of building long-term relationships with customers, is the existence of two key mediating variables: commitment and trust (Commitment-Trust Theory). In 1996, Blois (1996:173) confirmed this statement by stressing that building commitment and trust between the organisation and the customer would ultimately form the fundamental foundation for building a long-term relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:22; Blois, 1996:173; Morgan & Sanjay, 1993:113).

Furthermore, building these relationships implies the availability of time and cost, which can be seen as a long-term investment that will not necessarily come to an end once the relationship is established (Blois, 1996:173).

Both these elements (commitment and trust) can be viewed as central fundamental variables for three reasons (Morgan & Hunt, 1994:22):

- Commitment and trust encourage marketers to maintain relationship investments through cooperation with the stakeholders involved in the exchange process,
- Encourage marketers to refrain from opting for short-term alternatives when the expected long-term benefits of staying with their current partners can be retained, and



- Encourage marketers to consider actions, which might be of high risk, with care, with the belief that their stakeholders and partners will not be opportunists.

Morgan and Hunt (1994:22) believe that when both these fundamental elements (commitment and trust) occur in the relationship, it will lead to efficiency, productivity and effectiveness.

There are also other important elements, such as fundamental values, strategic elements, and characteristics of relationship marketing that play an important role in the development and implementation of a relationship marketing strategy, which need to be considered if an organisation ultimately wants to gain a competitive advantage through building a long-term relationship with customers.

## **2.4 FUNDAMENTAL VALUES, STRATEGIC ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING**

Fundamental values play an important role in relationship marketing. If the business or organisation considers the fundamental values of relationship marketing, and it integrates these values in the marketing plan, it can assist in developing a method for systematically analysing the effect of relationship marketing on the business.

Relationship marketing is grounded on several fundamental values:

- Each customer is considered and treated as an individual;
- There is an ultimate sense of collaboration and shared value creation between all parties;
- Long-term relationships pay;
- The goal should be to build win-win relationships, and;
- The core focus should distinguish between service and relationship values vs. bureaucratic-legal values (Gummesson, 1994:7; Gummesson, 2002:53; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:17).

Sin *et al.* (2002:658) identified five strategic elements for building a relationship marketing strategy (see Figure 2.2). First of all, a core service should be developed

around which the customer relationship will be built. Each relationship with each customer should be customised to the individual customer. It is of utmost importance to augment the core service (around which the customer relationship is built) with extra benefits for the customer. Certain pricing services should be in place to encourage customer loyalty, and the relationship marketing strategy and its importance should be marketed to the employees of the business to ensure that they will, in turn, perform well for customers.

As previously stated, these fundamental values and core strategic elements of relationship marketing can be implemented to assist the organisation in building long-term relationships with their customers and other role-players.



**Figure 2.2:** *Five strategic elements for building a relationship marketing strategy*  
Source: Sin *et al.* (2002:658)

Furthermore, the characteristics of relationship marketing should also be considered during the development and implementation of a successful relationship marketing strategy. Madhavaiah and Rao (2007:74) have identified some characteristics of relationship marketing that should also be considered when developing this strategy.

These characteristics include:

- Origin of the relationship (consider whether the organisation wants to attract, establish, build, create or initiate a relationship);
- Development of the relationship (consider how the organisation will build, develop, enhance or improve the relationship);
- Maintaining the relationship (consider strategies to sustain and nurture the relationship);
- Interaction between the parties (consider how the consumer and organisation will exchange value, interact, negotiate, network and cooperate);
- Time duration of the relationship (consider the long term relationship in terms of customer retention);
- Emotional content of the relationship (consider how the organisation and the customer will ensure that the relationship stays enjoyable, ethical, that all parties are committed, trust one another, and that parties involved will willingly respond to the relationship); and
- The output of the relationship (consider what the benefits, profit, rewards, efficiency and opportunities will be in terms of value creation for all parties involved).

Relationship marketing is, to a large extent, applicable for businesses in the service sector. These include businesses in the tourism industry (Igelsias *et al.*, 2011:632; Back, Lee & Abbott, 2011:111; Murdy & Pike, 2012:1281). Researchers in the services sector were amongst the first to embrace the concept of relationship marketing (Sin *et al.*, 2002:658). The reason for the appropriateness of relationship marketing in the tourism industry involves the fact that an important relationship between the frontline employee and the customer (or tourist/visitor) exists. This relationship influences the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty to a large extent. Thus, the relationship between the frontline employee and the tourist will influence the tourist's enjoyment of the product and/or purchase experience (Back *et al.*, 2011:111), which will have an influence on their intention to return.

From the above, it is clear that organisations (especially tourism organisations) should focus their marketing efforts on building long-term relationships with their

customers. This will ensure that all parties involved in the long-term relationship will benefit from the relationship.

## **2.5 BENEFITS OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING**

Relationship marketing is anchored in the perspective of interaction between different networks of relationships (Gummesson, 2002:3). It is also viewed as a joint venture within a network, where the customer (consumer) is considered as an important entity that contributes to value creation (Gummesson, 2002:310; Petrof, 1997:26).

Building a relationship between a consumer and the organisation requires that the consumer should be convinced that the organisation is able to provide continuous value and satisfaction to the consumer (Gummesson, 2002:310; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:14; Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:64). This will result in customers who have a loyal attitude towards the organisation through repeat transactions and recommendations to other parties (friends, family and colleagues). This holds benefits for the organisation in terms of:

- Increased sales,
- Increased market share, and
- Increased profits (Gummesson, 2002:3; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:14; Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:64; Adjei *et al.*, 2009:493).

Relationship marketing also involves several benefits for the organisation and its direct environment (which include the customers, society, citizens and the organisation itself). The advantages of relationship marketing for the organisation include:

- Relationship marketing will have a direct impact on the improved performance of the business (Sin *et al.*, 2002:656);
- The level of relationship marketing implemented by the business has a positive impact on the organisation in terms of its sales growth, customer retention, return on investment, market share, and overall performance (Peck, Payne, Christopher & Clark, 1999:47; Doyle, 2000:81; Sin *et al.*, 2002:670; Hollenson, 2003:202; Hau & Ngo, 2012:222);

- It assists in the development of customer loyalty, culminating in positive outcomes for the consumer as well as the marketer and the referrals from satisfied customers in the relationship (Barnes, 2000:49; White & Schneider, 2000:241; Lamb *et al.*, 2004:11; Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:654);
- Ultimately the development and maintaining of business relationships between the consumer and the business result in the success of the business through attracting and retaining customers (Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:654);
- Relationship marketing benefits businesses in terms of more satisfied customers, stronger profitability, increased client spending, better communication and more effective firm planning (Barnes, 2000:49; Doyle, 2000:81; Madhavaiah & Rao, 2007:654);
- Relationship marketing may be a strategy that can be implemented to overcome service intangibility (Crosby & Stephens, 1987:404);
- Relationship marketing implies lower business cost for the organisation, focusing on building long-term relationships with customers, seeing that over the long-term it is more cost effective to retain customers, than to acquire new customers (Doyle, 2000:81; Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 2002:8).

Seeing that the success of the long-term relationship is dependent on a certain level of satisfaction of the customer, it is also important that companies realise the benefits relationship marketing hold for the customer. The benefits experienced by the customer include confidence benefits (when the customer has confidence in the organisation and the value it creates, it ultimately reduces the level of worry and uneasiness they experience in terms of possible poor service delivery or quality), social benefits (interaction between the organisation and the customer should be enhanced in order for the customer to experience a sense of familiarity and personal recognition) and special treatment benefits (all additional services customers receive as part of a customised offer for the client, such as discounts, special deals and tailored services) (Chiou, 2004:688; Barnes, 2000:126; Alexander & Colgate, 2000:939).

However, although the above-mentioned indicates that relationship marketing benefits both the organisation and the customer, it (the building of long-term

relationships) might not be beneficial to all businesses under all circumstances (Adjei *et al.*, 2009:493). The down-side to the implementation of relationship marketing involves the fact that there is no valid measure for relationship marketing. Thus, there is no orderly decomposition of the effect of relationship marketing on the business (Sin *et al.*, 2002:656; Hau & Ngo, 2012:223). Crosby and Stephens (1987:404) indicate that economists also argue that relationship marketing creates insufficiencies in terms of customer satisfaction, seeing that the customer might feel satisfied, but for the wrong reasons.

Cant and Van Heerden (2013:125) state that the correct usage and sharing of information in marketing efforts contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation. They also state that the decisions made by the organisation during the process of establishing a long-term relationship with customers are influenced by two main factors: technology and the use thereof, and information.

## **2.6 UNDERSTANDING THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

In recent years, the world has come to a point where people find themselves living in a highly competitive global economy where technology plays a crucial role. Technology has become a trailblazer in innovation and development, profoundly disseminating the lives of people walking the face of the earth, as well as the way they do business. The dispersal and utilisation of technology have resulted in the possibility to facilitate people's lives and extend their reach (Badawy, 2009:220). As a result of the profound development of technology and innovation, the internet has become the tool that revolutionised the world. The internet advanced global connections and competition to a prodigious level which no one expected (Badawy, 2009:220).

The internet offers various interactive features and these features have become a vital aspect in society. Social media is but one of these interactive features on the internet and proves to be extremely popular. The popularity of social media is the direct result of the fact that two thirds of the world's internet populace visit social media sites. This proliferation of social media and the use of the internet brought

along an immense change to the media landscape as it has been known (Badawy, 2009:220; Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin, 2011:37; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1).

Holzner (as cited by Hsu, 2012:1) states that social media has advanced into an effective marketing tool. By including the use of social media in marketing strategies, it allows easy access for businesses to the market opportunities, to learn about trends in their target market, and enable them to communicate and build relationships with their consumers. Managing relationships with consumers could ultimately lead to bigger market share and revenue. Social media as marketing tool can also be explained as the process where a social group, who shares the same value systems and identity, exchanges product knowledge and opinions (Amerland, 2012:13).

Social media thus forms an important part of relationship marketing. Gummesson (2002:3) explains that relationship marketing is aimed at relations and communication within different networks of relationships between the consumer and the supplier. Before one can understand the importance of social media as marketing tool, it is important to comprehend the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media (see Figure 1.1 in chapter 1).

From Figure 1.1 it is clear that both relationship marketing and social media as marketing tool are aimed at embracing the importance of building long-term relationships with customers and other role-players. Relationship marketing is aimed at forging long-term relationships, whereas relationships form the foundation for social media. Relationship marketing has social bonding to effect, which ensures the personalisation and customisation of the relationship, where social media assists the organisation in the process of interacting with consumers in real-time by exchanging information, opinions, experiences and recommendations, and so on, customised to the profile of the organisation or the relationship the organisation aims to build with its customers.

Social media has expeditiously evoked the attention of Internet users of all ages and the time spent on social media sites by internet users are responsible for the

increased rate of more than three times the overall internet growth (Milano *et al.*, 2011:2; Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012:xv; Lund, 2011:3).

Social media, which forms part of the Web 2.0 phenomenon, has received the attention of researchers as well as the public to a large extent. The anomalous ease of interactivity which cultivates the formation of communities and the spawning of user-driven content proves to distinguish social media from its relatives (DeAndrea *et al.*, 2012:16; Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640). Relationship marketing and social media therefore supports one another with the purpose of interactively building long-term relationships with customers.

## 2.7 DEFINING THE TERM ‘SOCIAL MEDIA’

Initially, social media started out as a platform where individuals (family, friends and colleagues) share content with each other for entertainment purposes. However, organisations have realised the potential social media holds for communicating and interacting with consumers (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:399). In recent years, social media has become one of the research areas receiving considerable attention. This has to effect that different definitions for the concept of social media exist. Table 2.2 provides some of these different existing definitions of social media:

**Table 2.2:** *Theoretical definitions of social media*

AUTHOR/S	DEFINITION
Miguéns <i>et al.</i> , (2008:1)	“Social media are online communities of people who share common interests and activities. They provide a user with a collection of various interaction possibilities, ranging from simple chats to multiple video conferences and from the exchange of plain email messages to the participation in blogs and discussion groups.”
Kirtiř & Karahan (2011:262)	“Social media roughly means different ways in which internet users interact with one another online, and involves activities like creating and commenting on blogs, sharing



	content or communicating with friends.”
<b>Kaplan &amp; Haenlein (2011:254)</b>	“Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”
<b>Bowman et al., (2012:1)</b>	“Social media is a group of channels and applications that are largely user-driven where both the creation of content (to some extent) and the utility of channels themselves are determined by users.”
<b>Cant &amp; Van Heerden (2013:435)</b>	“Social media are the latest generation of network-based applications and content that have brought about a revolution in participatory communications, building communities, and creating and sharing information.”
<b>Anon (2013e:5)</b>	“Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment contents among themselves in virtual communities and networks.”
<b>Anon (2013e:32)</b>	“The use of a variety of websites that allow users to share content, interact and develop communities around similar interests.”
<b>Anon (2013e:108)</b>	“Interaction with external websites or services, based on participant contributions to the content.”
<b>Anon (2013e:125)</b>	“Social media describes online tools used to share and publish opinions, and perspectives, and include blogs, message boards, podcasts, wiki sites, and blogs. Messages can be delivered via text, images, audio, and video.”

From the above, three core aspects can be identified in defining the concept of social media:

- Social media offers various forms of interaction possibilities for users;
- Content shared on social media sites is mainly user-generated; and
- Users can create and exchange information.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, social media will be defined as:

Social media serves as an online platform for users to interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications. In essence, it allows users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users.

As soon as organisations and individuals understand what social media entails, it is imperative to comprehend the various forms of social media. These forms include emails, social networking sites, video sharing/content communities, blogs and micro-blogs, instant messaging, photo sharing, text messaging, collaborative projects, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds to mention but a few (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:91; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:255; LaRoche *et al.*, 2012:2). Table 2.3 indicates examples of the different forms of social media:

**Table 2.3: Examples of the different forms of social media**

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
<b>Email</b>	Gmail; MobileMe
<b>Social Networking Sites / Online Communities</b>	Facebook; MySpace; RenRen; TripAdvisor; Bebo; LinkedIn
<b>Social News Sites</b>	Digg; Reddit; NewsVine; BallHype
<b>Social Bookmarking</b>	Delicious; Magnolia; Diigo
<b>Social Sharing (Video Sharing/Content Communities; Photo Sharing)</b>	YouTube; Flickr!; Instagram; Photobucket; SmugMug; Vimeo
<b>Social Events</b>	Eventful; Meetup; Upcoming
<b>Blogs &amp; Micro-blogs</b>	Twitter; eBlogger
<b>Forums &amp; Message Boards / Discussion</b>	WeForum; World Tourism Forum; Google

<b>Groups</b>	Groups
<b>Instant Messaging</b>	Digsby; Adium; Facebook Chat; Whatsapp
<b>Text Messaging</b>	Mobile messaging
<b>Collaborative Projects (Wiki's) / Knowledge Sharing Sites / Co-creation</b>	Wikipedia; WikiTravel; NIKEiD
<b>Virtual Game Worlds</b>	World of Warcraft
<b>Virtual Social Worlds</b>	Second Life
<b>Product Reviews , Business Reviews and Opinions</b>	Amazon; Customer Lobby; yelp.com; epinions.com
<b>Social Media Monitoring and Social Media Analytics</b>	Attensity Voice of the Customer; Attensity360; Sysomos Heartbeat; Sysomos MAP
<b>Information Aggregators</b>	Netvibes; Twine

Sources: Evans, 2010:16; Anon, 2013e:5; Anon, 2013e:108; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011: 255; LaRoche *et al.*, 2012:2; Curtis *et al.*, 2010:91; Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640; Kim & Ko, 2012:1481; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:44; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:443.

Furthermore, the different types of social media can be used for a variety of purposes. These purposes include communication (blogs, micro-blogging, social networking), collaboration (wikis, social bookmarking, social news), multimedia (video sharing, social sharing), reviews and opinions (product reviews, business reviews, community Q&A), entertainment (virtual worlds, game sharing), brand monitoring (social media monitoring, social media analytics), the fulfilment of marketing strategies and other (information aggregators) (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:443; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:260).

Over the past few years, researchers have attempted to settle the question: “Why do organisations use social media?”. The apportionment of social media usage indicates that consumers commit almost one third of their total time throughout the day to the consumption of social media. The difficulty to address this question recites from the fact that social media offers copious opportunities for its users, which include organisations as well as its consumers (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Laroche *et al.*, 2012:1).

For marketers to answer the above-mentioned question “Why do organisations use social media?” and to understand how it can be used effectively for marketing purposes, organisations should understand the role and importance of social media as marketing tool.

## **2.8 THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING TOOL**

Social media marks a tremendous break from traditional mass media, as everybody knows it, and it has changed the media landscape completely. It started out as a common entertainment tool, but before long it has developed into the latest marketing marvel. This is due to the fact that the target group/audience becomes a near-equal partner in the generation and distribution of content through social media. Thus, social media has enhanced the standard communication repository of many businesses and holds momentous advantages in the business area (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:1; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:400).

Kirtiř and Karahan (2011:260), as well as Cant and Van Heerden (2013:435), state that social media can be considered the most powerful tool to help businesses execute their current marketing strategies. This is due to the fact that social media represents a universal source of information, changes the tools and strategies businesses use to communicate with their consumers, reduce the cost of executing their marketing strategies, and enables the consumer to control the flow of information to a certain extent (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:435).

Marketing has evolved from a controlled communications environment (with predetermined, distinct corporate spokespeople) into a circumstance where true participatory conversations are taking place between multiple unappointed authors. These authors include customers, competitors, observers, employees, and various interested members (Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:434). Organisations are looking for alternative ways to market their products and services, by eliminating traditional advertising media. The most exciting, invigorating alternative is most definitely social media (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378).

Social media serves as a great opportunity for organisations to pursue viral marketing, thus ensuring that it is an extraordinarily good marketing tool for organisations (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263). The importance of the use of social media as marketing tool for organisations includes:

- The possibility to streamline management functions, edify the consumers about specific programmes and services, and communicating with the members of the organisation's constituency (Briones *et al.*, 2011:38);
- Social media enables organisations to interact with their consumers, whilst transforming according to new technology and integrating these technologies and interactivity with consumers in their everyday operations (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1);
- Social media has the potential to help organisations reinvent their communication strategies for reaching their consumers, by allowing online communication through lowering the barriers of face-to-face interaction (DeAndrea *et al.*, 2012:15);
- Social media applications serve to be a convenient method to instantly broadcast specific marketing messages to a large group of people (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:255);
- It helps organisations to fulfil their marketing strategies at a distinctively lower cost, it has advantages in terms of time, audience and relations (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260);
- Social media ensures high attention and participation by consumers and this implicates the maximisation of brand exposure for the organisation (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263);
- Organisations ultimately use social media to escalate their connections with consumers to grow their audience, to encourage continuous interaction with the organisation's brand and to pursue the increase of purchase desires to persuade engagement with the site content and usefulness (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263);
- The use of social media is critical for organisations and is specifically used to communicate with suppliers and consumers, to build relationships and trust

between the organisation and the consumers and to identify possible partners (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153);

- Social media is used to categorise relationships, connect with others and is used as a recommendation system for specific activities (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1);
- It enables a website to develop from an undeviating page into a dynamic platform, which empowers users to generate content and share their experiences (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1).

The above articulate some of the reasons why people use social media. Social media has multiple uses and can therefore be used to accomplish a great number of goals. However, as social media develops and emerges into more forms, it is imperative for organisations to understand the benefits of the different ways in which they can use social media tools and how these tools relate to their environment. Currently, organisations are considering more innovative and cost effective methods to market their products and/or services. Thus, they are paying a substantial amount of attention to social media as it is regarded one of the most effective ways to reach the consumers. Ultimately, organisations tend to devote more resources to social media (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:264; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:2; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:43; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:435).

It is imperative for organisations to have very specific objectives and strategies if and when they plan to implement social media as marketing tool. The three most important objectives organisations should focus on for the use of social media as marketing tool include:

- Brand awareness (every time a user engages in the social media site created by or about the organisation, the organisation will gain increased brand exposure in highly relevant contexts);
- Brand engagement (highly engaging social media marketing efforts based on user-generated content will generate customer commitment, reinforce customer brand loyalty and motivate additional commitment and support to the brand in the future); and

- Word-of-mouth (aware and engaged customers communicate their opinions to other users, satisfied consumers will communicate positive attitudes towards the brand with other consumers and vice versa) (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:46).

In conclusion, social media are essentially used by organisations for the following reasons:

- To build direct relationships amongst customers and consumers;
- To increase the traffic to organisations' websites;
- To identify new business opportunities;
- To create different communities;
- To generate and distribute content (ranging from direct marketing messages to reviews and referrals by customers, and recommendations);
- To collect feedback from customers; and
- To support the organisation's brand/image.

Seeing that social media is such a powerful tool for interaction, communication and relationship building, it boasts a number of benefits for both the organisation and its consumers.

## 2.9 THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media holds several benefits, not only for organisations, but also for its users. Table 2.4 summarises the benefits of social media that account for the user, the organisation and then for both the user and the organisation.

**Table 2.4:** *Examples of the different forms of social media*

ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS	USER BENEFITS	ORGANISATIONAL & USER BENEFITS
Enables organisations to create conversations with consumers (Briones <i>et al.</i> , 2011:37).	Social media allows users to organise around different motives through collaborating with each other (Briones <i>et al.</i> , 2011:38;	Social media facilitates and extends the reach of both the organisation and the user (Badawy, 2009:220).

	Parra-López <i>et al.</i> , 2011:641).	
Internet-users tend to have a more positive attitude towards organisations who maintain social media activity (Briones <i>et al.</i> 2011:37).	Social media guides users when entering an unfamiliar social environment (DeAndrea <i>et al.</i> , 2012:16).	Social media assist in deepening the existing relationships between organisations and customers (DeAndrea <i>et al.</i> , 2012:16).
It allows viral marketing campaigns to circulate at a tremendous pace which enables organisations to promote their products and services at a fraction of the cost of traditional marketing media to a massive audience (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254).	Users are able to access most of the available social media sites for free (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:261).	It allows the both the organisation and the user to generate and exchange the content at any time, any place, by means of interactive communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260).
Social media eliminates the distribution part which is necessary in traditional mass media, thus reduces cost for the organisation (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:261).	Enables users to create and share their own content by means of photos, videos and comments with other readers/users (Leung <i>et al.</i> , 2013:4; Evans, 2010:16).	Social media increases communication, thus enhancing communication strategies of both the organisation and consumer (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:262).
Social media allows the development of specific target groups (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:261).	Social media empowers users to easily access information and at the same time be able to willingly share their own views, comments, and suggestions in a way that proves to be informal and collaborative. This will then increase the value and influence power in the decision-making process of other users (Miguens <i>et al.</i> , 2008:2; Parra-López <i>et</i>	



	<i>al.</i> , 2011:642; Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182).	
Assists organisations in identifying opportunities for brand development by considering the behaviour and comments of the users on the site as valuable which will lead to increase in brand trust and loyalty by improving the customer relationship with the brand, other consumers and the organisation and its products and/or services (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:262; Laroche <i>et al.</i> , 2012:5).	Social media allow users to respond to what they have seen, read or heard from other users on social media sites by posting comments that all users of the site can see and in turn react to (Anon, 2013e:125).	
Social media helps organisations to identify new business opportunities, facilitates the transfer of knowledge within the organisation, and have a positive impact on the organisational climate (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51).	Consumers are utilising social media in order to create, modify, share and discuss various information sourced and accessed on the internet (Pitt & Berthon, 2011:183).	

It is clear from the analysis above, that social media boasts several benefits for both the organisation and the user, of which the most important benefits include the deepening of existing relationships between the organisation and its customers (DeAndrea *et al.*, 2012:16), the fact that it allows both the organisation and the user to generate and exchange content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260) and social media increases and enhances communication between the organisation and the user (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:262).

Parra-López *et al.* (2011:641) state that the benefits of social media can be categorised in terms of functional benefits, social benefits and psychological and hedonic benefits. The benefits can be understood accordingly:

- Functional benefits:
  - Users can gather online to exchange information and experiences regarding purchasing and consumption; the exchange of information is much more significant online; users can easily access a greater amount of relevant information needed (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:641; Kang, 2011:29).
- Social benefits:
  - Users can communicate with one another; relationships can be built through the use of social media; ideas and opinions can be exchanged; the level of involvement of the user in the process of exchanging information (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:642; Kang, 2011:31).
- Psychological and hedonic benefits:
  - Individual's trust in the use of social media; the need to belong to a specific community; being a member of a specific community; pleasant and fun experience when using social media; being able to express opinions and sharing in experiences (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:642; Kang, 2011:32).

Furthermore, there are certain incentives that will contribute to the use of social media:

- Personal skills and predisposition towards social media:
  - The more users partake in social media, the more their acceptance of and personal skills in terms of social media use will increase (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:644);
- Trust in the contributions of others:

- Users believe that individuals who access social media sites express their true opinions in terms of what they think and the general perception amongst users is that these contributions are true and there are no misrepresentations (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:644; Kang, 2011:32);
- Altruism:
  - People are generally interested and willing to share what they know; they believe that it is of interest to others and that others can benefit from the information they share; it can become a platform where users can help each other (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:645; Pitt & Berthon, 2011:183; Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2);
- Having access to the technologies needed to access social media:
  - It is physically possible for users to access social media sites; different users influence the use of social media sites and show other individuals how to use social media sites; current users of social media sites become professional or personal referents of these sites (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:645);
- Socio-technological environment:
  - The level of technological, internet and social media use should be sufficient; the use of social media in different environments (social, cultural, educational and administrative) should be considered; analysis of the inclination to use social media in the immediate social environment should be conducted (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:645).

Although it is clear from the above that social media holds several benefits and advantages for organisations, there are also a number of challenges and disadvantages of social media.

## 2.10 THE CHALLENGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

It is clear that social media has played an immense role in the development of a more user-friendly and connected World Wide Web, but it also boasts a number of challenges and disadvantages (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4). Badawy (2009:220) and Evans (2010:8) state that social media becomes challenging to manage due to the accelerated nature of its technological development. Three basic criteria should be met in order to ensure the effectiveness and success of social media: *The right message* should be communicated to *the right people* at *the right time* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:256).

Other challenges and disadvantages include:

- It is unlikely that users will connect on social media platforms if they perceive it as cognitively demanding and costly (the monetary cost of technology is high), and when opportunity cost is low (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643);
- There are increasing concerns with regard to the risk of identity theft and privacy issues on social media sites (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643);
- Due to the vast development of social media, the size and nature of the social media attack surface changes persistently. This has to effect that social media site operators are not in full control of what their site/s might deliver from moment to moment as conversations go on with or without the involvement of the organisation (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Evans, 2010:9);
- Users have the desire to be part of a community where they can share their thoughts, experiences, files, images, videos and links. This sometimes reaches a frenetic level and may lead to the exploitation of the users' trust (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4);
- Social media becomes challenging for organisations when this medium is not important in the industry the organisation operates in, when there is uncertainty amongst employees as well as employers whether or not and how social media can help the organisation's brand, when staff is unfamiliar with

social media and does not have the technical skills to use social media and when competitors do not use social media (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1156);

- Social media requires substantial investment in terms of time (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1156);
- Social media requires enough research, a good thought-through strategy, effective implementation, buy-in from the team, networking, conversing and measuring (Evans, 2010:8);
- Social media success, in terms of the strategy and implementation, cannot be controlled. It tends to be fortuitous (Evans, 2010:8);
- Social media bears the risk to instantly destroy the organisation's image that has taken years to build, it implies the risk of a loss in productivity in employees and can also compromise any legal obligations (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51);
- Organisations with a lack of resources, employees with poor technical competencies and sluggish management are at risk to find social media challenging (Milano *et al.*, 2011:10);
- Another aspect of social media that serves to be challenging is the fact the sharing in social media is difficult to measure, seeing that the action of sharing goes beyond the organisation's site (offsite) (Evans, 2010:25);
- Users will be reluctant to engage on a social media platform if and when there is a certain level of suspicion and distrust and this will lead to a resistance to share information, comments and suggestions with other (Milano *et al.*, 2011:10);
- If the organisation does not facilitate the use or access for users to partake in social media or if it is too difficult for users to engage in social media, the action will not take place (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643).

The topic whether social media is the place and strategy for online marketing activities stays unresolved. It can merely serve as an opportunity to develop new policies, vision and strategies for marketing activities (Laroche *et al.*, 2012:1; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:264).

From the above it is clear that social media can serve as a promising marketing tool for organisations but that it also creates various challenges. Given the fact that social media can strengthen and deepen relationships between organisations and its customers, social media can play an important role in the tourism industry.

## **2.11 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

The tourism industry has proved itself to be an industry characterised by immense innovativeness throughout history (Hjalager, 2010:1; Buhalis & Law, 2008:609). Milano *et al.* (2011:2) considered tourism as one of the imperative elements of online commerce, which has profoundly impacted the structure of the online commerce industry. In 2011, the World Travel Market released a report that announced that more than one third of all leisure travellers in the United Kingdom chose their hotels on the basis of social media sites, such as Facebook and TripAdvisor (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4). The promulgation of social media has been so significant that it is considered a vital topic in the travel and tourism industry (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1).

In the tourism industry, social media is crucial for organisations that are increasingly valuing the opinions, reviews and referrals of their tourists. This will lead to more reliable and trustworthy information sources than the suppliers themselves (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2). Although social media has several benefits, a substantial amount of tourism organisations are still not fully employing social media as marketing strategy. Social media serves to be unique (compared to traditional broadcasting and publishing methods) in that it facilitates direct communication between the organisation and its target group (tourists), without having to acknowledge distance and time (Badawy, 2009:220; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378). New marketing mechanisms, such as the different types of social media, allow marketers to approve virtual catalogues and at the same time obtaining immediate customer feedback (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378).

The fact that there is a lack of direct experience with a tourism product in the industry (the quality and perceived benefits cannot be evaluated before the tourist has consumed the product) has been an important issue for a long period of time. Social media consists of the ability to bridge this gap (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:100).

Currently, social media is considered a mega trend in the tourism industry, with a significant impact. Travellers have widely adopted the use of social media to search, organise, share and elucidate their stories and experiences through different social media platforms in a collaborative way. With the development of social media platforms for tourism purposes, tourists have increasingly shown the tendency to book hotels via the internet. This implies a different level of competition amongst organisations in terms of developing new business models. It is of utmost importance that marketers of tourism organisations understand how tourists use the internet/social media before, during and after vacation trips to acquire information about their trips, to share their experiences and to compare the variety of services related to their trip (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Miguens *et al.*, 2008:3; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640; Litvin *et al.*, 2008:458).

According to Leung *et al.* (2013:4) social media has the ability to assist tourism organisations to engage potential visitors, understand and respond to tourists' preferences by analysing their comments on online communities and increase the online presence in order to reach greater online revenue (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4). Buhalis and Law (2008) state that social media dramatically influences tourists' behaviour, seeing that it enables both the tourist and the organisation (destination) to engage directly with one another (SanMartin & Herrero, 2012:241; Miguens *et al.* 2008:2).

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was two-fold. Firstly, it was important to contextualise social media, as marketing tool, as part of relationship marketing and the role and influence of relationship marketing on social media. This was done by an analysis of the literature regarding relationship marketing and its benefits, as well as the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media. It is clear that there are numerous definitions and descriptions for the term 'relationship marketing', however, the basis for the term is built on the fact that relationship marketing efforts begin and end with the consumer through attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships; it is based on the interaction within networks of relationships that lead

to long-term relationships with both customers and other role-players and relationship marketing is focussed on building relationships with customers by offering value and providing satisfaction on a consistent basis, which will enable the organisation to react to a changing demand.

The second purpose of this chapter was to determine and evaluate the factors influencing the success of social media marketing. This was achieved by researching the literature regarding the concept of social media, the benefits, challenges and disadvantages of social media as marketing tool and the role of social media in the tourism industry in order to determine the relevance and importance of the use of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry. From the literature it was clear that social media serves as an important marketing tool for organisations. It boasts a number of benefits, mainly focusing on information gathering, interaction and communication and content sharing. It also implies several challenges for the organisation in terms of trust issues, as well as violation of privacy issues and concerns.

The analysis of the above-mentioned literature review will play an important role in assisting with the development of the questionnaire for the attainment of the rest of the objectives for this study. This indicates the key areas to focus on in the development of the questionnaire, to ultimately develop a framework of the critical success factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.



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# CHAPTER 3

## FACTORS INHIBITING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

Over the past few years, the world has come to a point where people find themselves living in a highly competitive global economy where technology plays a crucial role in daily activities. As a result of the profound development of technology, social media has become a popular field of study in literature. Social media refers to an online platform for users to interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications. In essence, it allows users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users. It was found that little to no research has been conducted in the South African tourism landscape to determine the factors inhibiting the use of social media by both international and national visitors to South Africa. The purpose of this study was twofold: firstly the factors inhibiting the use of social media were determined, and secondly it was determined whether the factors inhibiting the use of social media differed between international and national tourists to South Africa. Research was conducted by fieldworkers at the O.R. Tambo International Airport, situated in Johannesburg, by means of questionnaires. The results indicated that the main factors inhibiting the use of social media included content challenges, privacy issues, and personal perceptions. No significant differences were found on the factors inhibiting the use of social media by international tourists versus national tourists. Novel to this study is the fact that from the results it was clear that tourists who are currently not participating in social media do have access to social media sites and have the technical skills and competency to use social media, and are well informed about the different types of social media. Tourism organisations should ensure a safe platform where tourists feel free to engage in the process of creating and sharing content about their product. It is also imperative for organisations to

understand that the positive reinforcement of tourists on the social media site of the organisation can ultimately increase their market share. Social media strategies need not be customised to national and international visitors, as their needs in terms of the use thereof are the same. The findings of this study will assist tourism organisations and its marketers in developing the optimal and most effective strategy to create trust in the social media marketing efforts of the tourism organisation, which will possibly lead to these tourists engaging more frequently in social media for travel and tourism purposes, to ultimately increase the market share of the tourism organisation.

**Key words:** social media, marketing, South Africa, tourism, tourists, inhibiting factors.

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, people and organisations have realised that the global economy has become increasingly competitive. In this economy it is evident that technology plays a crucial role. Technology has become a trailblazer in innovation and development, profoundly disseminating the lives of people, as well as the way business is done. The dispersal and utilisation of technology have resulted in the possibility to facilitate peoples' lives and extend their reach (Badawy, 2009:220; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:46). As a result of the profound development of technology and innovation, the Internet has become the tool that revolutionised the world. The Internet advanced global connections and competition to a prodigious level which no one expected (Badawy, 2009:220). It offers various interactive features which prove to be a vital aspect in society. Social media is but one of these interactive features on the internet and is extremely popular with two thirds of the world's internet populace visiting social media sites. This proliferation of social media and the use of the internet brought along an immense change to the media landscape as it has been known (Badawy, 2009:220; Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1).

Social media, which forms part of the Web 2.0 phenomenon, has received the attention of researchers as well as the public to a large extent. The anomalous ease of interactivity which cultivates the formation of communities and the spawning of user-driven content proves to distinguish social media from its relatives (DeAndrea *et*

*al.*, 2012:16; Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640). Kirtiř and Karahan (2011:260) state that social media can be considered as the most powerful tool to help businesses execute their current marketing strategies. It represents a universal source of information, changes the tools and strategies businesses use to communicate with their consumers, lowers the cost of executing their marketing strategies and enables the consumer to control the flow of information to a certain extent (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260).

Even with the importance of social media it is possible that all consumers are not familiar and/or comfortable with the use of social media sites. This can influence the success of any strategy involving social media. The starting point thus before implementing a social media strategy, especially in marketing, is to understand and comprehend the concept of social media and the importance thereof, as well as to determine the factors deterring people from utilising this form of media. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors inhibiting the use of social media, as well as determining any significant differences between the factors inhibiting the use of social media for national and international tourists.

### **3.2 UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL MEDIA PHENOMENON**

It is clear from the literature review regarding the concept of social media that it consists of various components that structure the significance of social media, the aspects inhibiting the use of social media, as well as the impact of social media on organisations' marketing strategies.

#### **3.2.1 The significance of social media**

Marketing has evolved from a controlled communications environment (with predetermined, distinct corporate spokespeople) into a circumstance where true participatory conversations are taking place between multiple unappointed authors, including customers, competitors, observers, employees and various interested members (Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182). Organisations are looking for alternative ways to market their products and services, by eliminating traditional advertising media. The most exciting and invigorating alternative is most probably social media (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378).

Before one can comprehend the impact of social media on society and in the business world, it is imperative to understand the concept of social media. In recent years, social media has become one of the research areas receiving considerable attention. This has to the effect that different descriptions for the concept of social media exist. Some of these descriptions include the following definitions:

- “Social media are online communities of people who share common interests and activities. They provide a user with a collection of various interaction possibilities, ranging from simple chats to multiple video conferences, and from the exchange of plain email messages to the participation in blogs and discussion groups (Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1)”;
- “Social media roughly means different ways which internet users interact with one another online, and involves activities like creating and commenting on blogs, sharing content or communicating with friends (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:262)”;
- “Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254)”;
- “Social media is a group of channels and applications that are largely user-driven where both the creation of content (to some extent) and the utility of channels themselves are determined by users (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1).”

An analysis of some of the most recent definitions and/or descriptions of social media reveals that these definitions/descriptions constitute similar components of the concept of social media, which include:

- Social media offers various forms of interaction possibilities for users;
- Content shared on social media sites are mainly user-generated;
- Users can create and exchange information.

Thus, for the purpose of this research, social media is defined as: ‘an online platform for users to interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications. In essence, it allows users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users’.

Social media has multiple uses and can therefore be used to accomplish a great number of personal, as well as individual goals. Currently organisations are considering more innovative and cost-effective methods to market their products and/or services. Thus, they are paying a substantial amount of attention to social media, as it is regarded one of the most effective ways to reach consumers. Ultimately, organisations tend to devote more resources to social media but are these paying off (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:264; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:2) ?

Although it is evident that social media offers copious opportunities to its users, which include organisations as well as their consumers, there are a number of people and organisations who are not adopting social media as a daily activity and participating in different types of social media (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; LaRoche *et al.*, 2012:1). This should be considered in marketing efforts since social media strategies are taking over other forms of media.

It is clear that social media has played an immense role in the development of a more user-friendly and connected World Wide Web, but it also boasts a number of challenges and disadvantages that contributes to the unwillingness of people and organisations to adopt the use of social media (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4). Badawy (2009:220) and Evans (2010:8) state that social media becomes challenging to manage due to the accelerated nature of its technological development.

### **3.2.2 Aspects inhibiting the use of social media**

There are a number of challenges and disadvantages that contribute to the factors inhibiting the use of social media from the perspective of the user as well as the organisation. The following can be viewed as factors inhibiting the use of social media for individuals:

- It is unlikely that users will connect on social media platforms if they perceive it as cognitively demanding and costly (the monetary cost of technology is high), and when opportunity cost is low (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643);

- There are increasing concerns with regard to the risk of identity theft and privacy issues on social media sites (Leung, Law, van Hoof & Buhalis, 2013:4; Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643);
- Users have the desire to be part of a community where they can share their thoughts, experiences, files, images, videos and links. This sometimes reaches a frenetic level and may lead to the exploitation of the users' trust (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4);
- Social media requires substantial investment in terms of time (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1156);
- Users will be reluctant to engage on a social media platform if and when there is a certain level of suspicion and distrust and this will lead to a resistance to share information, comments and suggestions with others (Milano, Baggio & Piatelli, 2011:10);
- If the organisation does not facilitate the use or access for users to partake in social media, or if it is too difficult for users to engage in social media, the action will not take place (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643).

On the other side, the challenges and disadvantages that organisations face in terms of the use of social media boast the following:

- Due to the vast development of social media opportunities, the size and nature of the social media attack surface changes persistently. This has to the effect that social media site operators are not in full control of what their site/s might deliver from moment to moment, as conversations go on with or without the involvement of the organisation (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Evans, 2010:9);
- Social media becomes challenging for organisations when this medium is not important in the industry the organisation operates in, when there is uncertainty among employees as well as employers whether or not and how social media can help the organisation's brand, when staff is unfamiliar with social media and does not have the technical skills to use social media and when competitors do not use social media (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1156);

- Social media requires enough research, a good thought-through strategy, effective implementation, buy-in from the team, networking, conversing and measuring (Evans, 2010:8);
- Social media success in terms of the strategy and implementation cannot be controlled. It tends to be fortuitous (Evans, 2010:8);
- Social media bears the risk to instantly destroy the organisation's image that took years to build, it implies the risk of a loss in productivity in employees and can also compromise any legal obligations (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51);
- Organisations with a lack of resources, employees with poor technical competencies, and sluggish management is at risk to find social media challenging (Milano *et al.*, 2011:10);
- Another aspect of social media that serves to be challenging is the fact that the sharing in social media is difficult to measure, seeing that the action of sharing goes beyond the organisation's site (offsite) (Evans, 2010:25).

Challenges and reasons not to utilise social media are evident from both a demand and supply perspective and therefore the topic of whether social media is the place and strategy for online marketing activities stays unresolved. On the other hand it can serve as an opportunity to develop new policies, vision and strategies for marketing activities (Laroche *et al.*, 2012:1; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:264).

### **3.2.3 The impact of social media on organisations' marketing strategies**

Social media has received the attention of researchers as a new phenomenon. When one considers the use and implementation of social media as marketing tool in South Africa, it is of utmost importance that the marketer remembers that even though there is a wide range of social media available and used in South Africa, not all these different types of social media have the same marketing impact on its consumers (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:452). Previous research studies done on people and/or organisations' unwillingness to participate in social media, include studies conducted by Bowman *et al.* (2012) who have found that the fact that social media is cognitively demanding, entails a high monetary cost in terms of technology, offers low opportunity cost, implies the risk of identity theft and boast several privacy issues are the main reasons for non-participation in social media.

Parra-Lopez *et al.* (2011) revealed similarities with all the reasons identified by Bowman *et al.* (2012), but added the difficulty of accessibility of social media and the level of difficulty when using social media as another reason for non-participation. The only two deciding factors for non-participation in social media found by Leung *et al.* (2013:4) were the risk of identity theft and privacy issues. Research conducted by Mansfield-Devine (2008:4) also shared similarities in terms of risk of identity theft and privacy issues, but he also concluded his research by stating that the fact that users had no control over the aftermath of the content they shared and exploitation of their trust should also be considered as reasons influencing their decision to participate in social media.

Langheinrich and Karjoth (2010) found that the risk of identity theft, privacy issues, the risk to instantly destroy the company's image, the fact that the use of social media resulted in a loss in productivity and the fact that it could compromise legal obligations also leads to non-participation in social media. Furthermore, a study conducted by Michaelidou *et al.* (2011) revealed that the main reasons for non-participation in social media were the fact that there was uncertainty amongst users on how they could benefit from social media, users were unfamiliar with social media, they did not have the technological skills required to use social media, and the use of social media required a substantial investment in terms of time. Milano *et al.* (2011) only found two determining factors for non-participation: users have a certain level of suspicion and distrust and they demonstrate a resistance to share information, comments and suggestions.

An analysis of the above-mentioned research indicates that the risk of identity theft and privacy issues were found to be the most common reasons for non-participation (Bowman *et al.*, 2012; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011; Leung *et al.*, 2013; Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010). Furthermore, the fact that the use of social media is cognitively demanding and offers a low opportunity cost (Bowman *et al.* 2012; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011) proved to be the only other reasons found by more than one research study.



From the above, it is clear that some research has been conducted on social media and the selected aspects contributing to individuals and organisations' unwillingness to participate in social media, however, it was clearly discovered that very little research, if any, has been conducted on a more complete set of factors inhibiting the use of social media of both international and national visitors to South Africa.

It is imperative for tourism organisations to understand why tourists' use, and on the other hand refrain from using social media. The tourism industry is considered an industry characterised by immense innovativeness throughout history (Hjalager, 2010:1). In 2011, Milano *et al.* (2011:2) considered tourism as one of the imperative elements of online commerce. This is explained by the case of the United Kingdom tourism industry, where more than one third of all leisure travellers in the United Kingdom chose their hotels on the basis of a social media sites such as Facebook and TripAdvisor (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4). Due to the fact that the growth of popularity of social media has been so significant, it is considered a vital topic in the travel and tourism industry (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1).

Social media is crucial for tourism organisations that are increasingly valuing the opinions, reviews and referrals of their tourists. This will lead to more reliable and trustworthy information sources than the suppliers themselves (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2). Therefore, the research question remains: Which factors inhibit the use of social media? Even more important and not determined yet: Does national and international visitors differ in their opinions on factors inhibiting the use of social media? The critical assessment of this question can assist organisations in determining whether or not they should develop customised marketing strategies. Organisations should ensure that these customised marketing strategies will motivate current non-participants in social media (irrespective of their location) to use social media. This should be done in order to ensure organisations reach a larger market, in real-time, at a lower cost.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is twofold, firstly an in-depth literature review was conducted followed by empirical research.

### **3.3.1 Literature review**

During this study, resources such as books, articles, annual reports, journals, theses, textbooks and other topic-related literature was used to gather adequate information. Due to the novelty of this research field, the World Wide Web also served as an important source of information. Search-engines that were used included Google Scholar and international and national databases such as Science Direct, SAePublications and Emerald. From the literature review, it was found that little to no research has been conducted on the use of social media in the South African tourism industry.

Thus, the literature review was considered as the starting point for this study. The thorough literature analyses set the path for the practical execution of the empirical research, especially in identifying the important aspects to be included in the development of the questionnaire. It also assisted in the analysis and interpretation of the data of the empirical survey.

### **3.3.2 Empirical research: Mixed methodology**

Due to the novelty of this research in the South African tourism industry it was decided to apply a mixed methodology approach namely qualitative and quantitative research.

#### **3.3.2.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research was conducted to determine the perceptions of tourism marketing managers in the use of social media and their opinions on the effectiveness, how the use of social media influences the success of the implemented marketing strategies, as well as the factors inhibiting the use of social media. The qualitative research was exploratory in nature and entailed semi-structured interviews. These interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions where the respondents had the opportunity to answer the questions based on their own opinions, expectations and experiences. The results of the semi-structured interviews provided insight to the opinions of the supply side of the

industry, and the information informed and aided in the development of the questionnaire used in the quantitative survey.

### **3.3.2.2 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research was used to gather information regarding the demographic variables of the respondents, as well as the factors inhibiting the use of social media. The quantitative research method was of a causal nature. Data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires.

#### **3.3.2.2.1 Development of the questionnaire**

Due to the absence of a suitable questionnaire to capture the relevant and necessary data for the purpose of this study, a new questionnaire, based on the literature review and the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with the marketing managers of tourism organisations was developed. The questionnaire mainly consisted of open-ended, close-ended and likert scale questions. The applicable sections of the questionnaire used for the purpose of this research, focused on capturing data based on the demographic variables, as well as the opinions of respondents concerning the reasons for not participating in social media. Pre-evaluation of the questionnaire by experts in the field took place in order to identify any errors or problems that might arise in answering the questions and analysing the data.

#### **3.3.2.2.2 Sampling method and distribution of the questionnaire**

The aim for this research study was to distribute questionnaires at the O.R. Tambo International Airport since it provides access to both national and international visitors. Due to a lack of a list of tourists to South Africa it was decided to use stratified sampling. Stratified sampling was used due to the difficulty of obtaining population lists with tourists with homogeneous characteristics, and therefore these characteristics could be identified by means of the data obtained through the distribution of the questionnaire. Previous research studies conducted by means of the stratified sampling method included Scholtz (2014) and Thetsane (2010). Stratification was set on two levels: firstly the even distribution between national and

international visitors and secondly the even distribution between arrival and departure halls and O.R. Tambo International Airport.

In 2013, 171 087 tourists travelled to South Africa via the O.R. Tambo International Airport (Statistics South Africa, 2014). As a population increases the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains relatively constant at slightly more than 380 cases (Krejcie & Morgan, 1960:610). Therefore, 450 questionnaires were distributed by fieldworkers in the identified strata. It was expected of respondents to complete the questionnaire by answering the close-ended questions to their own accord. This resulted in 446 questionnaires used for statistical analyses. However, the 446 questionnaires used, also included questionnaires where some of the items were not answered or a small section not completed. In the relevant cases and results this was taken into consideration with regards to the calculation of the results, and therefore some of the data might differ and be less than the total number of 446 questionnaires for the study. Thus, by considering the sample size, the number of questionnaires, and the stratification sampling method, the results of the data prove to be representative.

#### **3.3.2.2.3 Data capturing and statistical data analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaires were captured in Microsoft Excel and processed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 21.0. This program was also used to draw necessary graphs and figures related to the outcome and results of each section of the study. Frequency distribution, exploratory factor analysis, and independent-samples *t*-tests were used to reach the outcome of this study, in order to make accurate and effective conclusions based on the results of the study.

### **3.4 RESULTS**

The results for this research constitute three sections: A description of the demographic profile of the respondents who participated in this research study and respondents' inclination towards the use of social media, the reasons why tourists do not use social media, and the difference in reasons for not participating in social media between international and national visitors in South Africa.

### 3.4.1 Descriptive analysis

The main focus of this section is to provide a descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics, as well as a discussion of the main reasons why tourists do not participate in social media.

#### 3.4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of tourists

Table 3.1 serves as an indication of the demographic characteristics of the survey's respondents.

**Table 3.1: Demographic characteristics of tourists**

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY
<b>Travel Specifics</b>	International	54%	227
	Domestic	46%	191
	Arrivals	36%	155
	Departures	64%	274
<b>Gender</b>	Male	53%	238
	Female	47%	212
<b>Age</b>	<20	3%	12
	21 – 30	25%	110
	31 – 40	25%	113
	41 – 50	22%	98
	51 – 60	16%	71
<b>Level of Education</b>	Matric	24%	108
	Diploma/Degree	39%	173
	Professional	10%	46
	Post-graduate	19%	82
	Other	8%	34
<b>Province</b>	Gauteng	24%	106
	Mpumalanga	3%	12
	North-West	2%	7
	Free-State	2%	9
	Eastern Cape	7%	29
	Western Cape	6%	25
	Northern Cape	3%	14
	KwaZulu-Natal	8%	37

	Limpopo	5%	21
	Outside SA borders	42%	188
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	25%	112
	In a relationship	26%	115
	Married	21%	95
	Married with children	24%	107
	Divorced	3%	15
<b>Participation in Social Media</b>	Yes	56%	253
	No	44%	197

**Source: Author's own compilation**

A descriptive analysis (Table 3.1) of the statistical data indicates that the gender percentage of the respondents participating in this research study appeared to be mostly male with 53% and 47% female. In terms of age distribution, the tourists appeared to be relatively middle-aged with 38% of the visitors between the ages of 41 and 60 and 25% of the visitors between the ages of 31 and 40. The average age of tourists was 54.

Tourists passing through the O.R Tambo International Airport seemed to be very well educated with 24% passing matric and 39% educated with a diploma or a degree. Forty two percent of all these tourists originated from outside South African borders, where 5% originated from the United States of America and 4% from Germany. Fifty eight percent of tourists originated from South Africa, of which 24% resided from the Gauteng Province. A total percentage of 26% tourists were in a relationship, 25% were single and 24% were married with children compared to the 21% tourists who were married without children, which was a fairly even distribution.

Respondents had to indicate whether they currently participate in any form of social media at the time of the survey. Fifty six percent of the respondents reacted positively towards the question, whereas 44% indicated they were currently not participating in any form of social media at the time of the survey.

Thus, from the above it is clear that the respondents for this study were mainly male with an average age of 54, with an almost equal indication of respondents participating in social media, and respondents not participating in social media.

### 3.4.1.2 Reasons for non-participation in social media

Table 3.2 serves as an indication of respondents' specific reasons for not participating in social media.

**Table 3.2: Reasons for non-participation in social media**

I do not use social media because:	Completely disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Completely agree 4	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
I am sceptical about social media and do not use it at all	9%	24%	43%	24%	2.821	.9023
I am curious about social media but have not used it	9%	25%	45%	21%	2.781	.8758
I have tried using social media but am not comfortable with it	13%	27%	35%	25%	2.719	.9860
I find the use of social media somewhat annoying	8%	24%	43%	25%	2.852	.8849
I am unimpressed by social media	10%	32%	35%	23%	2.714	.9392
I find social media too difficult to use	11%	38%	30%	21%	2.612	.9352
I find social media too expensive to use	11%	34%	33%	22%	2.673	.9422
I am not at all interested in social media	9%	30%	39%	22%	2.735	.9064
I do not have the need for the information provided through social media	11%	34%	36%	19%	2.622	.9172
I do not have access to a computer	26%	41%	23%	10%	2.168	.9322
I do not have access to a Smartphone	25%	40%	25%	10%	2.199	.9316
I do not have access to social media sites	24%	44%	21%	11%	2.194	.9299
I do not have access to the Internet	27%	44%	18%	11%	2.117	.9345
I am afraid that someone might steal my identity	17%	32%	34%	17%	2.520	.9685
I am concerned about my privacy being violated when using social media	10%	18%	46%	26%	2.883	.9067
I do not have full control of the content I share	10%	24%	46%	20%	2.760	.8879
I am afraid if I use social media people might exploit my trust	9%	25%	46%	20%	2.776	.8774
I heard of too many people who had bad experiences with social media	11%	22%	43%	24%	2.786	.9309
I am afraid it might destroy my image	14%	28%	39%	19%	2.633	.9542
I am not willing to share any personal information about myself on social media sites	8%	16%	48%	28%	2.974	.8679
I fear that I might interact in dishonest behaviour online	12%	29%	37%	22%	2.694	.9436
I do not trust the opinions or content shared on social media sites	8%	28%	42%	22%	2.770	.8790
It is too time consuming to participate in social media	8%	21%	45%	26%	2.893	.8851
I do not have the technical skills to use social media	16%	35%	30%	19%	2.515	.9792
I find it difficult to keep up with the speed of technological development	11%	36%	33%	20%	2.633	.9269
I do not know how to connect to/on social media sites	17%	37%	27%	19%	2.480	.9946
I am unfamiliar with what the concept of social media entails	15%	40%	28%	17%	2.469	.9522
I am unfamiliar with the different types of social media	16%	36%	31%	17%	2.490	.9527
I have never heard of social media before	26%	36%	23%	15%	2.260	1.0121

I find the content that people share on social media sites suspicious	9%	32%	40%	19%	2.689	.8829
I find the information shared on social media sites difficult to contextualise	11%	33%	35%	21%	2.658	.9285
I do not find the content shared on social media sites trustworthy	7%	27%	49%	17%	2.760	.8219
I find the content shared an overload of information	9%	25%	44%	22%	2.796	.8824
The use of social media affects my productivity	12%	27%	39%	22%	2.714	.9392
People who use social media loses track of the real world	10%	25%	40%	25%	2.806	.9354

**Source: Author's own compilation**

From Table 3.2 it is evident that tourists are not participating in social media for the following reasons:

- Most tourists indicated that they did not participate in social media because they were not willing to share any personal information about themselves (76%);
- Seventy two percent of tourists were concerned that their privacy might be violated if they participated in social media;
- Tourists also found the use of/participation in social media too time consuming (72%).

Privacy and time spent on social media thus play an extremely important role in deterring respondents from partaking in social media.

The following aspects did not play a role in tourists' decision not to participate in the use of social media:

- Accessibility to the Internet (72%), social media sites (68%), a computer (67%) and a Smartphone (65%);
- The fact that they might never have heard of social media before (63%);
- Unfamiliarity with the concept of social media (55%) and the different types of social media (52%);
- The lack of knowledge to connect on/to social media sites (54%); and
- The technical skills needed to participate in social media (51%).

Thus, from the above it is clear that users who were not currently participating in any form of social media did have access to the internet and social media sites, as well as the devices necessary to connect to the internet and social media sites. They



were familiar with the concept and different types of social media and had the technical skills and ability to participate in social media. Therefore they had the means to partake in social media but they were withheld by aspects such as privacy and the time it takes to use social media.

Overall, certain concerns in terms their unwillingness to share any personal information about themselves (76%), in terms of content, privacy and security and the general use of social media prevented them from participating in social media, with the concern that their privacy might be violated when using social media (72%), and the fact that they found the use of social media too time consuming (72%) being the main motivators for not participating in social media. If tourism organisations can prove that their social media site is secure without any risks in terms of the above-mentioned concerns of the tourists, they can motivate the tourists to participate in and use social media to the benefit of both the tourist and the organisation.

### **3.4.2 EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS**

The main focus of this section is to explore the fundamental patterns of the reasons why tourists are not using social media. This was done by means of a factor analysis.

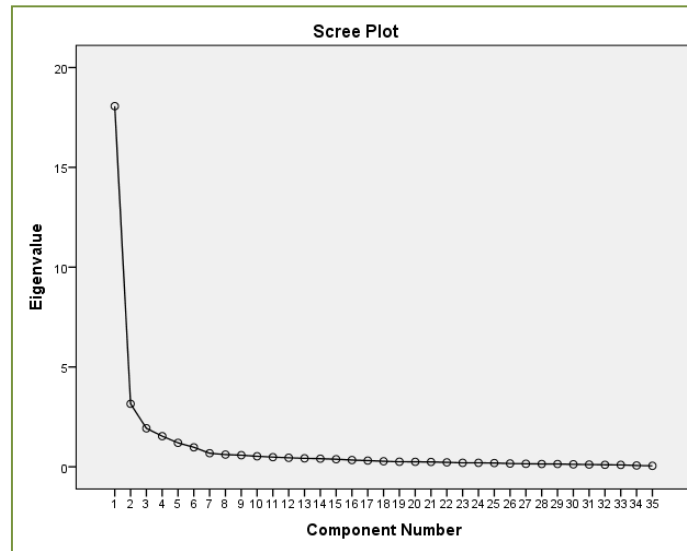
#### **3.4.2.1 Factor Analysis: Reasons for not using social media**

For the purpose of this analysis the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined and used in order to determine the suitability of principal components analysis. This basically refers to a data reduction procedure to determine a correlation matrix for the non-use motivational data of this study. By making use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, one can explore individual and multiple variables, as well as the correlations that exist between the variables. Thus, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure will indicate whether there is a possibility of a relationship between certain variables and if this relationship is relevant enough to proceed with a factor analysis, by means of determining adequate sampling data (Field, 2009:647).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for the data gathered at O.R Tambo International Airport to determine why tourists were not participating in any form of social media was .945. In this case the measure is highly acceptable (Field, 2009:647). The Bartlett test ( $p < .00001$ ) was also found to be significant (Pallant, 2005:172) and therefore the reduction of data by means of the principal component is justifiable. Five factors based on reasons for not using social media exist, after the factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed. The factor correlations revealed small correlations between factors, therefore showing the individuality of the factors. Loadings of 0.45 and higher were used for item inclusion and an eigenvalue of 1 was used as factor extraction criterion as supported by Maree (2007:220). The eigenvalues for these factors ranged from 1.199 to 18.064. The five factors represent 74% of the total variance explained (see Figure 3.1). These factors were labelled according to similar features.

The five factors (See Figure 3.1) for respondents at the O.R. Tambo International Airport were labelled as *Content Challenges* (Factor 1), *Personal Perceptions* (Factor 2), *Technological Competency* (Factor 3), *Accessibility* (Factor 4) and *Privacy Issues* (Factor 5). In order to determine the reliability of the analysed data and to serve as a measure for internal consistency among the identified items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were examined for each factor. For Cronbach Alpha's to be considered acceptable, the value should be above 0.7 (Field, 2009:675). The values for all five factors identified were above 0.9, indicating very high levels of internal consistency and therefore reliability.

Each of the above-mentioned factors was identified from categorised items based on a Likert scale in the questionnaire. The likert scale ranged from completely disagree as 1 to completely agree as 4. This was also used to calculate mean values for each factor in order to determine the level of importance for each factor.



**Figure 3.1:** *Scree Plot for Factors representing the total variance*

Table 3.3 serves as an indication of the factor analysis for reasons for non-participation in social media:

**Table 3.3:** *Factor analysis for reasons for non-participation in social media*

FACTOR LABEL	FACTOR 1: Content Challenges	FACTOR 2: Personal Perceptions	FACTOR 3: Technological Competency	FACTOR 4: Accessibility	FACTOR 5: Privacy Issues
Too time consuming	.760				
Do not find the content shared trustworthy	.743				
Do not trust opinions or content shared	.726				
Find the content shared an overload of information	.713				
The use of social media affects productivity	.672				
Find content shared suspicious	.660				
Find the information shared difficult to contextualise	.616				
People using social media lose track of the real world	.609				
Fear of interacting in dishonest behaviour	.606				
Not willing to share personal information	.424				
Unimpressed by social media		.811			
Not interested in social media		.733			
Find social media annoying		.717			
Find social media too difficult to use		.684			

Do not need information provided through social media		.672			
Uncomfortable with using social media		.669			
Find social media too expensive to use		.643			
Sceptical about social media		.605			
Unfamiliar with different types of social media			.836		
Unfamiliar with the concept of social media			.832		
Do not know how to connect to/on social media sites			.794		
Have never heard of social media before			.755		
Do not have the technical skills			.622		
Find it difficult to keep up with technological development			.568		
Curious about social media, but have not used it			.509		
Do not have access the internet				.880	
Do not have access to a smartphone				.857	
Do not have access to social media sites				.852	
Do not have access to a computer				.839	
Concerned about violation of privacy					.752
Do not have full control over content shared					.695
Have heard of too many bad experiences					.666
Afraid of exploitation of trust					.603
Afraid of image being destroyed					.545
Afraid of identity theft					.503
Cronbach's Alpha	.939	.927	.942	.950	.922
Mean Values and Standard Deviation	2.78 ( $\pm 0.72$ )	2.72 ( $\pm 0.75$ )	2.52 ( $\pm 0.82$ )	2.17 ( $\pm 0.87$ )	2.73 ( $\pm 0.78$ )
Inter-item Correlation Mean	.609	.613	.697	.825	.665

With regard to factor 1, ten items were categorised based on similarities, as indicated by the statistics of the analysed data and labelled *Content Challenges*. These items included their willingness to share information, fear of interacting in dishonest behaviour, distrust in the opinions and content shared on social media sites, time consumption when interacting on social media sites, and so on. It is clear

that tourists who are not engaging in social media generally do not have enough confidence in the content shared on social media sites to be trustworthy and/or truthful. It is of utmost importance that tourism organisations realise the necessity to help tourists understand how they can benefit from information shared on social media sites in order to best satisfy their needs through an online medium such as social media.

The second factor, labelled as *Personal Perceptions*, consisted of eight items. They included being sceptical about social media, being uncomfortable with using social media, finding the use of social media somewhat annoying, and being unimpressed with social media for example. Eight items were labelled *Personal Perceptions* (Factor 2). This indicated that the perception that social media is too difficult and costly to use already exist. Tourists were cognitively aware of what they perceive to understand from the use of social media, even though they were not participating in any form of social media at the time. Thus, tourism organisations should ensure that these cognitive experiences are positively influenced by motivating them to actively engage in social media. Thus, organisations can for example use easy applications to overcome and change the current existing perceptions tourists' inherently rely on to make the decision to participate in social media.

In the case of this study, curiosity about the use of social media, no technical skills, difficulty in keeping up with technological development, not knowing how to connect to/on social media sites, and so on, forms factor 3 (*Technological Competency*) for this study. Tourism organisations should recognise that some tourists might not be technologically competent or just not interested in technology, and identify and promote user-friendly social media sites to use for marketing purposes. This might also have a positive effect on their personal (cognitive) perceptions of the use of social media (as explained in Factor 2). Therefore, the vast development of technology might continuously influence non-users to refrain from participating in social media, should organisations not realise the importance of keeping abreast with the ever-changing technological environment in order to utilise this information and knowledge to change the negative perceptions of these non-users.

The fourth factor, labelled *Accessibility* (Factor 4), consisted of four items that include not having access to a computer, a smartphone, social media sites or the Internet. It is important to understand that social media is an online activity, and if the tourist does not have access to these components of online activity (computer and/or smartphone, the Internet and social media sites) it makes no sense to engage in social media for the marketing purposes of the tourism organisation. However, from the descriptive analysis it was clear that tourists do in fact have access to social media.

The last factor that was identified was categorised as *Privacy Issues* (Factor 5). This factor constitutes of six items based on the fear of identity theft, violation of privacy and not having full control over the content shared. These items entrust an emotional response that will discourage tourists to participate in social media. This will also have a negative influence on their personal perceptions (factor 2) based on the use of social media. Seeing that trust serves to be a difficult aspect to influence and change, this might prove to be the biggest challenge for tourism organisations compared to the other factors identified.

Table 3.3 indicates that Factor 1 (*Content Challenges*) delivered the highest mean-value: 2.78. Thus, of all the factors respondents considered the content of social media sites as the main reason for not using these sites. This is of critical importance since the 'free flow' of information on social media sites (considered to be one of the biggest advantages) is the main reason for non-participation. Respondents are concerned about the amount of information and the type of information, which require tourism organisations to plan the messages, posts and so on carefully, seeing that this may result in indirectly creating a certain level of distrust with the tourists in terms of the content shared on social media sites.

Factor 4 (*Accessibility*) delivered the lowest mean-value (2.17), indicating that not having access to a device that enables the use of social media sites or the Internet are the least important reason why tourists will not participate in any form of social media. Respondents have access, which creates opportunities, but are withheld by content, privacy and timing issues.

### 3.4.2.2 The influence of type of visitor on non-participation social media factors

Given the developing status of South Africa as a country it was part of the aim of this section to compare the influence of the type of visitor (international versus national tourists) on the reasons for not participating in social media as this information might influence domestic and international marketing strategies. This has not been analysed in any research before. An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the differences in the reasons for not participating in social media between International and National visitors to South Africa.

**Table 3.4:** *Results of the independent-samples t-test for International and National visitors to South Africa*

FACTOR	INTERNATIONAL/ NATIONAL	NUMBER (n)	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	T =
<b>Content Challenges</b>	International	82	2.74	.72	-.595
	National	106	2.80	.73	
<b>Personal Perceptions</b>	International	82	2.69	.74	-.507
	National	106	2.74	.78	
<b>Technological Competency</b>	International	82	2.54	.78	.153
	National	106	2.52	.87	
<b>Accessibility</b>	International	82	2.23	.81	1.03 6
	National	106	2.10	.92	
<b>Trust &amp; Violation of Privacy Issues</b>	International	82	2.68	.76	-.669
	National	106	2.76	.81	

From Table 3.4 it is evident that there was no statistically significant difference in scores for any of the factors indicated as reasons for not participating in social media by International and National tourists on the O.R Tambo International Airport. Thus, both International and National tourists to South Africa refrain from using social media for the same reasons. The non-use factors of social media can thus be considered as universal and all products and destinations should take note of these.

## 3.5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS

Due to the novelty of this study in a tourism environment and the lack of previous research conducted on non-participation in social media in general and in the

tourism industry, a variety of sources were consulted in order to determine reasons/possibilities/factors for non-participation in social media. The results revealed a number of significant findings, some of which indicate similarities with previous research, and others proving to be novel and unique from this research study. The results of the research study boast certain implications for tourism organisations in South Africa considering using social media as part of their marketing strategies. The demographic characteristics, as well as the factors identified by the factor analysis and the results of the independent-samples *t*-test have different implications for tourism organisations in implementing social media as an effective and successful marketing tool.

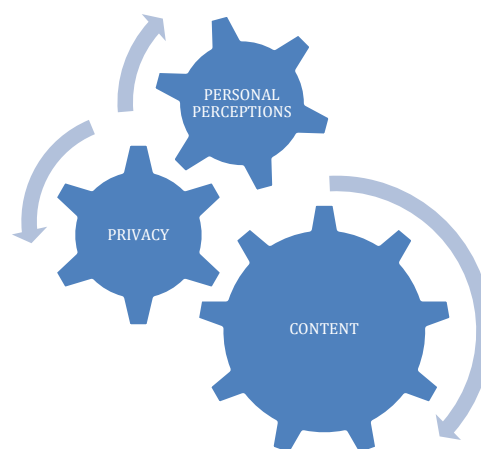
Firstly, the most significant finding of this study prove to be the fact that previous research (Parra- López *et al.*, 2011), indicated that difficulty of accessibility and use act as a determining factor for non-participation in social media. This was also one of the concerns that resulted from the semi-structured interviews held with the marketing managers of selected tourism organisations' in the exploratory phase of this research. However, from the results of the factor analysis it was clear that respondents' do in fact have access to social media sites, and they consider themselves competent, with the necessary technological skills, to interact on and use social media. This implies that tourism organisations have the opportunity to optimally develop social media as marketing strategy, without having concerns in terms of tourists' competency to use social media.

Secondly, the deciding factors that do inhibit the use of social media were clearly *Content*, *Privacy Issues*, and *Personal Perceptions*. Content is considered as the main reason for not using social media sites. This is of critical importance since the 'free flow' of information on social media sites (considered to be one of the biggest advantages) are the main reason for non-participation. Respondents are concerned about the amount and the type of information distributed through social media. It is thus critical for tourism organisations to plan the messages, posts and communication with the tourists carefully. Tourism organisations should consider creating awareness around the effectiveness of their social media site as part of their overall marketing efforts/campaign. Current users of the site or even a celebrity can testify to the ease of accessibility, the safe online environment and usefulness of the



site in facilitating travel decisions (for example ease of bookings, gathering of information and the major benefit of real-time interaction with the tourism organisation).

Thirdly, it was surprising that the independent-samples *t*-test revealed no significant differences between the reasons for not participating in social media for international and national tourists. This highlights the universal value of social media for different markets. In all circumstances users of social media consider content challenges, privacy issues, and personal preferences important in their use of social media and therefore tourism organisations are advised to not invest time in the development of a diversified marketing strategy if using this medium for marketing purposes. This has a direct impact on reduction of marketing costs but provides opportunities to gain a bigger part of the global market share, which can have an immense impact on the profit, sustainability and long-term success of the tourism organisation.



Fourthly, it is imperative for tourism organisations to realise that there is still a significant part of the market that does not use social media to its full extent based on the factors of non-participation. However tourism organisations that achieve a balance in effective content, privacy issues and users perceptions will convert traditional media users into social media users which will benefit both the user and the tourism organisation. To obtain a balance in effective content, tourism organisations' marketing managers should determine the type of information tourists gather from the social media site, and provide only this type of information to avoid

information clutter on the social media site. This will require a dedicated social media marketer that will allow for real-time interaction with the tourists. This is however currently the biggest benefit and challenge of social media sites where an online community is thus created.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was twofold: to determine the factors inhibiting the use of social media tourists to South Africa, as well as to determine whether a significant differences existed between the factors inhibiting the use of social media and the type of visitor. The survey conducted at O.R. Tambo International Airport amongst national and international visitors revealed significant results. The factors delivering the highest mean value included Content Challenges, Privacy Issues, and Personal Perceptions. A factor analysis of the reasons for non-participation revealed that five factors exist which leads to non-participation in social media. The factors include Content Challenges, Personal Perceptions, Technological Competency, Accessibility, Privacy Issues. These results confirmed aspects identified in previous studies and research, however in previous research and the semi-structured interviews it was found that accessibility is one of the main factors inhibiting the use of social media. Novel to this research is the finding that accessibility is not considered to be an inhibiting factor in the use of social media but that the industry considers this to be the case. This industry is missing valuable opportunities to build long-term relationships with their tourists and interact with them through social media. It was also clear that the type of visitor (International or National visitor) did not influence their reasons for not using social media. The research results indicated that tourism organisations should focus on positively influencing the view of the tourists in terms of the content shared to be safe, as well as ensuring that they do not fear that their trust and privacy are violated. This should be a continuous effort when developing marketing communication strategies when the aim is to attract and engage the non-participative tourists on their social media sites. This can result in new research opportunities for tourism organisations in the quest for increasing their market share and gaining a competitive advantage through social media marketing.

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# CHAPTER 4

## THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM PURPOSES

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### **ABSTRACT**

Traditionally, businesses have focused their marketing activities and goals on production and sales. However, the tremendous growth in technology has led to organisations realising the power and potential of online marketing in building long-term relationships with customers. Social media refers to an online platform where users can interact with one another, by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content through different channels and/or applications. In essence, social media allows its users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users. It holds several benefits for its users, be it organisations or customers. It is imperative for tourism organisations to understand social media, the different ways it can be utilised, and the benefits it holds for the organisation and its consumers in terms of travel and tourism. It has been found that there is a profound lack of research in the South African tourism industry with regard to the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. The purpose of this article is twofold: firstly to determine how and why tourists use social media for travel and tourism purposes, and secondly to determine whether there is a correlation between the tourists attitudes towards the use of social media and the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. Research was conducted by fieldworkers at the O.R. Tambo International Airport, situated in Johannesburg, by means of questionnaires. The results indicated three factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes: information gathering, interaction and communication and content sharing. Novel to this study, it was clear that significant correlations exist between the attitudes of tourists towards the use of social media and the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. Tourism organisations should understand that tourists' willingness to interact on

social media sites have a direct influence on their level of interaction and communication, and content sharing. These organisations should also acknowledge that tourists' level of competency regarding the use of social media will influence the type of content shared on social media sites. Therefore, it is imperative for tourism organisations to understand that the findings of this study will assist them to develop their social media marketing strategies; that will ultimately lead to repeat-visits, a deeper level of trust between the organisation and the tourist, as well as more referrals and better reviews of the tourism organisation by the tourists. Thus, sound long-term relationships between the organisation and a more loyal customer will be the end-result of the social media marketing strategies.

**Key words:** social media, marketing, South Africa, tourism, travel, use of social media, attitudes

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The fundamental goal of any organisation should be customer satisfaction (Longenecker *et al.*, 2006:128). By doing this, the organisation will ultimately reach long-term success. According to Hau and Ngo (2012:222) long-term success is based on five imperative elements, that include sales growth, market share, profits, return on investment and customer retention (Hau & Ngo, 2012:222). The only way organisations can focus on customer satisfaction as a long-term goal to be successful, is by building a long-term relationship with their customers. Therefore, the focus of marketing strategies on marketing activities and goals that has taken a progressive shift to the consumer, that plays an imperative role in the success of businesses (Longenecker *et al.*, 2006:128; Lamb *et al.*, 2011:14; Iglesias, Sauquet & Montaña, 2011:632; Duncan & Moriarity, 1998:3).

Recently, it has become evident that economies are extremely competitive in comparison to earlier times. This leads to the increasingly important role of technology in people's everyday lives. Technology does not only change individuals' lives, but also their way of doing business. The distribution and utilisation of technology has the potential to facilitate the lives of people and to extend their reach (Badawy, 2009:220). As a result of the profound development of technology and innovation, the Internet has become the tool that revolutionised the world. The

Internet advanced global connections and competition to an exceptional level which no one expected (Badawy, 2009:220).

The Internet offers various interactive features which have become a vital aspect in society. Social media is but one of these interactive features on the internet and proves to be extremely popular. The popularity of social media is the direct result of the fact that two thirds of the world's internet populace visit social media sites. This proliferation of social media and the use of the internet brought along an immense change to the media landscape as it has been known (Badawy, 2009:220; Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1).

Kirtiř and Karahan (2011:260) state that social media can be considered the most powerful tool to help businesses execute their current marketing strategies. It represents a universal source of information, changed the tools and strategies organisations use to communicate with their consumers, lowers the cost of executing organisations' marketing strategies and enables the consumer to control the flow of information to a certain extent (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260).

This is also true for tourism businesses. Throughout history, the tourism industry has proved itself to be at the forefront of embracing innovativeness (Hjalager, 2010:1; Buhalis & Law, 2008:609). Tourism can be considered one of the most important elements of online commerce that has profoundly impacted the structure of the online commerce industry. This might be a direct result of the fact that one third of all leisure travellers in the United Kingdom chose their hotels through the recommendations and reviews on social media sites (Milano *et al.*, 2011:2; Leung *et al.*, 2013:4). The adoption and integration of social media in marketing strategies are crucial for organisations in the tourism industry who are increasingly valuing the opinions, reviews and referrals of their tourists. This will lead to more reliable and trustworthy information sources than the suppliers themselves (Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:2). However, due to the lack of research regarding the application and success of social media in the tourism industry, there are still a number of tourism organisations around the world who are still not fully employing social media as marketing strategy and making mistakes along the way.

Thus, before tourism organisations and destinations even consider implementing social media as an effective and successful marketing strategy, it is of utmost importance for these organisations to understand and comprehend the concept, as well as the importance of social media and the ways in which it can benefit both the organisation and its consumer.

## **4.2 MARKETING AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

As time progresses, marketing no longer takes place in a controlled communication environment with predetermined distinct corporate spokespeople. It has evolved into a circumstance where true participatory conversations are taking place between multiple unappointed authors. These authors include customers, competitors, observers, employees and various interested members (Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182). Organisations are constantly looking for alternative ways to market their products and services through the elimination of traditional advertising media. The most exciting and invigorating alternative is most probably social media (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378).

Recently, social media has become an increasingly popular research area. This leads to different descriptions and definitions for the concept of social media. Before one can comprehend the impact of social media on society and in the business world, it is imperative to understand the concept of social media. An analysis of some of the most recent descriptions/definitions of social media revealed that it constitutes similarities in terms of the different components of these terms. The similarities mainly include the fact that social media offers various forms of interaction possibilities for users, the content shared on social media sites are mainly user-generated and users can create and exchange information (Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:262; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1).

Thus, for the purpose of this research, social media is defined as the online platform where users can interact with one another, by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content through different channels and/or applications. In essence, social

media allows its users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users. This is in most cases considered to be trustworthy but it is also difficult to control these messages.

Social media has multiple uses and can therefore be used to accomplish a variety of personal, individual and organisational goals. Currently organisations, such as tourism organisations, are considering more innovative and cost-effective methods to market their products and/or services. These organisations are paying a substantial amount of attention to social media as it is currently regarded one of the most effective ways to reach consumers. This leads to organisations tending to devote more resources to social media (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:264; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:2).

#### **4.2.1 Social media as useful marketing tool**

Social media and its different forms boast numerous opportunities for organisations and its users. As soon as organisations and individuals comprehend what social media entails, it is imperative to know and understand these different forms (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:91; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:255; LaRoche *et al.*, 2012:2).

Examples of the different forms of social media include email (Gmail, MobileMe), social networking sites/online communities (Facebook, MySpace, RenRen, TripAdvisor, Bebo, LinkedIn), social news sites (Digg, Reddit, NewsVine, BallHype), social bookmarking (Delicious; Magnolia; Diigo), social sharing which includes video sharing/content communities and photo sharing (YouTube; Flickr!; Instagram), social events (Eventful; Meetup; Upcoming), blogs & micro-blogs (Twitter; eBlogger), forums and message boards/discussion groups (WeForum; World Tourism Forum; Google Groups), instant messaging (Digsby; Adium; Facebook Chat; Whatsapp), text messaging (mobile messaging) and collaborative projects (Wiki's)/knowledge sharing sites /co-creation (Wikipedia; WikiTravel; NIKEiD) (Evans, 2010:16; Anon, 2013:5; Anon, 2013:108; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011: 255; LaRoche *et al.*, 2012:2; Curtis *et al.*, 2010:91; Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640; Kim & Ko, 2012:1481; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:44).

Over the past few years, researchers have attempted to answer the question: “Why do organisations and tourists use social media?”. The difficulty to address this question resides from the fact that social media offers so many opportunities for organisations as well as their consumers (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Laroche *et al.*, 2012:1). The apportionment of social media usage indicates that consumers commit almost one third of their total time throughout the day to the consumption of social media.

In an online report published by Nick Johnson (2013), he stated that more than 39% of organisations believed that Facebook was the best social network for marketing purposes. This was followed by Twitter (28%), LinkedIn (20%) and YouTube (10%). He also found that only 17% of organisations using social media for marketing purposes were satisfied with the extent to which they were utilising social media as marketing tool.

In this same report, Johnson (2013) found that there were both positive and negative sides to the growing popularity and usefulness of social media. The positive aspects of social media growth included:

- Seventy two percent of executives believe that social media had impacted their internal organisation, and it could no longer only be an “addition” to their normal way of doing business;
- Social media had a profoundly deep impact on customer service, customer insights, employee engagement and product development;
- Social media would impact on a number of customer departments over the next few years; and
- Eighty three percent of organisations believed that they were not utilising social media to its full potential.

On the flip side there are also a number of negative aspects that should be considered in social media growth. The number of employees devoted to managing social media sites are decreasing, the social media marketing efforts of organisations are not reaching the higher end of the organisation (thus, it is not reported to the head of marketing), more focus is placed on executing efforts in



social media marketing and less focus is placed on developing a proper social media marketing strategy, the budget allocated to social media marketing efforts are not increasing, the progress in terms of measuring social media impact is inadequate, and only half of all corporate boards are buying into social media (Johnson, 2013). The value of social media is thus recognised but with that the reservations to utilise this medium as well.

#### **4.2.2 Understanding the importance of social media**

Social media serves as a great opportunity for organisations to pursue viral marketing, thus ensuring that it is an extraordinarily good marketing tool for organisations (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263). Social media holds the following benefits for organisations as marketing tool:

- The possibility to streamline management functions, edify the consumers about specific programmes and services, and communicating with the members of the organisation's constituency (Briones *et al.*, 2011:38);
- Social media enables organisations to interact with consumers whilst transforming according to new technology, and integrating these technologies and interactivity with consumers in their everyday operations (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1);
- Social media has the potential to help organisations reinvent their communication strategies for reaching their consumers, by allowing online communication through lowering the barriers of face-to-face interaction (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield & Fiore, 2012:15);
- Social media applications serve to be a convenient method to instantly broadcast specific marketing messages to a large group of people (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:255);
- It helps organisations to fulfil their marketing strategies at a distinctively lower cost, it has advantages in terms of time, audience and relations (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:260);
- Social media ensures high attention and participation by consumers and this implicates the maximisation of brand exposure for the organisation (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263);

- Organisations ultimately use social media to escalate their connections with consumers to grow their audience, to encourage continuous interaction with the organisation's brand and to pursue the increase of purchase desires to persuade engagement with the site content and usefulness (Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:263);
- The use of social media is critical for organisations and specifically used to communicate with suppliers and consumers, to build relationships and trust between the organisation and the consumers and to identify possible partners (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153);
- Social media is used to categorise relationships, connect with others and act as a recommendation system for specific activities (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1);
- It enables websites to develop from an undeviating page into a dynamic platform which empowers users to generate content and share their experiences (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1); and
- Social media enables organisations and their customers to stay closely connected in a way that has never before been possible (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:440).

The above articulates some of the reasons why organisations use social media and the potential of social media is evident. However, as social media develops and emerges into more forms, it is imperative for organisations to understand the benefits of the different ways in which they can use social media tools and how these tools relate to their environment. Currently, organisations are considering more innovative and cost effective methods to market their products and/or services. Thus, they are paying a substantial amount of attention to social media and therefore, organisations tend to devote more resources to social media (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:264; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:2; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:43). However, one can pose the question: Is this the case in South Africa?

#### **4.2.3 Social media in the South African context**

World Wide Worx published a report (South African Social Media Landscape 2014) which explained the social media landscape in South Africa. Table 4.1 indicates the most prominent social media in South Africa:

**Table 4.1: The most prominent social media in South Africa**

<b>Social Media</b>	<b>Number of Registered Users</b>	<b>Number of Active Users</b>	<b>Penetration of Population</b>	<b>Largest Age Group</b>	<b>Average time on site spend per day</b>
Facebook	6 190 000	9 400 000	9.86%	18-24	21 minutes
Mxit	6 500 000	7 400 000	12%	18-25	85 minutes
Twitter	5 500 000	5 500 000	2%	<i>Not determined</i>	18 minutes
YouTube	4 700 000	<i>Not determined</i>	10.7%	18-34	<i>Not determined</i>
LinkedIn	2 700 000	600 000	4.1%	18-54	<i>Not determined</i>
Pinterest	930 000	150 000	0.3%	<i>Not determined</i>	14 minutes
Foursquare	175 000	<i>Not determined</i>	0.3%	<i>Not determined</i>	<i>Not determined</i>

Source: Cant & Van Heerden (2013:452)

When one considers Table 4.1, it is clear that social media also holds opportunities for South African organisations to use social media as marketing tool. The above table also serves as an indication that the different types of social media used, with its defined age group, might offer different benefits to both the organisation and the consumer. The most popular social media sites in South Africa are Mxit, Facebook, and YouTube with the largest age group using these sites are between the age of 18 and 34 years. It is also evident that Facebook penetrates 9,86% of the population between the age of 18 to 24, whereas Youtube penetrates 10,7% of the population between the age of 18-34. Therefore, organisations should realise the opportunities that are created by the use of social media, more specifically Facebook and YouTube, for online marketing in South Africa (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:452).

It is of utmost importance that organisations should have very specific objectives and strategies if and when they plan to implement social media as marketing tool. The three most important objectives organisations should focus on for the use of social

media as marketing tool include brand awareness, brand engagement and word-of-mouth (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:46).

#### **4.2.4 The role of social media in the tourism industry**

Social media is currently considered a mega trend in the tourism industry with a significant impact. Social media serves to be unique in that it facilitates direct communication between the organisation and its target group (tourists), without having to acknowledge distance and time (Badawy, 2009:220; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378). The different types of social media enable marketers to allow virtual catalogues and at the same time obtain immediate customer feedback (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378).

The fact that there is a lack of direct experience with a tourism product in the industry has been an important issue for a long period of time. This refers to the fact that the quality and perceived benefits cannot be evaluated before the tourist has consumed the product. Social media creates a platform to bridge this gap to a certain extent (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:100).

Tourists have adopted the use of social media to search, organise, share and elucidate their stories and experiences through different social media platforms in a way where they can collaborate with one another, irrespective time and location (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:254; Scott, 2010:38; Dunay *et al.*, 2011:9; Hsu, 2012:3). Due to the development of social media platforms for various tourism purposes, tourists have shown the tendency to increasingly book hotels for their travel arrangements via the internet. This implies a different level of competition amongst organisations in terms of developing new business models and marketing strategies. It is of utmost importance that marketers of tourism organisations understand how tourists use the internet/social media before, during and after vacation trips to acquire information about their trips, to share their experiences and to compare the variety of services related to their trip (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Miguens *et al.*, 2008:3; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640; Litvin *et al.*, 2008:458).

According to Leung *et al.* (2013:4) social media has the ability to assist tourism organisations in reaching their goals to engage potential visitors, understand and

respond to tourists' preferences by analysing their comments on online communities and increase the online presence in order to reach greater online revenue (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4).

Buhalis and Law (2008:609) state that social media dramatically influences tourists' behaviour seeing that it enables both the tourist and the organisation (destination) to engage directly with one another (SanMartin & Herrero, 2012:241; Miguens *et al.* 2008:2). It is clear that social media holds several benefits, not only for organisations, but also for its users. Social media has grown significantly, offering a vast social network that offers numerous opportunities and alternatives for traditional marketing efforts. Organisations and its customers should realise the potential of social media to satisfy their needs and help them reach their goals, in order to fully utilise social media and the benefits it offers.

It is thus clear that the use of social media as marketing tool can have an immense impact on the success and competitive advantage of organisations, and more specifically organisations in the service sector, such as tourism organisations. However, the most important factors to focus on to encourage the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes amongst the tourists have not been determined to this point.

The purpose of this research study is to identify the factors that influence the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as to determine whether certain attitudes towards the use of social media have an impact on the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.

### **4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is twofold, firstly an in-depth literature review was conducted and secondly the empirical research applied mixed methodology.

#### **4.3.1 Literature review**

During this study, resources such as books, articles, annual reports, journals, theses, textbooks and other topic-related literature was used to gather adequate information.

Due to the novelty of this research field, the World Wide Web also served as an important source of information. Search-engines that were used included Google Scholar and international and national databases such as Science Direct, SAePublications and Emerald. From the literature review, it was found that little to no research has been conducted on the use of social media in the South African tourism industry.

Thus, the literature review was considered as the starting point for this study. The thorough literature analyses set the path for the practical execution of the empirical research, especially in identifying the important aspects to be included in the development of the questionnaire. It also assisted in the analysis and interpretation of the data of the empirical survey.

#### **4.3.2 Empirical research: Mixed methodology**

Due to the novelty of this research in the tourism industry it was decided to apply a mixed methodology approach namely qualitative and quantitative research.

##### **4.3.2.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research was conducted to determine the perceptions of tourism marketing managers in the use of social media and their opinions on the effectiveness, how the use of social media influences the success of the implemented marketing strategies, as well as the factors inhibiting the use of social media. The qualitative research was exploratory in nature and entailed semi-structured interviews. These interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions where the respondents had the opportunity to answer the questions based on their own opinions, expectations and experiences. The results of the semi-structured interviews provided insight to the opinions of the supply side of the industry, and the information informed and aided in the development of the questionnaire.

#### **4.3.2.2 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research was used to gather information regarding the demographic variables of the respondents, the factors influencing the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as the determining the attitudes towards the use of social media that has an impact on the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. The quantitative research method was of a causal nature. Data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires.

##### **4.3.2.2.1 Development of the questionnaire**

Due to the absence of a suitable questionnaire to capture the relevant and necessary data for the purpose of this study, a new questionnaire, based on the literature review and the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with the marketing managers of tourism organisations was developed. The questionnaire mainly consisted of open-ended, closed and likert scale questions. The applicable sections of the questionnaire used for the purpose of this article, focused on capturing data based on the demographic variables, as well as the opinions of respondents concerning the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. Pre-evaluation of the questionnaire by experts in the field took place in order to identify any errors or problems that might arise in answering the questions and analysing the data.

##### **4.3.2.2.2 Sampling method and distribution of the questionnaire**

The aim for this research study was to distribute questionnaires at the O.R. Tambo International Airport since it provides access to both national and international visitors. Due to a lack of a list of tourists to South Africa it was decided to use stratified sampling. Stratified sampling was used due to the difficulty of obtaining population lists with tourists with homogeneous characteristics, and therefore these characteristics could be identified by means of the data obtained through the distribution of the questionnaire. Previous research studies conducted by means of the stratified sampling method included Scholtz (2014) and Thetsane (2010). Stratification was set on two levels: firstly the even distribution between national and international visitors and secondly the even distribution between arrival and departure halls at O.R. Tambo International Airport.

In 2013, 171 087 tourists travelled to South Africa via the O.R. Tambo International Airport (Statistics South Africa, 2014). As a population increases the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains relatively constant at slightly more than 380 cases (Krejcie & Morgan, 1960:610). Therefore 450 questionnaires were distributed by fieldworkers in the identified strata. It was expected of respondents to complete the questionnaire by answering the close-ended questions to their own accord. This resulted in 446 questionnaires used for statistical analyses. However, the 446 questionnaires used, also included questionnaires where some of the items were not answered or a small section not completed. In the relevant cases and results this were taken into consideration with regards to the calculation of the results, and therefore some of the data might differ and less than the total number of 446 questionnaires for the study. Thus, by considering the sample size, the number of questionnaires, and the stratification sampling method, the results of the data prove to be representative.

#### **4.3.2.3 Data capturing and statistical data analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaires were captured in Microsoft Excel and processed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 21.0. This program was also used to draw necessary graphs and figures related to the outcome and results of each section of the study. Frequency distribution, exploratory factor analysis, and correlations were used to reach the outcome of this study, in order to make accurate and effective conclusions based on the results of the study.

#### **4.4 RESULTS**

The results of this study will constitute of three sections: A description of the demographic profile of the tourists who participated in this research study, (concluding their travel behaviour and the type of social media sites they participate in), a factor analysis of the reasons for participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes and correlations between the travel behaviour of tourists and the participation in social media for travel and tourism purposes.



#### 4.4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The main focus of this section is to provide a descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics, as well as a discussion of the travel behaviour and the respondents' use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.

##### 4.4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of tourists

Table 4.2 serves as an indication of the demographic characteristics of both international and national respondents:

**Table 4.2: Demographic characteristics of tourists**

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY
<b>Travel Specifics</b>	International	54%	227
	Domestic	46%	191
<b>Gender</b>	Male	53%	238
	Female	47%	212
<b>Age</b>	<20	3%	12
	21 – 30	25%	110
	31 – 40	25%	113
	41 – 50	22%	98
	51 – 60	16%	71
<b>Level of Education</b>	Matric	24%	108
	Diploma/Degree	39%	173
	Professional	10%	46
	Post-graduate	19%	82
	Other	8%	34
<b>Province</b>	Gauteng	24%	106
	Mpumalanga	3%	12
	North-West	2%	7
	Free-State	2%	9
	Eastern Cape	7%	29
	Western Cape	6%	25
	Northern Cape	3%	14
	KwaZulu-Natal	8%	37
	Limpopo	5%	21
	Outside SA borders	42%	188

<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	25%	112
	In a relationship	26%	115
	Married	21%	95
	Married with children	24%	107
	Divorced	3%	15
<b>Participation in social media</b>	Yes	56%	253
	No	44%	197

A descriptive analysis (Table 4.2) of the statistical data indicates that the gender percentage of the respondents participating in this research study appeared to be mostly male with 53% and 47% female. In terms of age distribution, the tourists appeared to be relatively middle-aged with 38% of the visitors between the ages of 41 and 60 and 25% of the visitors between the ages of 31 and 40. The average age of tourists was 54.

Tourists passing through O.R Tambo International Airport seemed to be very well educated with 24% passing matric and 39% educated with a diploma or a degree. Forty-two percent (42%) of all these tourists originated from outside South African borders, where 5% originated from the United States of America and 4% from Germany. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of tourists originated from South Africa, of which 24% resided from the Gauteng Province. A total percentage of 26% tourists were in a relationship, 25% were single and 24% were married with children compared to the 21% tourists who were married without children.

Respondents had to indicate whether they currently participate in any form of social media. Fifty six percent (56%) of the respondents reacted positively towards the question, whereas 44% indicated they were not participating in any form of social media at the time.

#### **4.4.1.2 Travel behaviour**

Table 4.3 serves as an indication of the travel behaviour of both international and national tourists at the O.R. Tambo International Airport:

**Table 4.3:**            *Travel behaviour of tourists*

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
<b>Weekends per year</b>	0	7%	32
	1-5	54%	251
	6-10	24%	101
	>10	15%	56
<b>Holidays per year</b>	0	0%	0
	1-2	63%	277
	3-4	29%	130
	5	8%	37
	>5	0%	0
<b>Average nights stayed</b>	0	7%	31
	1-5	44%	190
	6-10	24%	108
	>10	26%	107

From Table 4.3 it is clear that 54% of tourists travelled between 1-5 weekends a year and 24% travelled 6-10 weekends a year. When analysing the total number of vacations a year, other than travelling on weekends, it was indicated that 63% of respondents travelled 1-2 times a year and 29% of respondents travelled 3-4 times a year.

The average length of holidays indicated that 44% of respondents stayed 1-5 nights, whereas 24% stayed an average of 6-10 nights and a total of 26% stayed more than 10 nights. Thus from the above it is clear that respondents participating in social media are frequent travellers, spending at least 1-5 nights at the tourism destination/product.

#### **4.4.1.3 Usage of social media sites**

Table 4.4 indicates the types of social media sites tourists are currently participating in, as well as the site respondents spend most time on per week:

**Table 4.4:**            *Usage of Social media sites*

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA SITE</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATING</b>	<b>% OF REPSONDENTS INDICATING MOST TIME SPENT ON SITE PER WEEK</b>	<b>% RESPONDENTS INDICATING SITES USED FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM PURPOSES</b>
Facebook	49%	31%	54%
Twitter	22%	6%	15%
MySpace	2%	0%	3%
YouTube	23%	5%	15%
LinkedIn	18%	2%	7%
Flickr	2%	0%	2%
Blogging	3%	0%	11%
TripAdvisor	8%	0%	32%
Instagram	14%	4%	9%
Pinterest	6%	0%	3%
Email	50%	27%	64%
Other	16%	13%	17%

Table 4.4 indicates the different social media sites that tourists participated in at the time. It is clear that Email (50%) and Facebook (49%) were relatively evenly popular, with YouTube (23%) and Twitter (22%) following their popularity at a distance. Although Email seem to be the most popular social media used by tourists (see Table 4.6), it is evident that the tourists spent most of their time per week on Facebook (31%) and a little less time on emails (27%). Tourists spent substantially less time in a week on Twitter (6%) and YouTube (5%).

According to Table 4.4, 64% of all tourists used email as their main social media medium for tourism and travel purposes but they also made use of Facebook (54%) and TripAdvisor (32%) when planning to travel. Seventeen percent (17%) of tourists indicated that they used other forms of social media which was not listed. Tourists use the social media listed above for various tourism and travel purposes. These purposes are listed below in section 4.2.7.

Table 4.5 indicates the average amount of time spent on social media sites per week:

**Table 4.5:** *Average amount of time spent on social media sites per week*

<b>0 - 1 Hour</b>	21%
<b>2 - 3 Hours</b>	32%
<b>4 - 5 Hours</b>	23%
<b>More than 5 Hours</b>	25%

It is clear that most tourists participating in this research study spent between 2 and 3 hours per week on social media sites (32%). However, this number does not seem that significant due to a very small difference between the 32% and the 25% of tourists who spent more than 5 hours a week on social media and 23% spending between 4 and 5 hours a week on social media sites. It is clear that social media sites form part of respondents' everyday lives which create opportunities for marketers.

#### **4.4.1.4 Use of social media for tourism and travel purposes**

Besides the general use of social media it is necessary to determine the use of these sites for tourism purposes so that one obtain information directly relevant to the industry. Table 4.6 serves as an indication of the level to which the tourists agreed with regard to the reason they use social media for travel and tourism purposes:

**Table 4.6:** *The use of social media for tourism and travel purposes*

<b>I use social media to:</b>	<b>Completely disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Completely Agree</b>	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Make bookings	16%	16%	43%	25%	2.760	.9972
<b>Enquire about a booking</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>2.932</b>	<b>.9310</b>
Get exclusive offers from tourism products/destinations	12%	20%	49%	19%	2.748	.8987
Get more information about tourism products/destinations	10%	13%	56%	21%	2.880	.8606
<b>Get contact information of a specific tourism product/ destination</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>.8275</b>
Do some research about tourism products/destinations	8%	10%	55%	27%	3.012	.8334
<b>Make better informed travel decisions</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>2.936</b>	<b>.8619</b>
<b>Collect relevant information about tourism products/destinations</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>2.956</b>	<b>.8227</b>
<b>Access a wide range of knowledge about tourism products/destinations at no extra cost</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>2.900</b>	<b>.8608</b>
Plan my holiday or weekend breakaway	10%	15%	51%	24%	2.888	.8846
Share my experiences of tourism products/destinations	10%	22%	46%	22%	2.796	.8931

Create and share content about my visit to tourism products/destinations (content such as photos, videos, comments, etc.)	12%	23%	47%	18%	2.696	.9027
Tailor my own content about tourism products/destinations according to my experiences	14%	28%	47%	11%	2.560	.8726
Share relevant information about tourism products/destinations	12%	27%	47%	14%	2.624	.8658
Compare tourism products/destinations	9%	18%	53%	20%	2.832	.8572
Recommend tourism products/destinations to others	11%	20%	50%	19%	2.764	.8941
Increase the awareness tourism products/destinations	12%	26%	46%	16%	2.644	.8902
Help tourism products/destinations gain credibility	13%	28%	45%	14%	2.600	.8827
Interact with other like-minded tourists	9%	31%	45%	15%	2.664	.8450
Interact with tourists who has the same interests as me	9%	30%	46%	15%	2.660	.8457
Communicate and interact directly with tourism products/destinations	12%	24%	48%	16%	2.672	.8852
Communicate directly with other tourists	14%	36%	40%	10%	2.456	.8597
Engage in open dialogues with other tourists by responding to the comments on the social media site	16%	34%	40%	10%	2.444	.8775
Ask for travel advice	10%	19%	54%	17%	2.796	.8422
Give travel advice	15%	26%	44%	15%	2.600	.9184
Ask for the opinions of other tourists on specific tourism products/destinations	13%	26%	46%	15%	2.628	.8926
Make suggestions based on my experiences of tourism product/destinations	12%	25%	47%	16%	2.676	.8889

Tourists use the different types of social media, as explained in section 4.4.1.4, for a variety of tourism and travel purposes. According to Table 4.6 these purposes include:

- Tourists visit these sites to do some research about tourism products/destinations (82%);
- Tourists collect relevant information about tourism products/destinations through social media sites (79%);
- Seventy eight percent of tourists visit these sites to get contact information of a specific tourism product/ destination
- Seventy seven percent of tourists visit social media sites to get more information about tourism products/destinations and;
- Seventy seven percent use social media to make better informed travel decisions.

The following purposes indicated no remarkable difference in opinion (in terms of agreement and disagreement) amongst the tourists:

- The use of social media to communicate directly with other tourists (50% disagreed);
- To engage in open dialogues with other tourists by responding to the comments on the social media site (50% disagreed);

- To use social media to tailor their own content about tourism products/destinations according to their experiences (41% disagreed);
- To help tourism products/destinations gain credibility (41% disagreed).

Thus, from the above it is clear that tourists mainly use social media to gather and verify information collected from social media sites for travel and tourism purposes. It also seems that they do not necessarily favour the biggest advantage of social media namely interactive communication with others.

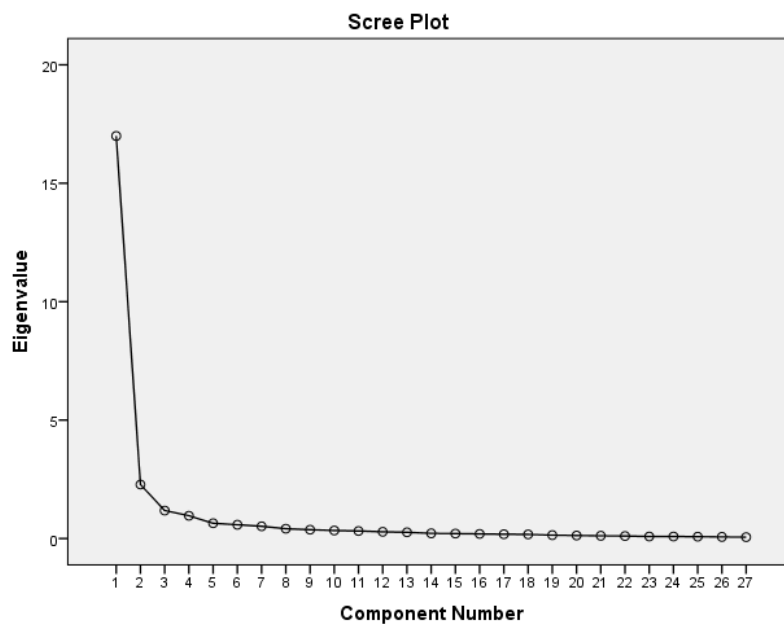
#### **4.4.2 EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS**

##### **4.4.2.1 Reasons for participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes**

The main focus of this section is to explore the fundamental patterns of the reasons how and why tourists are using social media for travel and tourism purposes, determined by means of a factor analysis. For the purpose of this analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined and used in order to determine the suitability of principal components analysis. By making use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, it will indicate whether the relationship between certain variables is relevant enough to proceed with a factor analysis, by means of determining adequate sampling data (Field, 2009:647).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for the data gathered at the O.R Tambo International Airport to determine the general reasons for participation in social media was .917 In this case the measure was highly acceptable (Field, 2009:647). The Bartlett's test ( $p < .00001$ ) was also found to be significant and therefore the reduction of data by means of the principal component would be justifiable (Pallant, 2005:172). Twenty six items based on reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes were identified, on which a factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed. The factor correlations also revealed small correlations between factors, thus showing the individuality of the factors. Loadings of 0.45 were used for item inclusion and an eigenvalue of 1 was used for factor extraction criterion as

supported by Maree (2007:220). This resulted in three factors for the respondents participating. The eigenvalues for these factors ranged between 1.181 and 16.996. The three factors represented 76% of the total variance (see Figure 4.1). These factors were labelled according to similar features.



**Figure 4.1:** Scree Plot for Factors representing the total variance

The three factors for respondents at the O.R. Tambo International Airport were labelled as *Information Gathering* (Factor 1), *Interaction and Communication* (Factor 2) and *Content Sharing* (Factor 3). In order to determine the reliability of the analysed data and to serve as a measure for internal consistency among the identified items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were examined for each factor. For Cronbach Alpha's to be considered acceptable, the value should be above 0.7 (Field, 2009:675). All of these values were above 0.9, thus indicating very high levels of internal consistency and therefore prove to be highly reliable.

Each of the above-mentioned factors was identified from categorised items based on a Likert scale in the questionnaire. This was used to calculate mean values for each factor in order to determine the level of importance for each factor. Table 4.7 serves



as an indication of the factor analysis for reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes:

**Table 4.7:** *Factor analysis of reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes*

<b>FACTOR LABEL</b>	<b>FACTOR 1: Information Gathering</b>	<b>FACTOR 2: Interaction &amp; Communication</b>	<b>FACTOR 3: Content Sharing</b>
Get more information about tourism products/destinations	.824		
Get contact information of a specific tourism product/destination	.795		
Enquire about a booking	.790		
Make bookings	.777		
Get exclusive offers from tourism products/destinations	.759		
Get more information about tourism products/destinations	.744		
Make better informed travel decisions	.732		
Do some research about tourism products/destinations	.713		
Plan my holiday or weekend breakaway	.686		
Access a wide range of knowledge about tourism products/destinations at no extra cost	.682		
Compare tourism products/destinations	.613		
Give travel advice		.841	
Ask for the opinions of other tourists on specific tourism products/destinations		.801	
Engage in open dialogues with other tourists by responding to the comments on the social media site		.795	
Make suggestions based on my experiences of tourism product/destinations		.785	
Communicate directly with other tourists		.736	
Ask for travel advice		.718	
Interact with other like-minded tourists		.626	
Interact with tourists who has the same interests as me		.570	
Tailor my own content about tourism products/destinations according to my experiences			.732
Create and share content about my visit to tourism products/destinations (content such as photos, videos, comments, etc.)			.688
Increase the awareness tourism products/destinations			.684
Help tourism products/destinations gain credibility			.679
Share my experiences of tourism products/destinations			.650
Share relevant information about tourism products/destinations			.642
Recommend tourism products/destinations to others			.622
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.963</b>	<b>.952</b>	<b>.943</b>
<b>Mean Values and Standard Deviation</b>	<b>2.88 (±0.75)</b>	<b>2.62 (±0.75)</b>	<b>2.66 (±0.76)</b>
<b>Inter-item Correlation Mean</b>	<b>.706</b>	<b>.711</b>	<b>.703</b>

With regard to factor 1, *Information Gathering*, eleven items were categorised due to similar characteristics, as indicated by the statistics of the analysed data. These items included: to get more information about the tourism product, to get contact information of the specific tourism product/destination, enquiring about a booking and to make bookings and to get exclusive offers and more information about the tourism product/destination, amongst others. Tourists who are using social media for travel and tourism purposes are doing so with the objective to gather information about a specific tourism product or destination, whether it is to get contact information or to make a better informed travel decisions. Tourism organisations should realise the necessity to share accurate and adequate information about their tourism product/destination on their social media sites to directly assist tourists in the process of information gathering. The traditional ways of searching for information are fading and social media is fulfilling this function.

The second factor, *Interaction and Communication*, consisted of eight items. They included giving travel advice, asking for the opinions of other tourists, to engage in open dialogues with other tourists on specific tourism products/destinations and to make suggestions based on their own experience of a tourism product/destination. This implies that tourists are looking for ways to interact and communicate with other tourists with regard to a specific tourism product or destination. They want to share their experiences or get travel advice. Thus, tourism organisations should ensure that these social media sites are accessible to tourists in terms of interaction and communication, and that an effective two-way communication process can take place between the tourists and also between the organisation. Therefore, it is important that tourism organisations employ committed personnel who are assigned to the management of social media in terms of interaction and communicating with tourists on the social media sites in a timely manner. Also to monitor messages and address problems where need be. The interaction and communication messages should also be positive to ensure that the image and brand of the organisation are not harmed.

In the case of this study, Factor 3, *Content Sharing*, entailed tourists tailoring their own content about a tourism product/destination, creating and sharing content about

their visit to a tourism product/destination, increasing the awareness of a tourism product/destination and helping tourism products/destinations to gain credibility. Tourism organisations should recognise that tourists want to share certain information in the form of content (video, photo, and so on.) on the social media site. This will enable tourists to share their experiences with each other, in order to make better informed travel decisions and assist in the process of information gathering (as explained in Factor 1). This is changing the intangible face of tourism marketing and brings the product closer to the potential tourists. However if this is not closely monitored it can cause the organisation harm.

Table 4.7 indicates that Factor 1 (*Information Gathering*) delivered the highest mean-value: 2.88. This implies that the use of social media for information gathering serves to be the most important reason for using social media for travel and tourism purposes. This information should be precise, updated and easy to access and follow. Factor 2 (*Interaction & Communication*) delivered the lowest mean-value (2.62), indicating that this is the least important reason why tourists will participate in social media for travel and tourism purposes. As in the case of other media, it seems less important for tourists to interact but more important to gather information.

#### **4.4.2.2 The influence of attitude towards social media and the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes**

Spearman rank order correlations were applied to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables, in this case between the attitudes of tourists towards social media and their actual use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. A correlation of 0 indicates no relationship at all, a correlation of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and a value of -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation. The correlations were interpreted according to the guidelines of Cohen (1988), that suggested: small  $\rho = .10-.29$ , medium  $\rho = .30-.49$  and large  $\rho = .50-.10$ .

Tourists' attitude toward the use of social media was categorised in terms of competency (tourists considering themselves as a beginner, advanced user, expert, or being comfortable with the use of social media) (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643;

Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6), frequency of use (whether the tourists' use social media as a regular part of their life) (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Laroche *et al.*, 2012:1), inclination (finding the use of social media useful or annoying, or being indifferent towards the use of social media) (Manthiou, 2012:15, Aluri, 2012:38; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:64), trust (trusting the social media site and the tourism organisation and their concerns in terms of privacy and security issues) (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643) and willingness to share personal information (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643) (see Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8:** *Correlations between tourists' attitudes towards the use of social media and factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes*

	Competency	Frequency of use	Inclination	Trust	Willingness
<b>Information Gathering</b>					
<i>Spearman Corr Coeff</i>	.228**	.136*	-.008	.265**	.259**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.033	.906	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	248	248	248	248	248
<b>Interaction &amp; Communication</b>					
<i>Spearman Corr Coeff</i>	.269**	.029	.062	.234**	.318**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.654	.328	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	248	248	248	248	248
<b>Content Sharing</b>					
<i>Spearman Corr Coeff</i>	.282**	.131*	-.024	.234**	.315**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.039	.708	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	248	248	248	248	248

\*small  $r_s$ =.10-.29; \*\*medium  $r_s$ =.30-.49; \*\*\*large  $r_s$ =.50-1.0

From Table 4.8 it is clear that significant but small correlations existed between Information Gathering and competency ( $r_s=0.228$ ), as well as trust ( $r_s=0.265$ ) and willingness ( $r_s=0.259$ ). These significant positive correlations imply that as the users' level of competency improved, their frequency of use increased, they trusted the social media site more and they were more willing to share their personal information

on the social media site the more they used the site to gather information. These tourists will therefore use social media sites more as they become more skilled and as they trust the site more. The frequency of use indicated very small correlations with Information Gathering and Content Sharing as factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. These correlations were so small that it is not considered significant, and therefore are not discussed.

Small significant correlations also existed between Interaction and Communication and competency ( $r_s=0.269$ ), trust ( $r_s=0.234$ ) and willingness ( $r_s=0.318$ ). These positive correlations imply that as the level of interaction and communication increase, their level of competency, trust and willingness will also increase. Therefore, it is clear that the more tourists interact and communicate on social media sites, the more competent they become, the more they trust the site and are becoming increasingly willing to interact and communicate on the social media site of the tourism organisation. This is a chain reaction which should be considered in social media campaigns and strategies.

The last set of correlations existed between content sharing and competency ( $r_s=0.282$ ), trust ( $r_s=0.234$ ) and willingness ( $r_s=0.315$ ). Thus, the more tourists share content on social media sites, the more their level of competency, trust and willingness to share information and interact on social media sites will increase.

From the above it is clear that the most significant correlations existed between interaction and communication and willingness ( $r_s=0.318$ ), content sharing and willingness ( $r_s=0.315$ ) and content sharing and competency ( $r_s=0.282$ ). Thus, it is imperative for tourism organisations to understand that the more the tourists interact and communicate on their social media sites, the more willing they become to interact on the social media sites, as their level of content sharing increases their willingness to share more content will also increase, and the more content they share the more competent they become in using social media sites for this purpose. The two-way interaction process in building this long-term relationship is evident as well as the continuous process it requires.

#### **4.5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS**

The research yielded significant results to be taken into consideration when planning social media strategies for travel and tourism purposes. The following four results with their implications will be discussed:

Firstly, according to the demographic results, tourists traveling in South Africa tend to be mostly males of 54 years of age. Tourism organisations in South Africa should be up-to-date with the trends that middle-aged people follow in order to determine which type of marketing medium mostly attracts their attention. Information on the social media behaviour of the middle-aged market is scarce even though they are currently the main travelling market. For example, tourism organisations should determine whether this market participates in social media for travel and tourism purposes and how they use and react to the information shared on the organisations' social media site. This will assist marketers in determining the best possible marketing medium to use to reach these tourists. It was also evident that tourists participating in social media in the South African context were between the ages of 18 and 34 years, and that Facebook and YouTube were two of the main social media sites that they used. Thus, tourism organisations in South Africa should also develop marketing strategies specifically for Facebook and YouTube, with marketing messages that a younger market can identify with, in order to penetrate a market that does not use social media specifically for travel and tourism purposes at the moment.

Secondly, the travel behaviour results indicated that respondents of this research study are frequent travellers, who stay 1-5 nights when travelling. These travellers spend at least 2-3 hours per week on social media, and very specifically on Email and Facebook. This implies that there is a definite frequent traveling market, which can utilise social media in their travel arrangements. Tourism organisations should realise that Email and Facebook are the two main types of social media that tourists use for travel and tourism purposes. Tourism organisations can develop and implement specific social media marketing strategies for Email and Facebook. This information regarding their email addresses and what they are willing to share on Facebook can be obtained through giving the tourist the opportunity to send this information via email to the tourism organisation. The information can then be captured on a database and used accordingly. They should also determine what the

prime time is that tourists engage on Facebook, to ensure that messages are sent and that any type of communication takes place during this time. This will ensure that tourists gain access to communication and information shared on social media sites almost instantly, without the organisation bearing the risk that these critically customised marketing messages get lost amongst all the other information shared through social media by other organisations.

Thirdly, when one considers the factor analysis for reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as the analysis of previous studies and research conducted, similarities between the results of this study and the results of previous studies, and/or research conducted, could clearly be identified.

Factor 1 (Information Gathering) delivered the highest mean value of all three factors identified and indicates similarities in terms of the reasons for use of social media identified by Miguens *et al.* (2008), Kirtiř and Karahan (2011), Parra-López *et al.* (2011), and Pitt and Berthon (2011). Content sharing (factor 3) delivered the second highest mean value. This results in the fact that tourists, both international and national, use social media for travel and tourism purposes due to the fact that they can tailor their own content about a tourism product/destination. This proved to indicate similarities with research conducted by Miguens *et al.* (2008), Evans (2010), Kirtiř and Karahan (2011), Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), Pitt and Berthon (2011), and Leung *et al.* (2013) who also found this factor to be prominent in the use of social media.

By analysing the similarities of the factors with previous research studies, as well as the results of this study, it indicates that the most important reason why tourists participate in social media for travel and tourism purposes is due to the fact that they want to gather specific information with regard to the tourism product or destination. Thus, tourism organisations should focus on generating quality information that they can share (make available) on their social media sites. This type of information can vary from the correct contact information, the option for the tourist to make a booking or enquire about a booking, to accessing more and better information about the tourism product/destination to assist the tourist in making a better informed decision. Organisations should realise that they can benefit from this in the sense that tourists'

level of trust in the tourism organisation and its social media site will increase if and when they can gather more (and a variety) of content on the social media site of the tourism organisation. This also accounts for the case of *Content Sharing*. Tourism organisations should consider that this level of content sharing can ultimately be utilised in a positive way to indirectly create electronic word-of-mouth efforts. It is imperative for organisations to understand how the positive reinforcement of tourists on the social media sites of the organisation can ultimately increase their market share, through electronic word-of-mouth. For example, the more positive content shared by tourists on the social media site with regard to their experience at the tourism product/destination, as well as the correct information that the tourists have the need to gather from the social media site, the more like-minded tourists can access this content in their process of information gathering to make better informed decisions. Ultimately, this will lead to more tourists who have a positive perception about the specific product/destination/organisation, which leads to an increased level of trust and willingness to interact on the social media site, which can indirectly increase the market share of the tourism organisation by gaining a competitive advantage through online relationships.

Furthermore, in the case of this study, factor 2 (Interaction & Communication) proved to deliver the lowest mean value. Although this factor delivered the lowest mean value, it was also a result of studies conducted by Michaelidou *et al.* (2011), Briones *et al.* (2011), Kirtiş and Karahan (2011), Parra- López *et al.* (2011), Bowman *et al.* (2012), and Leung *et al.* (2013). Thus, tourists who participated in this study mainly use social media to gather information and share content about the tourism product/destination/organisation, but they also use social media as a means of interaction and communication for their travel and tourism purposes, even if it is on a smaller scale. Therefore, tourism organisations should first and foremost focus their online social media marketing strategies to ensure that tourists can gather information from the site and share content and not necessarily on the possibility to interact and communicate. Thus, it might not be substantial to allocate valuable resources such as time, money and energy on maintaining a social media site for the sole purpose of interaction and communication. The level of interaction and communication and the need that might exist amongst tourists to do so on social media sites can be directly minimised by sharing relevant and quality information and



content on social media sites, that offer the tourist exactly what they are searching for. This finding is highly significant since one of the main characteristics of social media and the one that distinguish it to a great extent from other types of media is not that important to respondents. This can be due to the time it might take to interact.

The fourth significant finding for this study prove to be the correlations that exist between the attitudes of tourists toward social media and the factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. This implies that as tourists' level of interaction and communication increase, their willingness to share personal information without any privacy and trust concerns will also increase. The same account for tourists' level of content sharing. The more content they share on social media sites, the more they will trust the site and be willing to share personal information on the social media site. Lastly, as tourists share more content on social media sites, their level of competency will also increase. If tourism organisations want tourists to be more willing to interact on social media, as well as be more competent in the level of content they share, they should ensure that tourists interact, communicate and share content more frequently. Tourism organisations can host competitions on social media sites where tourists are encouraged to share pictures and/or videos of their visit to the tourism product/destination that articulates their experience, along with one sentence that describes their unique experience. These competitions can be hosted on a weekly basis to motivate and encourage tourists to interact more on social media sites. This can result into effective marketing strategies that motivate and encourage tourists to engage more frequently on the social media site of the tourism organisation for the purpose of content sharing and interaction and communication. If the tourism organisation can succeed in the above, it will ultimately lead to repeat-visits, a deeper level of trust in between the tourism organisation and the tourists, as well as more referrals and better reviews of the tourism organisation by the tourists. Thus, sound long-term relationships between the tourism organisation and a more loyal customer will be the end-result of these marketing efforts.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The main purpose of this study was twofold: to determine the factors which forms the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as to determine whether significant correlations exist between the factors of the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes and tourists' attitudes towards social media. A survey was conducted at the O.R. Tambo International Airport, where the questionnaires were distributed more or less evenly between the international and domestic departures and arrivals halls. The distribution of the questionnaires was done by fieldworkers. A factor analysis of the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes revealed that three factors existed which leads to the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. The factors included information gathering, interaction and communication and content sharing. The factors delivering the highest mean value included information gathering and content sharing. These results confirmed reasons identified in previous studies and research. Correlations existed between the factors of the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes and the attitude of tourists with regard to competency, trust and willingness. The research results indicated that tourism organisations should focus on enabling tourists to gather information about the specific tourism product/destination/organisation through their social media sites, provide them the opportunity to share content, and enable them to interact with like-minded tourists through the tourism organisation's social media site. However, it was significantly identified that strategies that focus on information gathering and content sharing should enjoy primary attention and resources allocation, seeing that this can ultimately minimise the need for tourists to interact and communicate for the purpose of information gathering and content sharing. Tourism organisations should continuously generate high quality content and manage their social media sites to fully utilise it to ensure a positive cognitive experience for tourists. This can result in new research opportunities for tourism organisations in the quest for increasing their market share and gaining a competitive advantage through social media marketing.



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# CHAPTER 5

## ASPECTS CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASE THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

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### **ABSTRACT**

Social media has become the world's latest marketing phenomenon, being considered a trailblazer in innovation and development and profoundly disseminating the lives of all people and the way they do business every day. This is also evident in the tourism industry. However, the rapid development of social media, the lack of clear guidelines on how to use social media effectively and how to increase social media usage, create challenges for tourism destinations and products to manage it effectively. Research concerning the use of social media and how to increase the use thereof in the tourism industry is lacking from a demand perspective. The purpose of this study was thus to assess whether tourists' attitudes and their opinions regarding the success factors for social media can contribute to increased tourism social media activity. The results indicated that tourists' attitudes toward the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes were dependent on the degree of trust and willingness to participate in social media. These respondents utilised social media specifically for information gathering, interaction and communication as well as content sharing. Their assessment of the success factors identified content accessibility and sharing as key success factors. The significant results from this study indicated that trust in the site, willingness to use the site, content and accessibility and sharing as well as benefits received from the site will encourage respondents to use social media more for information gathering which is ultimately what tourists mainly want from tourism sites. If tourism destinations and products aim at increasing interaction and communication with tourists attention should be given to their willingness to use as well as the benefits they receive for the site. Interaction

and communication through social media is thus highly dependent on the inputs from the users and their needs. Lastly, it was found that efforts encouraging respondents to share content (such as photos, experiences and so on) on social media sites were dependent on their willingness to use the sites as well as the content accessibility and sharing opportunities. These results make a significant contribution to this field of study by highlighting how to increase direct user input on tourism social media sites. Tourism organisations should implement these aspects in order to improve the effectiveness of their social media sites, which can also result in long-term relationships, optimal reach of a larger market in a cost-effective manner.

**Key words:** social media, critical success factors, marketing

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Over the past few years, the external environment has developed in such a way that individuals find themselves in an advanced and highly competitive global economy, where the role and impact of technology is undeniable. Technology is not only considered a creator in innovation and development, but it is also profoundly influencing the lives of all people and the way they do business every day. The distribution and utilisation of technology facilitate the lives of people and extend their reach beyond what they can imagine (Badawy, 2009:220). The intense development of technology and innovation has resulted in the Internet becoming the most popular tool that revolutionised the world. The Internet advanced global connections and competition to a prodigious level which no one expected (Badawy, 2009:220).

The Internet offers various interactive features that have become a vital aspect in society. One of these interactive features that prove to be very significant is social media. The popularity of social media is the direct result of the fact that two thirds of the world's Internet populace visit social media sites. The rapid increase in the use of social media and the Internet has caused a great change to the media landscape as it has been known (Badawy, 2009:220; Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1). Social media has expeditiously evoked the attention of Internet users of all ages and the time spent on social media sites by internet users are responsible for the increased rate of more than three times the overall internet growth (Milano *et al.*, 2011:2; Briones *et al.*, 2011:37; Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012:xv; Lund, 2011:3). This indirectly offers various opportunities for industries such as the tourism industry.

The exponential growth of social media has become an important topic of attention in the tourism industry, playing a crucial role for tourism organisations that are valuing the opinions of their tourists more and more every day (Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1). Schmallegger and Carson (2007:100) stated that the lack of direct experience with a tourism product and the fact that the quality and perceived benefits cannot be evaluated before a tourist has consumed the tourism product, is a major gap that needs to be bridged. Social media provides a platform to do just that due to the visual and interactive qualities it offers. However the pace of development has somewhat left some tourism organisations' behind in grasping the real value of this medium. Most of the social media efforts, especially for smaller businesses, happen haphazardly and there is a lack of clear guidelines, frameworks and theories to guide the tourism industry in optimising this medium for marketing purposes. The purpose of this research is therefore to identify the aspects that can contribute to the increased use of social media in the travel and tourism industry in an innovative manner.

## **5.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AS (UNDER-UTILISED) PHENOMENON IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Social media has received the attention of researchers as well as the public to a large extent. It is of utmost importance for organisations adopting this latest marketing marvel to consider and understand the various opportunities social media offers for both the organisation and its customers. It is also important that these organisations know which aspects contribute to increased use of social media as this knowledge might assist in becoming more competitive. Firstly, attention is given to the understanding and contextualisation of social media.

### **5.2.1 Understanding social media**

The anomalous ease of interactivity, which cultivates the formation of communities and the spawning of user-driven content, proves to distinguish social media from its relatives (DeAndrea *et al.*, 2012:16; Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640).

Holzner (as cited by Hsu, 2012:1) stated that social media has advanced into an effective marketing tool. Businesses might gain easy access to market opportunities, learn about trends in their target market, and be able to communicate and build relationships with their consumers, should they include social media in their marketing strategies. By managing relationships with consumers in this way, could ultimately lead to bigger market share and revenue. Social media as marketing tool can be explained as the process where a social group, who shares the same value systems and identity, exchange product knowledge and opinions (Amerland, 2012:13).

A thorough analyses of previous research (Miguéns *et al.*, 2008:1; Kirtiř & Karahan, 2011:262; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:435), revealed three universal items that form the core of social media: social media offers various forms of interaction possibilities for its users, the content shared on social media sites are mainly user-generated, and users can create and exchange information. This phenomenon can thus be defined as an online platform where users can interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications. In essence it allows users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users. This changes the way tourism products can be marketed and create more opportunities for interaction and regular contact.

Social media presents itself in a variety of forms. These forms include emails (Gmail, MobileMe); social networking sites and online communities (Facebook, MySpace, TripAdvisor, LinkedIn); social news sites (Reddit, NewsVine, Digg); social bookmarking (Delicious, Magnolia, Diigo); social sharing of videos, photos and content (YouTube, Flickr!, Instagram, Vimeo); social events (Eventful, Meetup, Upcoming); blogs and micro-blogs (Twitter, eBlogger); forums and message boards (WeForum, World Tourism Forum, Google Groups); instant messaging (Facebook Chat, Whatsapp); text messaging (mobile messaging); collaborative projects (Wikipedia, WikiTravel, NIKEiD); virtual game worlds (World of Warcraft); virtual social worlds (Second Life); product reviews, business reviews, and opinions (Amazon, Customer Lobby, yelp.com); social media monitoring and social media analytics (Attensity Voice of the Customer, Sysomos Heartbeat, Attensity360); and

information aggregators such as Netvibes and Twine (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:91; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:255; LaRoche *et al.*, 2012:2). The number of forms available in itself creates challenges in effectively managing these options and optimises their function and effectiveness in the marketing strategy.

The above-mentioned forms of social media boast a variety of purposeful uses for the user (both tourism product and tourist). These purposes include communication (blogs, micro-blogging, social networking), collaboration (wikis, social bookmarking, social news), multimedia (video sharing, social sharing), reviews and opinions (product reviews, business reviews, community Q&A), entertainment (virtual worlds, game sharing), brand monitoring (social media monitoring, social media analytics), and other (information aggregators) (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:443). The power of the tourist in the marketing process becomes more important and should be managed in a different manner than when dealing with print media.

### **5.2.2 The importance of social media in the tourism industry**

The significant growth of social media has become a popular field in the travel and tourism industry, seeing that social media plays a crucial role for organisations in the tourism industry that are increasingly valuing the opinions, reviews and referrals of their tourists (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:1). This enables the tourism organisation to gather more reliable and trustworthy information directly from the tourist, rather than from the suppliers (Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2) and the tourist from the tourism organisation. Social media serves to be unique (compared to traditional broadcasting and publishing methods) in that it facilitates direct communication between the tourism organisation and its target group (tourists), without having to acknowledge distance and time (Badawy, 2009:220; Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378). Another profound positive element of social media marketing mechanisms, such as the different types of social media is that it allows marketers to develop and use virtual catalogues and at the same time obtain immediate customer feedback (Lamb *et al.*, 2010:378).

The fact that there is a lack of direct experience with a tourism product in the industry (the quality and perceived benefits cannot be evaluated before the tourist has consumed the product) has been an important issue for a long period of time. Social



media consists of the ability to bridge this gap (Schmallegger & Carson, 2007:100) and come closer to the actual experience at the product.

Currently, social media is considered a mega trend in the tourism industry with a significant impact. Travelers have widely adopted the use of social media to search, organise, share and elucidate their stories and experiences through different social media platforms in a collaborative way. With the development of social media platforms for tourism purposes, tourists have increasingly shown the tendency to book hotels via the Internet. This implies a different level of competition amongst organisations in terms of developing new business models. It is of utmost importance that marketers of tourism organisations understand how tourists use the internet/social media before, during and after vacation trips to acquire information about their trips, to share their experiences and to compare the variety of services related to their trip (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Miguens *et al.*, 2008:3; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:640; Litvin *et al.*, 2008:458).

According to Leung *et al.* (2013:4) social media has the ability to assist tourism organisations to engage potential visitors, understand and respond to tourists' preferences by analysing their comments on online communities, and increase the online presence in order to reach greater online revenue (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4). Buhalis and Law (2008) stated that social media dramatically influences tourists' behaviour seeing that it enables both the tourist and the organisation (destination) to engage directly with one another (SanMartin & Herrero, 2012:241; Miguens *et al.* 2008:2). Although social media has several benefits and it is used extensively, a substantial amount of tourism organisations are still not fully employing and enjoying the benefits of social media as marketing strategy due to uncertainties as to exactly how this should be done. It is thus imperative that organisations plan social media strategies in order to reap the benefits thereof.

### **5.2.3 The importance of the use of social media as marketing tool for organisations**

It is clear that social media has changed the traditional marketing landscape, as it has been known. Initially, social media was used as a common entertainment tool,

but in an instant it has developed into the latest marketing marvel. The fact that the target group/audience becomes a near-equal partner in the generation and distribution of content through social media plays a significant role in the growth of social media and its impact on the traditional marketing landscape. Thus, social media holds momentous advantages in the business area and therefore has enhanced the standard communication repository of many businesses (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:260; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:400) directly contributing to their competitiveness and sustainability in this industry. Due to the highly competitive and fragile global economy, organisations are thus considering more innovative and cost effective methods to market their products and/or services such as social media.

Social media can be considered as one of the most powerful tools to help businesses execute their current marketing strategies, seeing that it represents a universal source of information, changes the tools and strategies businesses use to communicate with their consumers, lowers the cost of executing their marketing strategies, and enables the consumer to control the flow of information to a certain extent (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1153; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:260; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:400).

Social media thus serves as a unique marketing tool for organisations (Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:263) with the value thereof only recently acknowledged but still not fully understood. It is regarded one of the most effective ways to reach the consumers and with the various benefits it offers, organisations are paying a substantial amount of attention to social media as alternative, and in some cases even primary marketing tool. The development of social media and the advancement of its different forms urge organisations to understand the benefits in such a way that the right social media form is chosen to relate to the environment and the consumer.

Ultimately, organisations tend to devote more resources to social media on a daily basis (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:264; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:2; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010:43; Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:435) but more resources do not guarantee success and more guidance is needed regarding the planning and

implementation on exactly what the tourist expect and are willing to share on these sites.

No one can argue that social media has played an immense role in the development of a more user-friendly and connected World Wide Web. However, the use of social media also boasts a number of challenges and disadvantages for its users, whether it is tourists or organisations (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4). Badawy (2009:220) and Evans (2010:8) state that due to the accelerated nature of its technological development, social media becomes challenging to manage. It is imperative to consider three basic criteria in order to ensure the effectiveness and success of social media: the right message should be communicated to the right people at the right time (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:256). This is however easier to attain for traditional forms of marketing and thus this medium poses more challenges than other media forms.

Due to the vast and fast development of social media, the size and nature of the social media attack surface changes persistently. This has to effect that social media site operators are not in full control of what their site/s might deliver from moment to moment as conversations go on with or without the involvement of the organisation (Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Evans, 2010:9). If organisations operate in industry that do not deem social media important, it becomes challenging for these organisations to educate its employees on aspects such whether or not and how social media can help the organisation's brand. When staff members are unfamiliar with social media and do not have the technical skills to use social media, and when competitors do not use social media, the organisation will struggle to implement a successful social media marketing strategy (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1156). Another major challenge for organisations is the fact that social media requires substantial investment in terms of time and it requires enough research, a good thought-through strategy, effective implementation, buy-in from the team, networking, conversing, and measurement (Evans, 2010:8; Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011:1156).

Social media success in terms of the strategy and implementation cannot be controlled. It tends to be fortuitous (Evans, 2010:8). Ineffective management and the lack of control imply that social media bears the risk to instantly destroy the

organisation's image that took years to build, the risk of a loss in productivity in employees and can also compromise any legal obligations (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51). Thus, organisations with a lack of resources, employees with poor technical competencies, and sluggish management are at risk to find social media challenging (Milano *et al.*, 2011:10).

The above implies that tourism organisations should be just as aware of the challenges and disadvantages of the use of social media as perceived by the tourist, if and when they plan to implement a social media marketing strategy. Thus, for organisations to overcome the challenges that the use of social media entail, it is necessary to develop guidelines for organisations to fully comprehend the optimal use of social media in the tourism industry. This can be done by the development of a framework that tourism organisations can implement as part of their social media marketing strategies. However, it is not only the organisation that experiences a vast number of challenges with the use of social media.

#### **5.2.4 Understanding the attitudes toward the use of social media from a tourist perspective**

The importance and use of social media sites are dependent on tourists' attitudes and the reasons for using these sites.

Tourists' attitudes are described as their tendency to engage in specific behaviour, which is based on their personal beliefs regarding what they want to achieve and the reactions necessary to achieve certain outcomes (Manthiou, 2012:15; Aluri, 2012:38). Manthiou (2012:15) also states that these attitudes are primarily based on and considered in terms of the individual's evaluation of the consequences that might follow their behaviour. Thus, it is imperative to ensure that tourists will demonstrate a positive attitude towards the organisation in the process of engaging on social media sites, seeing that this will most likely generate favourable attitudes toward the organisation.

When considering the tourists' attitudes towards the use of social media it becomes important that they trust the site and are willing to use the social media site (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:64; Kang, 2011:32). Parra-López *et al.* (2011:64) and Kang

(2011:32) stated that the level of the individual's trust in the use of social media, the need to belong to a specific community, being a member of a specific community, pleasant and fun experience when using social media, being able to express opinions, and sharing in experiences contributes to the benefits experienced through the use of social media for the user.

The tourist might experience concerns with regard to cost-effectiveness (Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643); the risk of identity theft and privacy issues on social media sites that influence tourists' trust and willingness to participate in social media (Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Mansfield-Devine, 2008:4; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:6; Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010:51; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643); and users are reluctant to engage on a social media platform if and when there is a certain level of suspicion and distrust which will lead to a resistance to share information, comments and suggestions with other (Milano *et al.*, 2011:10); and if the organisation does not facilitate the use or access for users to partake in social media or if it is too difficult for users to engage in social media, or should it be too time-consuming, the action will not take place (Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:643) and this unique marketing tool is not utilised to its full potential.

The necessity of interaction between the organisation and tourist on social media sites is clear as well as the importance of understanding the needs and requirements of both these role players. Over the past few years researchers focused on reasons for using social media (Briones *et al.*, 2011:38; Bowman *et al.*, 2012:1; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011:255; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011:641; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011:261; Leung *et al.*, 2013:4; Evans, 2010:16; Miguens *et al.*, 2008:2; Pitt & Berthon, 2011:182). The apportionment of social media usage indicates that consumers commit almost one third of their total time throughout the day to the consumption of social media (Curtis *et al.*, 2010:90; Laroche *et al.*, 2012:1). Therefore, it is clear that the intensity of use can be considered an important attitude toward the use of social media. This marketing medium is definitely used but the effectiveness thereof in the tourism industry is questioned. Given the competition in this industry tourism organisations should optimise the use of this tool by understanding the aspects that can contribute to increased use of these sites as these might lead to a competitive advantage for organisations.

### **5.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is twofold, firstly an in-depth literature review was conducted and secondly the empirical research applied mixed methodology.

#### **5.3.1 Literature review**

During this study, resources such as books, articles, annual reports, journals, theses, textbooks and other topic-related literature was used to gather adequate information. Due to the novelty of this research field, the World Wide Web also served as an important source of information gathering in terms of tourists' attitudes toward the use of social media and the critical success factors for the use of social media. Search-engines that were used included Google Scholar and international and national databases such as Science Direct, SAePublications and Emerald. From the literature review, it was found that little to no research has been conducted on the use of social media in the South African tourism industry.

Thus, the literature review was considered as the starting point for this study. The thorough literature analyses set the path for the practical execution of the empirical research, especially in identifying the important aspects to be included in the development of the questionnaire. It also assisted in the analysis and interpretation of the data of the empirical survey.

#### **5.3.2 Empirical research: Mixed methodology**

Due to the novelty of this research in the tourism industry it was decided to apply a mixed methodology approach namely qualitative and quantitative research.

##### **5.3.2.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research was conducted to determine the perceptions of tourism marketing managers in the use of social media and their opinions on the effectiveness, and how the use of social media influences the success of the implemented marketing strategies. The qualitative research was exploratory in nature and entailed semi-structured interviews. These interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions where the respondents had the opportunity to

answer the questions based on their own opinions, expectations and experiences. The results of the semi-structured interviews provided insight to the opinions of the supply side of the industry, and the information informed and aided in the development of the questionnaire.

### **5.3.2.2 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research was used to gather information regarding the demographic variables of the respondents, the factors influencing the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as the determining the attitudes towards the use of social media that has an impact on the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, and lastly the critical success aspects for the use of social media. The quantitative research method was of a causal nature. Data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires.

#### **5.3.2.2.1 Development of the questionnaire**

Due to the absence of a suitable questionnaire to capture the relevant and necessary data for the purpose of this study, a new questionnaire, based on the literature review and the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with the marketing managers of tourism organisations was developed. The questionnaire mainly consisted of open-ended, closed and likert scale questions. The applicable sections of the questionnaire used in for the purpose of this article, focused on capturing data based on the demographic variables, as well as the opinions of respondents concerning the reasons for participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes, the respondents' attitudes towards the use of social media, as well as the most important aspects (critical aspects) for the effective use of social media. Pre-evaluation of the questionnaire by experts in the field took place in order to identify any errors or problems that might arise in answering the questions and analysing the data.

#### **5.3.2.2.2 Sampling method and distribution of the questionnaire**

For the purpose of this research questionnaires were distributed at the O.R. Tambo International Airport since it provides access to both national and international visitors. Due to a lack of a list of tourists to South Africa it was decided to use

stratified sampling. Stratified sampling was used due to the difficulty of obtaining population lists with tourists with homogeneous characteristics, and therefore these characteristics could be identified by means of the data obtained through the distribution of the questionnaire. Previous research studies conducted by means of the stratified sampling method included Scholtz (2014) and Thetsane (2010). Stratification was set on two levels: firstly the even distribution between national and international visitors and secondly the even distribution between arrival and departure halls and O.R. Tambo International Airport.

In 2013, 171 087 tourists travelled to South Africa via the O.R. Tambo International Airport (Statistics South Africa, 2014). As a population increases the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains relatively constant at slightly more than 380 cases (Krejcie & Morgan, 1960:610). Therefore 450 questionnaires were distributed by fieldworkers in the identified strata. It was expected of respondents to complete the questionnaire by answering all questions to their own accord. This resulted in 446 questionnaires used for statistical analyses. However, the 446 questionnaires used, also included questionnaires where some of the items were not answered or a small section not completed. In the relevant cases and results this were taken into consideration with regards to the calculation of the results, and therefore some of the data might differ and less than the total number of 446 questionnaires for the study. Thus, by considering the sample size, the number of questionnaires, and the stratification sampling method, the results of the data prove to be representative.

#### **5.3.2.3 Data capturing and statistical data analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaires were captured in Microsoft Excel and processed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 21.0. This program was also used to draw necessary graphs and figures related to the outcome and results of each section of the study. Frequency distribution, exploratory factor analysis, and correlations were used to reach the outcome of this study, in order to make accurate and effective conclusions based on the results of the study.



## 5.4 RESULTS

The results of this study are focused on the demographic profile of respondents, the reasons for using social media, respondents' attitudes towards social media, the critical success aspects for social media and lastly the aspects that can contribute to increased social media usage for the travel and tourism industry.

### 5.4.1 Demographic characteristics of tourists

A demographic profile was determined for respondents travelling to and in South Africa. Table 5.1 indicates the demographic characteristics for these tourists:

**Table 5.1: Demographic characteristics of National and International tourists**

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY
Travel Specifics	International	54%	227
	Domestic	46%	191
	Arrivals	36%	155
	Departures	64%	274
Gender	Male	53%	238
	Female	47%	212
Age	<20	3%	12
	21 – 30	25%	110
	31 – 40	25%	113
	41 – 50	22%	98
	51 – 60	16%	71
Level of Education	Matric	24%	108
	Diploma/Degree	39%	173
	Professional	10%	46
	Post-graduate	19%	82
	Other	8%	34
Province	Gauteng	24%	106
	Mpumalanga	3%	12
	North-West	2%	7
	Free-State	2%	9
	Eastern Cape	7%	29
	Western Cape	6%	25
	Northern Cape	3%	14

	KwaZulu-Natal	8%	37
	Limpopo	5%	21
	Outside SA borders	42%	188
Marital Status	Single	25%	112
	In a relationship	26%	115
	Married	21%	95
	Married with children	24%	107
	Divorced	3%	15

From the table above (Table 5.1) it is clear that the descriptive analysis of the statistical data indicated that the gender percentage of the respondents participating in this research study appeared to be mostly male. Forty seven percent (47%) of the respondents indicated that they were female and 53% indicated they were male. The tourists appeared to be relatively middle-aged with 38% of the visitors between the ages of 41 and 60 and 25% of the visitors between the ages of 31 and 40. The average age of tourists was 54.

Tourists participating in this research study seemed to be very well educated with 24% passing matric and 39% educated with a diploma or a degree. A total of 42% of all these tourists originated from outside South African borders, where 5% originated from the United States of America and 4% from Germany. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of tourists originated from South Africa, of which 24% resided from the Gauteng Province. In terms of relationship status, a total percentage of 26% tourists were in a relationship, 25% were single and 24% were married with children compared to the 21% tourists who were married without children.

#### **5.4.2 Reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes**

These analyses were addressed in chapter 4 (See Table 4.7). From this analysis three factors were evident and proved reliable (See Table 5.2). Information gathering (M=2.88) was considered the most important reason to use social media for travel and tourism purposes, followed by content sharing (M=2.66) and interaction and communication (M=2.62). These results will be utilised in the regression analysis to follow.

**Table 5.2:** *Factor analysis summary for reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes*

FACTOR LABEL	FACTOR 1: Information Gathering	FACTOR 2: Interaction & Communication	FACTOR 3: Content Sharing
Cronbach's Alpha	.963	.952	.943
Mean Values and Standard Deviation	2.88 ( $\pm 0.75$ )	2.62 ( $\pm 0.75$ )	2.66 ( $\pm 0.76$ )
Inter-item Correlation Mean	.706	.711	.703

### 5.4.3 Tourists' attitude towards the use of social media

Certain statements were included in the questionnaire to determine tourists' attitude towards the use of social media for travel purposes. Table 5.3 serves as an indication of these statements and tourists' response to that.

**Table 5.3:** *Tourists' attitudes towards the use of social media for travel purposes*

Attitude towards the use of social media for travel purposes:	Yes	No
I have tried social media but am just beginning to use it for travel purposes	36%	64%
I am using social media and consider myself a beginner	27%	<b>73%</b>
I am using social media often and are comfortable with it	<b>76%</b>	24%
I use social media and consider myself an 'advanced' user	61%	39%
I use social media as a regular part of my life	<b>72%</b>	28%
I consider myself an 'expert' when it comes to social media	37%	63%
I find the use of social media somewhat annoying	29%	<b>71%</b>
I am indifferent to the use of social media	32%	68%
I find the use of social media very useful	<b>77%</b>	23%
I trust the social media site of the tourism organisation	60%	40%
I trust the tourism organisation	62%	38%
I will willingly share all my personal information on the site	20%	<b>80%</b>
I will willingly share some of my personal information on the site	39%	61%
I have no concerns in terms of privacy and security	25%	<b>75%</b>

issues when using social media		
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From Table 5.3 it is clear that tourists mainly demonstrated the following attitudes towards the use of social media:

- Tourists were not willing to share all their personal information on the social media site (80%);
- Tourists found the use of social media very useful (77%);
- Tourists were using social media often and are comfortable with the use of it (76%);
- Tourists had concerns in terms of privacy and security issues when using social media (75%);
- Seventy three percent of tourists used social media, but considered themselves a beginner;
- Seventy two percent of tourists used social media as a regular part of their life; and
- Seventy one percent of tourists found the use of social media somewhat annoying.

From the above it is clear that tourists demonstrate both positive and negative attitudes towards the use of social media for travel purposes. The main negative attitude relates to tourists' unwillingness to share all their personal information on social media sites and they have concerns in terms of privacy and security issues when using social media. However, on the positive side tourists do find the use of social media for travel purposes very useful and are comfortable with the use of social media, therefore using it as a regular part of life. This creates various opportunities for the tourism industry.

After careful and thorough consideration of the literature review on the matter of understanding attitudes toward the use of social media, as well as an evaluation of the items indicated in Table 5.3, the items were categorised according to similar themes. These categories were mainly used to determine the attitudes that act as predictors for the factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.

The first set of attitudes toward the use of social media was labelled *Competency*, and consisted of items focusing on the level of use of social media in terms of the tourist viewing themselves as a beginner, advanced user or an expert in the use of social media. This item categorisation was based on evidence from the literature review with regard to research conducted by Parra-López *et al.* (2011:643) and Bowman *et al.* (2012:6), who indicated that tourists will not engage in social media if they find it difficult to use and access social media sites.

The second set of attitudes was labelled *Frequency of Use*. The items for this category included the use of social media as part of the tourists' everyday life. This category was deemed applicable due to research conducted by Curtis *et al.* (2010:90) and Laroche *et al.* (2012:1) who found that users commit almost one-third of their time on social media sites.

Thirdly, items such as tourists' general behaviour toward the use of social media in terms of finding it annoying, being indifferent to the use of social media, and finding social media very useful, were labelled *Inclination towards Use*. Previous research conducted by Manthiou (2012:15), Aluri (2012:38) and Cant & Van Heerden (2013:64) indicated that tourists' attitudes toward the use of social media has a direct impact on their inclination toward the use of social media.

The fourth set of attitudes identified was labelled *Trust*, and focused on general trust in the tourism organisation, and trust in the social media site of the tourism organisation. Leung *et al.* (2013:4), Bowman *et al.* (2012:6), Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010:51) and Parra-López *et al.* (2011:643) also found trust to be a determining factor for the influence of attitude toward the use of social media.

The last set of attitudes focused on tourists' willingness to share personal information and their general concerns in terms of trust and privacy issues when using social media. These items are referred to as *Willingness*. This indicated similarities with the findings of Leung *et al.* (2013:4), Bowman *et al.* (2012:6), Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010:51) and Parra-López *et al.* (2011:643), who indicated that tourists' reluctance

to share any personal information on social media sites plays a significant role in determining their attitude towards the use of social media.

Thus, should organisations strive to develop successful social media marketing strategies, it is imperative to consider tourists' attitudes toward the use of social media, to forecast and determine their behaviour. This can indirectly help organisations to influence a positive attitude among tourists' regarding the use of the organisation's social media site.

#### 5.4.4 Critical success aspects for the use of social media

Table 5.4 serves as a descriptive indication of the aspects tourists consider very important for the effective use of social media:

**Table 5.4:** *Critical success aspects for the effective use of social media*

<b>Social media is currently very successful because:</b>	<b>Completely disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Completely agree</b>	<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
It is cost-effective	5%	17%	50%	28%	3.016	.8114
Information can be shared frequently	1%	9%	58%	32%	3.212	.6393
Social media sites are trustworthy	7%	43%	36%	14%	2.568	.8099
The content shared on social media sites are useful	2%	13%	61%	24%	3.060	.6769
Different types of content can be shared (for example photos, videos, comments, etc.)	3%	7%	58%	32%	3.192	.6965
Content can be shared any time of the day	2%	4%	57%	37%	3.296	.6212
Content can be accessed any time of the day	2%	2%	58%	38%	<b>3.332</b>	.5993
Content can be shared any day of the week	2%	3%	57%	38%	<b>3.316</b>	.6275
It enables me to interact directly with organisations	2%	15%	56%	28%	3.088	.7002
It provides immediate feedback when I share/post something on social media sites	2%	12%	61%	25%	3.096	.6577
Social media sites can be easily accessed	3%	8%	56%	33%	3.196	.6866
It is very user-friendly	2%	10%	63%	25%	3.112	.6490
I am allowed to share content	3%	6%	63%	28%	3.172	.6450
I am allowed to respond to content shared by others	2%	6%	63%	29%	3.184	.6323

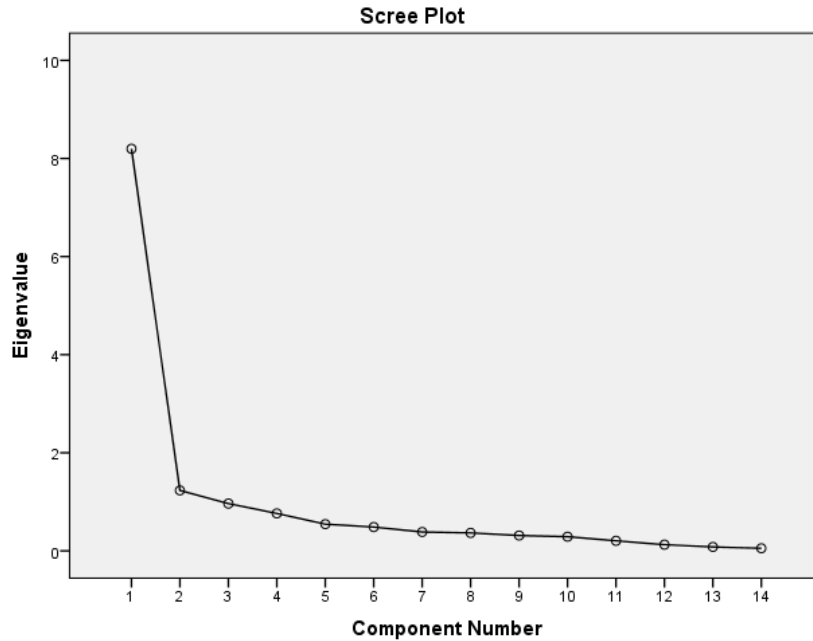
It is evident that most tourists felt that the fact that content can be accessed any time of the day (96%) and shared any time of the day or week (95%) were the most critical aspects for the success of social media. The second most critical aspect was the fact that tourists are allowed to share content and respond to the content shared by others (92%). The ability to access social media sites without difficulty, the different types of content that can be shared on social media sites and the ability to

frequently share information on these sites also contributed to the critical success aspects for social media (90%).

It is clear that accessibility and content (the ability to access and share frequently) were viewed as the most critical aspects determining the success of social media sites. From the table above (Table 5.4) it is evident that there were no major differences between these two aspects and user-friendliness of the sites, response time (immediate feedback), usefulness of content and interaction amongst tourists. Thus, these aspects, from a descriptive point of view, can be seen as important.

In order to perform a regression analyses it was deemed appropriate to do a factor analyses on these critical aspects. Therefore for the purpose of this study, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined and used in order to determine the suitability of principal components analysis. In essence this is a data reduction procedure to determine a correlation matrix for the critical success factor data of this study. By making use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, it will indicate whether there is a possibility of a relationship between certain variables and if this relationship is relevant enough to proceed with a factor analysis, by means of determining adequate sampling data (Field, 2009:647). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for the critical success aspects for the use of social media was .907 which is highly acceptable (Maree, 2007:221). The Bartlett's test ( $p < .00001$ ) was also found to be significant and therefore the reduction of data by means of the principal component is justifiable with varimax rotation.

Two factors based on the critical success aspects for using social media for travel and tourism purposes exist. This data reduction method was used due to little correlations between the critical success factors for using social media for travel and tourism purposes. Loadings of 0.45 were used for item inclusion and an eigenvalue of 1 was used for factor extraction criterion as supported by Maree (2007:220). This resulted in two factors for respondents participating in this study. The two factors represent 67% of the total variance (see Figure 5.1). These factors were labelled according to similar features.



**Figure 5.1:** Scree Plot for Factors representing the total variance

The two critical success factors for respondents were labelled as *Content Accessibility and Sharing* (Factor 1) and *Beneficial Aspects* (Factor 2). The eigenvalues for these factors ranged from 1.232 to 8.197. In order to determine the reliability of the analysed data and to serve as a measure for internal consistency among the identified items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were examined for each factor. For Cronbach Alpha's to be considered acceptable, the value should be above 0.6 (Field, 2009:675). Each aspect was assessed on a Likert scale in the questionnaire and this was used to calculate mean values for each factor in order to determine the level of importance for each factor (See Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5:** Factor analysis for critical success factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes

FACTOR LABEL	FACTOR 1: Content Accessibility and Sharing	FACTOR 2: Beneficial Aspects
Content can be shared any day of the week	.924	
Content can be shared any time of the day	.913	
Content can be accessed any time of the day	.910	
I am allowed to share content	.751	
I am allowed to respond to content shared by others	.731	
It provides immediate feedback when I share/post something on social media sites	.716	
Social media sites can be easily accessed	.694	
Different types of content can be shared (for example photos, videos, comments, etc.)	.667	



It enables me to interact directly with organisations	.639	
Information can be shared frequently	.628	
It is very user-friendly	.583	
Social media sites are trustworthy		.874
The content shared on social media sites are useful		.743
It is cost-effective		.543
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.948</b>	<b>.649</b>
<b>Mean Values and Standard Deviation</b>	<b>3.20 (±0.53)</b>	<b>2.87 (±0.60)</b>
<b>Inter-item Correlation Mean</b>	<b>.627</b>	<b>.441</b>

With regard to Factor 1, eleven items were categorised due to similar characteristics, as indicated by the statistics of the analysed data. These items included aspects such as the time of day and day of the week content can be shared, tourists' opportunity to share and respond to content and immediate feedback provided on content shared. These items were labelled as *Content Accessibility and Sharing* (Factor 1). Tourists who are using social media for travel and tourism purposes consider it critical that these sites are easily accessible and allow for sharing.

The second factor identified consisted of three items including the trustworthiness of the site, usefulness of the content accessed and shared and the cost-effectiveness of the site. These three items were labelled *Beneficial Aspects* (Factor 2). Tourists use social media sites based on the benefits they will experience and consider trustworthiness, usefulness and cost-effectiveness to be of particular importance. Since tourists are willing to engage on social media this factor shows the importance of creating trust and providing useful information. Tourists will remain users if they perceive the site to be beneficial otherwise they might move to the next product that can provide these benefits.

Table 5.5 indicates that Factor 1 (*Content Accessibility and Sharing*) delivered the highest mean-value:  $M=3.20$ . Content accessibility and sharing is thus the most important critical success factor to be considered by organisations. Factor 2 (*Beneficial Aspects*) delivered the lowest mean-value ( $M=2.87$ ), indicating that tourists considered the benefits less important than content accessibility and sharing as a critical success factor for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. Still the mean value is not too low to be considered as not important.

#### 5.4.5 Aspects contributing to the use of social media sites

Standard multiple regression was used to determine how well do certain attitudes and the critical success factors predict the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.

##### a. Attitudes predicting the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes

The results indicate how well the set of variables in terms of attitude predict the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes (in terms of information gathering, interaction and communication, and content sharing as factors identified for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes). The items of the different attitudes (see Table 5.2) were categorised in the following attitudes: perceived level of competency, the frequency of use, inclination towards use, the degree of trust, and willingness to use social media.

The results also indicated the unique variance of each of the independent variables. The table below indicates the model summary and specifies the percentage of the total variance explained of the independent variables: Information Gathering, Interaction and Communication, and Content Sharing (See Table 5.6).

**Table 5.6:** *Model summary of the total variance explained of the independent variables with regard to tourists' attitudes*

ATTITUDES PREDICTING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM PURPOSES					
Independent Variable	Attitude	R Square	Total Variance	Standardised Coefficients Beta	Sig.
Information Gathering	Degree of Trust	.126	12.6%	.305	.002
Interaction and Communication	Willingness	.128	12.8%	.249	.003
Content Sharing	Willingness	.126	12.6%	.256	.002

The model for *Information Gathering* for travel and tourism purposes through social media, explains 12.6% of the total variance. The *Degree of Trust* (in terms of trusting the specific social media site and the tourism organisation, and their concerns in terms of privacy and security issues) acts as the best predictor for their use of social media sites for information gathering ( $\beta=.305; <0.005$ ). This implies that, should the tourist demonstrate a low level of trust in the site and the tourism organisation, they will not use the site for information gathering which ultimately relate to their travel decisions.

The model for *Interaction and Communication* through social media sites for travel and tourism purposes, explains 12.8% of the total variance. The tourists' *Willingness* to share their personal information acts as the best predictor for their use of social media to interact and communicate ( $\beta=.249; <0.005$ ). This implies that, should the tourist demonstrate a higher level of willingness to share their personal information on the site, they will interact and communicate on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes.

From the above, it is clear that the model for *Content Sharing* on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes explains 12.6% of the total variance. Again tourists' *Willingness* to share their personal information acts as the best predictor for their use of social media to share content for travel and tourism purposes ( $\beta=.256; <0.005$ ). Thus, tourists who are willing to share personal information on social media sites will willingly share content on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes. This shows the importance of gaining the trust and building a long-term relationship with the tourists.

The level of competency, use intensity, and inclination towards use as attitudes toward the use of social media indicated no significance in acting as predictors of the factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, and therefore these results are not reported.

**b. Critical success factors predicting the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes**

In order to determine how well does the critical success factors for the effective use of social media predict the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, standard multiple regression was applied (See Table 5.7).

The results indicated how well the set of variables in terms of important aspects for the effective use of social media predict the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes in terms of *Information Gathering*, *Interaction and Communication*, and *Content Sharing*. The results also indicated the unique variance of each of the independent variable.

**Table 5.7:** *Model summary of the total variance explained of the independent variables with regard to tourists' perception of critical success factors*

<b>CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS PREDICTING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM PURPOSES</b>					
<b>Model</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Total Variance</b>	<b>Standardised Coefficients Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Information Gathering</b>	Beneficial Aspects	.230	23%	.273	.000
<b>Interaction and Communication</b>	Beneficial Aspects	.134	13.4%	.220	.004
<b>Content Sharing</b>	Content Accessibility and Sharing	.191	19.1%	.281	.000

The model for *Information Gathering* on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes explained 23% of the total variance. It was thus clear that the benefits received are important when using social media for travel and tourism purposes, it was determined the best predictor specifically for information gathering (beta=.273; 0.000). This implies that tourists will use social media sites to gather information for their travel and tourism needs, if they are fully aware of the attributes/benefits in terms of the trustworthiness of the site, the usefulness of the content shared and if it is cost-effective to use the site for travel and tourism purposes.

The model for *Interaction and Communication* explained 13.4% of the total variance. In this regard, the *Beneficial Aspects* gained when using social media sites to interact and communicate with regard to travel and tourism was identified as the best predictor ( $\beta=.220$ ;  $<0.000$ ). This implies that tourists will use social media sites to interact and communicate for travel and tourism purposes, if they are fully aware of the attributes/benefits in terms of the trustworthiness of the site, the usefulness of the content shared and if it is cost-effective to use the site for travel and tourism purposes.

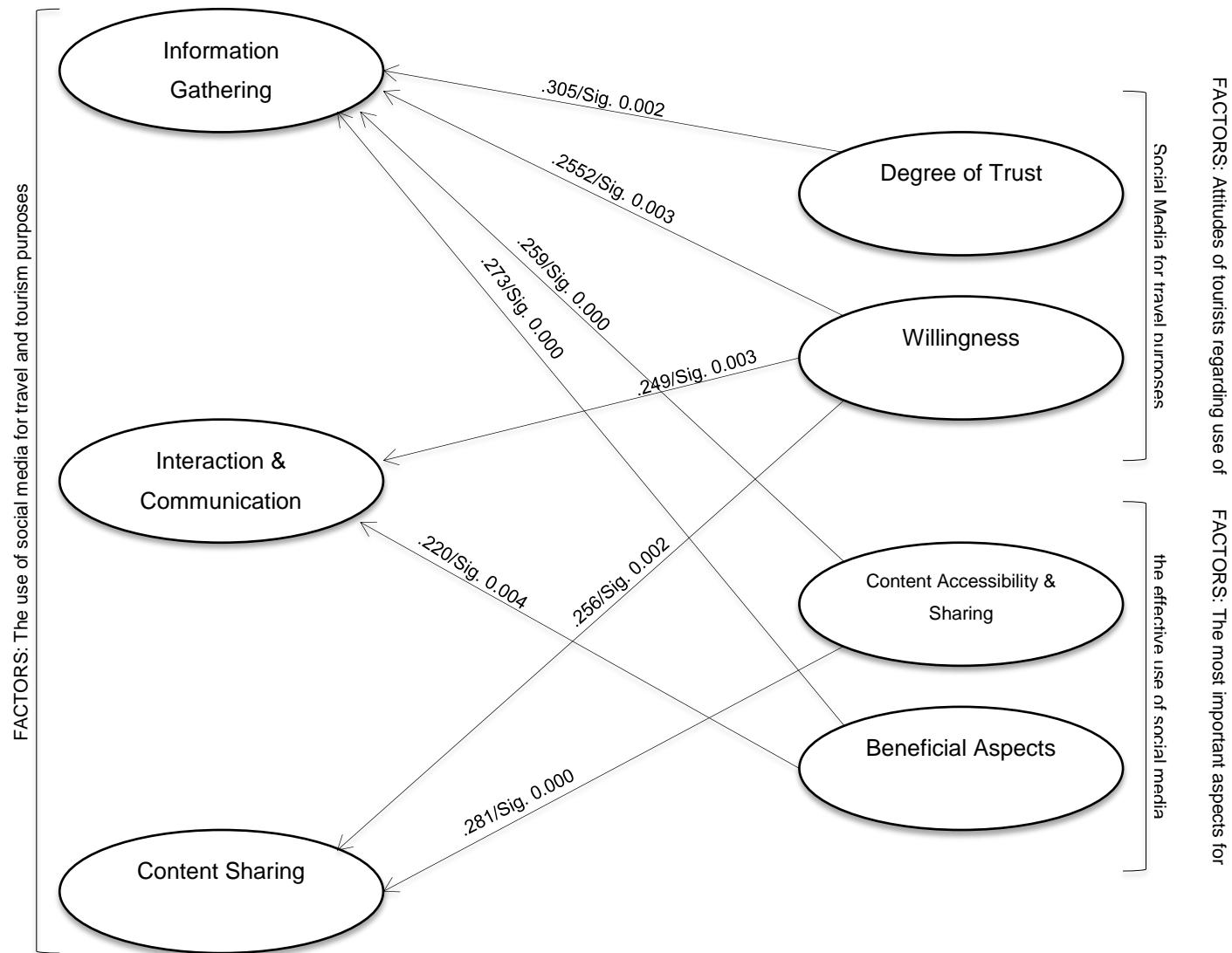
The above model (with regard to *Content Sharing*) explains 19.1% of the total variance. In this regard, *Content Accessibility and Sharing* was identified as the best predictor for content sharing through social media for travel and tourism purposes ( $\beta=.281$ ;  $<.005$ ). This implies that tourists will actively share content, should the content they require for travel and tourism purposes be easily accessible and fairly easy to share.

## **5.5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION OF RESULTS**

Due to the novelty of this study in a tourism environment and the lack of previous research conducted on tourists' attitudes towards the use of social media, as well as the critical success aspects for the use of social media, a variety of sources were consulted to determine possible attitudes and critical success aspects for the use of social media. The results revealed a number of significant findings, some of which indicate similarities with previous research, and others proving to be novel and unique from this research study. The results of the research study boast certain implications for tourism organisations in South Africa considering using social media as part of their marketing strategies. The tourists' attitudes toward the use of social media, as well as the factors in the factor analysis for the critical success aspects of the use of social media and the results of the standard multiple regression have different implications for tourism organisations in implementing social media as an effective and successful marketing tool.

Firstly, from the results it is clear that tourists demonstrate certain attitudes towards the use of social media, which can assist tourism organisations in increasing and improving their use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. Tourists mainly indicated that they are not willing to share all their personal information on social media site, but they do find social media very useful and use it often and are comfortable with the use of social media. In terms of the attitudes toward the use of social media, this study indicated similarities with the findings of previous research conducted by Manthiou (2012), Aluri (2012); Parra-López *et al.* (2011), Kang (2011), Leung *et al.* (2013), Mansfield-Devine (2008), Bowman *et al.* (2012) and Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010).

Thus, considering these attitudes toward the use of social media, it is clear tourism organisations have the opportunity to optimally utilise social media as marketing tool. This is due to the fact that they have the opportunity to share relevant information with tourists on a regular basis, knowing that they are willing to use social media sites or the content shared on social media sites. However, tourists are not willing to share all their personal information on social media sites and thus tourism organisations should be mindful of this fact by determining only the necessary information needed to communicate with tourists and by helping the tourist understand how exactly this information will be used by the tourism organisation. Permission should be obtained directly from the tourists to use their personal information. If the organisation can deliver on this, they will ultimately build and reinforce long-term relationships with the tourist through building higher levels of trust.



**Figure 5.2:** Aspects contributing to the increased use of social media for travel and tourism purposes

This will in return lead to repeat visits and positive recommendations by the tourists.

Secondly, the factor analysis of the critical success aspects for the use of social media revealed two factors: *Content Accessibility and Sharing*, and *Beneficial Aspects*. The accessibility and sharing of content are considered as the most critical success factor for social media. It is of utmost importance that tourism organisations realise the necessity to create social media sites that are user-friendly, interactive and enable tourists to access and share content, and receive feedback from the organisation through the social media site. This shows that tourists want to participate by sharing information (for example photos, experiences, critique), which can create both advantages and disadvantages for tourism organisations. This also shows a willingness on the part of the tourist to engage with the organisation, which is one of the corner stones of loyalty and long-term relationships with them. Furthermore, in terms of *Beneficial Aspects*, seeing that tourists will remain users if they perceive the site to be beneficial, tourism organisations should create benefits for tourists who use social media sites for travel and tourism purposes (for example special packages or discounts for tourists who make bookings through social media sites) and communicate these special benefits for social media tourists in their traditional and social media marketing messages. Should tourism organisations fail to do so, tourists might move to the next product that can provide these benefits.

Thirdly, novel to this study, from Figure 5.2 it was clear that specific predictors exist for the factors influencing the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes in terms of the attitudes of tourists regarding the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as the most important factors for the effective use of social media.

In terms of the attitudes of tourists with regard to the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, the degree/level of trust tourists have in the organisation is an important predictor for the successful use thereof in terms of information gathering. Therefore if the tourism organisation can increase



the level of trust the tourist has in the tourism organisation, the tourist will engage on the social media site to gather relevant information from the tourism organisation's social media site to make better informed travel decisions.

The willingness of tourists to use social media is the only attitude predictor for interaction and communication on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes, however it also predicts content sharing for travel and tourism purposes. Therefore, tourists will only interact and communicate on the social media sites of the tourism organisations and share content based on experiences with the tourism organisation, if they demonstrate the willingness to do so. Willingness can be increased by increasing their degree of trust, ensuring a user-friendly site, and ultimately ensuring an enjoyable experience when interacting on the social media site. The tourism product has the ability to do just this – create an enjoyable experience. The tourism organisation is more than ever dependent on the tourist to create long-term relationships.

In terms of the most important aspects for the effective use of social media, content accessibility and sharing is a critical success factor for information gathering, as well as content sharing for travel and tourism purposes. Tourism organisations should ensure that content is easily accessible through the social media site and it can easily be shared on the social media site, to contribute to providing and ensuring an enjoyable experience when tourists use social media for travel and tourism purposes. In order to ensure this, it is imperative for tourism organisations to have very specific goals and strategies regarding the type of content that they share and that they identify and use social media sites that tourists use frequently and are capable to use and utilise the site for travel and tourism purposes. This could ultimately increase the number of users interacting on the social media site, as well as increase awareness and the recommendations made by tourists on the social media site.

Beneficial aspects prove to be the last predictor based on the effective use for social media for travel and tourism purposes. Tourists need to be aware of

and understand the benefits they will gain when using or interacting and communicating on the social media site. If tourists fully comprehend the beneficial aspects (for example tourists engaging on social media sites, or making a booking through the social media site can get special offers or win a prize) of using the social media site for travel and tourism purposes, they will most likely increase their level and frequency of gathering information on the social media site, as well as increase their level and frequency of interacting and communicating on social media sites.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this research study was to assess whether tourists attitudes and their opinions regarding the success factors for social media contributes to increased tourism social media activity. A survey was conducted at the O.R. Tambo International Airport by distributing questionnaires where 450 questionnaires were distributed amongst national and international tourists. The results revealed that tourists demonstrate certain attitudes when using social media for travel and tourism purposes. The fact that tourists find social media very useful and use it frequently creates the opportunity for tourism organisations to optimally utilise social media as marketing tool, however, organisations should be mindful of the fact that tourists are not willing to share all their personal information and that this particular attitude towards the use of social media can make it difficult for tourism organisations to reach social media marketing success. The results also revealed that tourists' degree of trust and willingness to participate in social media are predictors for information gathering for travel and tourism purposes. It was also clear that tourists' willingness to participate in social media and the perceived beneficial aspects they can gain from using social media are predictors for interaction and communication through social media for travel and tourism purposes. Furthermore, tourists' willingness to participate in social media and content accessibility and sharing are predictors for content sharing on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes. Therefore, the following aspects can contribute to the increased use of social media: tourists' attitudes in terms of their degree of trust and willingness to use social media and the focus on critical success aspects such as content accessibility and sharing and

beneficial aspects. The application of these significant findings will increase online traffic, visibility and image, build and strengthen long-term relationships with tourists, build trust between the organisation and the tourist which can lead to increased repeat visits and recommendations, the opportunity to enter and target new markets, and ultimately lead to gaining a competitive advantage in the market and increasing revenues and profit

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# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research study was to critically assess the factors influencing the effective use of social media in the South African tourism industry in order to develop a framework to optimise the application of social media in the tourism industry. Five objectives for the study were set in Chapter 1, in order to attain the research goal for this study. The five objectives included the following:

- The first objective was to contextualise social media as marketing tool as part of relationship marketing. This objective was achieved in Chapter 2, which addresses the literature review. In this Chapter an overview was given of both relationship marketing and social media, in order to understand the interrelatedness of social media and relationship marketing.
- The second objective entailed determining and evaluating the factors influencing the success of social media marketing by means of a literature review (addressed in chapter 2). An in-depth literature analysis was done regarding the social media phenomenon. This was an important part of the research since this analysis of the literature review assisted in the development of the questionnaire and the validation of the results obtained in this study by means of finding similarities and/or differences with previous research done in this field of study.

- For Chapter 3 (Article 1), Chapter 4 (Article 2) and Chapter 5 (Article 3) the overall aim was to determine the application and usage of social media by tourists with reference to factors inhibiting the use of social media, the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, the relationship between the use of social media and travel behaviour, the identification of aspects that can contribute to the increased use social media in travel and tourism decision making.

In Chapter 3, a literature review on the significance of social media and the aspects inhibiting the use of social media was discussed and a factor analysis was done in order to determine the main factors inhibiting the use of social media, and an independent samples *t*-test was applied to determine similarities/differences between international and national tourists. In Chapter 4, a literature overview on social media and the use of social media were discussed, a factor analysis for the reasons for participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes, correlations between the attitude of tourists toward the use of social media and the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes were done. In chapter 5 a literature review regarding social media as phenomenon in the tourism industry, the importance of the use of social media as marketing tool for organisations, and the attitudes toward the use of social media from a tourist perspective were given. A summary of the factor analysis of the reasons for using social media for travel and tourism purposes, a factor analysis of the critical success aspects for the use of social media and standard multiple regression of the attitudes and most important aspects influencing the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes were discussed.

- The fourth objective for this research study was to develop a framework for the critical success factors to optimise the use of social media as part of tourism marketing strategies. This objective is addressed in Chapter 6 where the framework is presented and discussed.

- The last objective for this study was to draw conclusions and make recommendations that will assist marketing managers in optimising the use of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry. This objective will be achieved in this chapter, Chapter 6. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the research results, as indicated in Chapter 3, 4 and 5. The contributions of this research are stated in this chapter as well as conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the research results. Conclusions and recommendations with regard to future and further research in this field of study will also be made.

Thus, the latter of the above is concluded in the section below. Thereafter the most important contributions of this study are discussed, followed by a discussion of the recommendations for tourism organisations, as well as future research.

## **6.2 CONCLUSIONS**

With regard to the literature review “Understanding the concepts Relationship Marketing and Social media” (Chapter 2), the following conclusions can be made:

### **6.2.1 Conclusions regarding the contextualisation of social media as marketing tool as part of relationship marketing (Chapter 2).**

The following conclusions can be drawn with regard to the literature review on Relationship marketing:

- Throughout history businesses have focused their marketing activities on production and sales, however, this has taken a progressive shift to the consumer. Thus, for businesses to focus on customer satisfaction as an ultimate goal, it is of utmost importance that they should build a long-term relationship with their consumers (cf. 2.1).

- Relationship marketing has grown significantly and became an important marketing strategy. There has been a major shift from transactional marketing to relationship marketing, as marketing managers realised the importance of building long-term relationships with customers. This implies that the marketing effort becomes highly mutually beneficial for both the organisation and the customers over the long-term (cf. 2.2).
- The fact that everyone perceives the concept of relationship marketing differently in terms of its key conceptualisations explains the absence of a universally accepted definition for relationship marketing. However, it is clear that the following elements are essential parts of the concept relationship marketing: relationship marketing efforts begins and ends with the consumer through attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships; relationship marketing is based on the interaction within networks of relationships that leads to long-term relationships with both customers and other role-players; relationship marketing is focused on building relationships with customers by offering value and providing satisfaction on a consistent basis which will enable the organisation to react to changing demand (cf. 2.2).
- Relationship marketing efforts should ultimately focus on identifying the core customers of the organisation in order to establish, develop, maintain, enhance and expand relationships between the organisation, its customers and other stakeholders, in order to maintain a competitive edge (cf. 2.2).
- Relationship marketing is viewed as a multidimensional paradigm, which comprises of six generally identified components that should be attended to in order to focus on developing a relationship marketing strategy: trust, bonding, communication, shared values, empathy and reciprocity (cf. 2.3).

- Although there are a number of contextual factors that influence the success of certain relationship marketing efforts, central to the success of building long term relationships with customers, is the existence of two key mediating variables: commitment and trust (Commitment-Trust Theory). Thus, building commitment and trust between the organisation and the customer will ultimately form the fundamental foundation for building a long-term relationship (cf. 2.3).
- Relationship marketing consists of five strategic elements that organisations should focus on for building a relationship marketing strategy. After organisations have attended to the six components of relationship marketing, they should focus on the five strategic elements, which include core service, customer relationships, augmenting core service, pricing services vs. customer loyalty, and marketing to employees (cf. 2.4). These fundamental values and core strategic elements of relationship marketing can be implemented to assist the organisation in building long-term relationships with their customers and other role players (cf. 2.4).
- Relationship marketing is applicable for businesses in the service sector such as the tourism industry. Researchers in the services sector were amongst the first to embrace the concept of relationship marketing. The reason for the appropriateness of relationship marketing in the tourism industry involves the fact that there exists an important relationship between the frontline employee and the customer (or tourist/visitor). This relationship influences the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty to a large extent (cf. 2.4).
- Building a relationship between a consumer and the organisation requires that the consumer should be convinced that the organisation is able to provide continuous value and satisfaction to the consumer. This will result in customers who have a loyal attitude towards the organisation through repeat transactions and recommendations to



other parties (friends, family and colleagues). This holds benefits for the organisation in terms of: increased sales, increased market share, and increased profits (cf. 2.5).

- Although the success of the long-term relationship is dependent on a certain level of satisfaction of the customer, it is also important that companies realise the benefits relationship marketing holds for the customer. The benefits experienced by the customer include confidence benefits, social benefits, and special treatment benefits (cf. 2.5).
- The correct usage and sharing of information in relationship marketing efforts contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation. Also, the decisions made by the organisation during the process of establishing a long-term relationship with customers are influenced by two main factors: technology and the use thereof, and information (cf. 2.5).
- Social media has advanced into an effective marketing tool. By including the use of social media in marketing strategies, it allows businesses easy access to market opportunities, to learn about trends in their target market, and enable them to communicate and build relationships with their consumers. Social media forms an important part of relationship marketing. Relationship marketing is aimed at relations and communication within different networks of relationships between the consumer and the supplier (cf. 2.6).
- Both relationship marketing and social media as marketing tool is aimed at embracing the importance of building long-term relationships with customers and other role-players. Relationship marketing is aimed at forging long-term relationships, whereas relationships form the foundation for social media. Relationship marketing has social bonding to effect which ensures the personalisation and customisation of the

relationship, where social media assists the organisation in the process of interacting with consumers in real-time by exchanging information, opinions, experiences and recommendations, and so on, customised to the profile of the organisation or the relationship the organisation aims to build with its customers (cf. 2.6).

### **6.2.2 Conclusions regarding determining and evaluating the factors influencing the success of social media marketing (Chapter 2).**

The following conclusions can be made regarding the literature review on Social Media (Chapter 2):

- Social media started out as a platform where individuals share content with each other for entertainment purposes. However, organisations have realised the potential social media holds for communicating and interacting with consumers. Social media has become one of the research areas receiving considerable attention. This has to the effect that different descriptions for the concept of social media exist. Social media serves as an online platform for users to interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications. In essence, it allows users to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other users (cf. 2.7).
- As soon as organisations and individuals understand what social media entails, it is imperative to comprehend the various forms of social media. These forms include emails, social networking sites, video sharing/content communities, blogs and micro-blogs, instant messaging, photo sharing, text messaging, collaborative projects, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds (cf. 2.7).
- The different types of social media can be used for a variety of purposes. These purposes include communication, collaboration,

multimedia, reviews and opinions, entertainment, brand monitoring, the fulfilment of marketing strategies and other (cf. 2.7).

- This online medium marks a tremendous break from traditional mass media, and it changed the marketing landscape completely. Social media has developed into the latest marketing wonder. This is due to the fact that the target group/audience becomes a near-equal partner in the generation and distribution of content through social media. Thus, social media has enhanced the standard communication repository of many businesses and holds momentous advantages for businesses (cf. 2.8).
- Social media represents a universal source of information which changed the tools and strategies businesses use to communicate with their consumers, to reduce the cost of executing their marketing strategies, and to enable the consumer to control the flow of information to a certain extent. Thus, social media can be considered the most powerful tool to help businesses execute their current marketing strategies in a different manner than a few years back (cf. 2.8).
- The importance of the use of social media as marketing tool for organisations include communication and interaction purposes, to instantly broadcast specific marketing messages to consumers, to fulfil marketing strategies at a lower cost, and to build relationships and trust between the organisation and the consumers, amongst others (cf. 2.8).
- As it develops into more forms, it is imperative for organisations to understand the benefits of the different ways in which they can use social media tools and how these tools relate to their environment. Organisations are considering more innovative and cost effective methods to market their products and/or services. Thus, they are paying a substantial amount of attention to social media, as it is

regarded one of the most effective ways to reach the consumers. Ultimately, organisations tend to devote more resources to social media (cf. 2.8).

- It is imperative for organisations to have very specific objectives and strategies if and when they plan to implement social media as marketing tool. The three most important objectives organisations should focus on for the use of social media as marketing tool include brand awareness, brand engagement, and word-of-mouth communication (cf. 2.8).
- Social media boasts several benefits for both the organisation and the user, of which the most important benefits include the deepening of existing relationships between the organisation and its customers, the fact that it allows both the organisation and the user to generate and exchange content, and social media increases and enhances communication between the organisation and the user (cf. 2.9).
- The benefits of social media can be categorised in terms of functional benefits, social benefits and psychological and hedonic benefits. Furthermore, there are certain incentives that will contribute to the use of social media: personal skills and predisposition towards social media, trust in the contributions of others, altruism, having access to the technologies needed to access social media, and the socio-technological environment (cf. 2.9).
- The social media phenomenon has played an immense role in the development of a more user-friendly and connected World Wide Web, but it also boasts a number of challenges and disadvantages. These disadvantages include the fact that social media site operators are not in full control of what is being shared on their sites, the exploitation of users' trust, privacy and security issues and concerns for the user, it requires a substantial investment in terms of time, bears the risk to

destroy the image of the organisation instantly, and social media becomes difficult to measure (cf. 2.10).

- The use of social media can serve as a promising marketing tool for organisations. Given the fact that social media can strengthen and deepen relationships between organisations and its customers, social media can play an important role in the tourism industry (cf. 2.10).
- Tourism is considered as one of the imperative elements of online commerce, which has profoundly impacted the structure of the online commerce industry. The promulgation of social media has been so significant that it is considered a vital topic in the travel and tourism industry. In the tourism industry, social media is crucial for organisations that are increasingly valuing the opinions, reviews and referrals of their tourists. This will lead to more reliable and trustworthy information sources than the suppliers themselves (cf. 2.11).
- Although social media has several benefits, a substantial amount of tourism organisations are still not fully employing social media as marketing strategy. This proves that there is a gap in the literature and research of the field. Social media serves to be unique (compared to traditional broadcasting and publishing methods) in that it facilitates direct communication between the organisation and its target group (tourists), without having to acknowledge distance and time (cf. 2.11).
- Social media is considered a mega trend in the tourism industry with a significant impact. Travellers have widely adopted the use of social media to search, organise, share and elucidate their stories and experiences through different social media platforms in a collaborative way. This implies a different level of competition amongst organisations in terms of developing new business models. It is of utmost importance that marketers of tourism organisations understand how tourists use the internet/social media before, during and after vacation trips to

acquire information about their trips, to share their experiences and to compare the variety of services related to their trip (cf. 2.11).

- It has the ability to assist tourism organisations to engage potential visitors, understand and respond to tourists' preferences by analysing their comments on online communities, and increase the online presence in order to reach greater online revenue. Social media dramatically influences tourists' behaviour seeing that it enables both the tourist and the organisation (destination) to engage directly with one another (cf. 2.11).

### **6.2.3 Conclusions regarding the application and usage of social media by tourists with reference to:**

- **Factors inhibiting the use of social media (Chapter 3):**

In Article 1 (Chapter 3) a descriptive analysis was done in order to determine the demographic variables of tourists, the main reasons why tourists will refrain from using social media, as well as the differences between the reasons for not using social media between International and National tourists to South Africa. The following conclusions were evident:

- More male respondents participated in this research study. Respondents were mainly between the ages of 41 and 60, with an average age of 54. Tourists were well educated with a diploma or degree (cf. 3.4.1.1).
- Most of the tourists participating in this research study originated from South Africa, with 42% of tourists residing from outside South African borders. The majority of tourists indicated that they participate in social media, with 44% indicating that they do not use social media at the time (cf. 3.4.1.1).

- Tourists indicated that they were not participating in social media mainly due to the fact that they were not willing to share any personal information about themselves, they were concerned that their privacy might be violated, and they found the use of social media too time consuming (cf. 3.4.1.2)
- There were no statistically significant differences of the factors indicated for not participating in social media by International and National tourists to South Africa. Thus, both International and National tourists refrained from using social media for the same reasons. The non-use factor of social media can therefore be considered as universal (cf. 3.4.2.2).

In Article 1 (Chapter 3) a factor analysis was done in order to determine the main reasons why tourists do not participate in social media. These results indicated the following five factors that inhibit the use of social media for tourists travelling in/to South Africa:

- Content (in terms of the fact that they use of social media is too time consuming, they do not find the content shared trustworthy and they do not trust the opinions or content shared), was identified as the main factor inhibiting the use of social media (cf. 3.4.2.1). Thus, tourists mainly refrain from using social media due to the fact that they do not trust the content shared on social media sites.
- The second factor identified, consisted of aspects such as being sceptical about social media, being uncomfortable with using social media, and finding the use of social media somewhat annoying. These items were labelled Personal Perceptions and also served as a factor inhibiting the use of social media (cf. 3.4.2.1). Thus, the perception tourists have prior to any social media experience act as the third most important factor inhibiting the use of social media.

- Factor 3 was identified as technological competency. This factor was the second least significant factor inhibiting the use of social media (cf. 3.4.2.1) and can thus not be considered as a major inhibiting factor. Tourists have the technological ability and competency to use social media, and it does not act as a deciding factor for not using social media.
- Accessibility, which involved tourists' access to devices, Internet and social media sites, was the least significant factor inhibiting the use of social media (cf. 3.4.2.1). Thus, the fact that tourists do in fact have access to social media creates multiple opportunities for tourism organisations to utilise social media as marketing tool, should they be successful in overcoming the other factors inhibiting the use of social media, such as *Content*, *Privacy Issues*, and *Personal Perceptions*.
- The last factor identified focused on tourists concerns in terms of violation of privacy, level of control over content shared on social media sites and concerns in terms of trust and identity-theft. This factor was labelled 'Privacy Issues' and proved to be the second most important factor inhibiting the use of social media (cf. 3.4.2.1). Thus, tourists view this as the second most important reason for not using social media. Therefore, if tourism organisations cannot overcome this factor, all other efforts to engage non-participants on social media might be of no value.

The identified factors indicated similarities with the findings of previous research studies done in different industries. By considering the above-mentioned factors, marketers can fully understand tourists' negativity in terms of the use of social media, as well as comprehending their resistance to the use of social media. This information provides insight for tourism organisations on how to adapt social media strategies to overcome these obstacles.



- **The use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, the relationship between the use of social media and travel behaviour (Chapter 4):**

In this article the results focused on the demographic variables, the travel behaviour of tourists, the type of social media sites used and the time spend on social media, and the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. A factor analysis was done for the reasons tourists use social media for travel and tourism purposes. Correlations were determined between the attitudes of tourists towards the use of social media and the factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. The following conclusions were evident:

- Demographic conclusions as per the previous article.
- The majority of tourists were in a relationship, with 24% of tourists indicating that they were married with children. 54% of tourists travelled between 1-5 weekends per year (cf. 4.4.1.2). It is thus mostly tourists who are in a relationship that travels 1-5 weekends per year.
- Tourists took 1-2 holidays per year, other than traveling on weekends. The average length of holidays appeared to consist of 1-5 nights (cf. 4.4.1.2). This implies that tourists who participate in social media for travel and tourism purposes are frequent travellers.
- Email was the most preferred type of social media used. There was no significant difference between the popularity of Email and Facebook (cf. 4.4.1.3).
- Email (64%) and Facebook (54%) were the most popular types of social media used specifically for travel and tourism purposes. 32% of tourists also used TripAdvisor when planning to travel (cf. 4.4.1.4).

In Chapter 4 (Article 2) a factor analysis was done in order to determine the reasons for participating in social media specifically for travel and tourism purposes. The results indicated the following:

- Information gathering, with regard to the tourism product or service, contact information and enquiring about and making a booking, is the main reason for participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes (cf. 4.4.2.1). Thus, tourism organisations should give attention to the importance of sharing accurate, adequate, updated and relevant information on social media sites to assist tourists in their search for information about the tourism organisation, destination, or product. The level of competition in this industry is alarming and tourism organisations should utilise every medium to its full potential in delivering sound product information.
- Factor 2, Interaction and Communication, consisted of items such as communicating and interacting to give travel advice, ask for the opinions of other tourists and interacting with like-minded people. This factor proved to be the least important factor influencing the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, however, the difference in mean value for this factor and Factor 2 were very small (cf. 4.4.2.1). Therefore, tourism organisations should employ committed personnel who are assigned specifically to social media management in terms of interaction and communication with tourists, to ensure timely and real-time response to messages and content shared on the social media site. The literature revealed that organisations are not dedicating enough employees for the management of their social media sites. The research results indicated the importance of dedicated employees that can ensure immediate feedback and real-time response, therefore it is imperative for organisations to give attention to this matter.
- Factor 3 was identified as Content Sharing. This motive was the second most important reason for the use of social media for travel and

tourism purposes, enabling tourists to create and share content about the tourism product or destination at any place and at any time (cf. 4.4.2.1). Tourism organisations should focus on enabling tourists to share their experiences, opinions and suggestions with one another, in order to change the intangible face of tourism and to bring the product closer to current and potential tourists. This should however be closely monitored which support the previous finding related to dedicated staff members for social media.

The identified factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes indicated similarities with the findings of previous research studies. However, novel to this study was the results that indicated the necessity for tourism organisations to realise that tourists who are using social media for travel and tourism purposes are frequent travellers. These tourists also find it necessary to receive timely feedback and real-time response. Therefore, it indicated the importance of tourism organisations employing dedicated personnel to manage social media sites. By determining and understanding the factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, marketing managers can focus their marketing strategies on enabling tourists to gather information about their tourism organisation, product or destination through social media, and to ensure that they are able to share content such as opinions, reviews, experiences, photos and so on with other tourists on social media sites. This could lead to tourists making better-informed travel decisions and better recommendations from tourists based on their experience with the tourism organisation or at the tourism product or destination.

A correlation analysis was done in order to determine the correlations that exist between tourists' attitude towards the use of social media and the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. From the results of the research, the following can be concluded:

- Information gathering (Factor 1) indicated significant correlations with tourists' attitudes in terms of competency, trust and willingness (cf.

4.4.2.3). Thus, as tourists' level of competency improves, their frequency of use increases, they trusted the site more, and they were more willing to share their personal information. Tourists' skills level therefore has a direct impact on their frequency and level of use. Tourism organisations should give attention to the fact that the current travelling market prove to be of a much older age. Therefore, these organisations should ensure that their current travelling market does have the skill and competency to fully utilise social media for travel and tourism purposes.

- Significant correlations also existed between interaction and communication (factor 2) and competency, trust and willingness (cf. 4.4.2.3). Thus, as tourists' level of interaction and communication increase, their level of trust, willingness and competency will also increase. Again, tourists' level of interaction influences their competency, as well as their willingness and level of trust to interact and communicate on the social media site of the tourism organisation.
- Content Sharing (factor 3) indicated significant correlations with competency, trust and willingness (cf. 4.4.2.3). Thus, the more tourists share content on social media sites, the more their level of competency, trust and willingness to share information and interact on social media sites will increase. The interrelatedness of these factors is evident and should be included in all social marketing strategies.
- No significant correlations were reported between the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes with use intensity and inclination towards use as attitudes of tourists when participating in social media (cf. 4.4.2.3).
- The most significant correlations that exist were between interaction and communication and willingness, content sharing and willingness, and content sharing and competency (cf. 4.4.2.3).

- **The identification of aspects that can contribute to the increased use of social media in travel and tourism industry (Chapter 5):**

In this article the results focused on aspects that can contribute to the increased use of social media in the travel and tourism industry with a focus on the attitudes of tourists towards the use of social media and the critical success factors for the use of social media.

- Tourists mainly demonstrated that they were not willing to share all their personal information on social media sites, they found the use of social media very useful and they were using social media more often (cf. 5.4.1.2). Thus, tourists' reluctance to be willing to share all their personal information on social media sites plays a significant role in determining their attitude toward the use of social media. The use of these sites is thus not the major challenge but their trust in these sites is important.
- Tourists demonstrated both positive and negative attitudes towards the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. The main negative attitude included tourists' unwillingness to share all their personal information on social media sites (cf. 5.4.1.2). On the positive side, tourists found the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes very useful and were comfortable with the use thereof, therefore using it as a regular part of life (cf. 5.4.1.2). Tourism organisations should realise that the fact that tourists find the use of social media very useful and are comfortable with the use of social media creates opportunities for the organisation to optimally utilise social media as marketing tool. However, this can only be done effectively if the organisation is mindful of the fact that they are not willing to share all their personal information on social media sites. This creates challenges in terms of bookings and payments over the Internet.

A factor analysis was done in order to determine the critical success factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. The results of the research study concluded the following:

- Two factors based on the critical success factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes existed. The two factors were labelled Content Accessibility and Sharing, and Beneficial Aspects (cf. 5.4.2.1).
- Content Accessibility and Sharing included the fact that content can be shared at any time of the day, any day of the week, the opportunity to respond to content shared and the opportunity to share content. This factor delivered the highest mean value (cf. 5.4.2.1). Thus, tourists who were using social media sites consider it critical that these sites are easily accessible and allow for the sharing of different types of content. This also indicated a willingness on the part of the tourist to engage with the organisation, which can be an important feature for the development of a long-term relationship between the tourist and the tourism organisation.
- Beneficial Aspects, consisted of items such as the fact that social media sites were trustworthy, useful and cost-effective and delivered the second highest mean value (cf. 5.4.2.1). Thus, it is clear that tourists will use social media based on their perceived level of benefits they will experience when using the social media sites. Since tourists indicated the willingness to use social media sites if they will experience beneficial aspects, this factor shows the importance of providing and communicating useful information based on the benefits of the use of social media.
- Content Accessibility and Sharing, can be considered the most important and statistically significant critical success factor for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, with Beneficial Aspects

(Factor 2), being a less important critical success factor for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes (cf. 5.4.2.1).

Standard multiple regression was done in order to determine how well certain attitudes predict the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. From the results, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- The level of trust in terms of tourists trusting the specific social media site and the tourism organisation, and their concerns in terms of privacy and security issues, acted as the best predictor for information gathering (cf. 5.4.2.2).
- Tourists' willingness to share their personal information acted as the best predictor for their use of social media to interact and communicate (cf. 5.4.2.2).
- Tourists' willingness to share their personal information also acted as the best predictor for their use of social media to share content for travel and tourism purposes (cf. 5.4.2.2).

In order to determine how well do important aspects for the effective use of social media predict the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, standard multiple regression was done. The results concluded the following:

- The attributes gained when using social media was determined as the best predictor for information gathering for travel and tourism purposes (cf. 5.4.2.3).
- In terms of interaction and communication, the attributes gained when using social media proved to be the best predictor (cf. 5.4.2.3).

- Content accessibility and sharing was identified as the best predictor for content sharing through social media for travel and tourism purposes (cf. 5.4.2.3).

#### **6.2.4 Conclusions with regard to the framework to be implemented by tourism organisations to assist in improving the effective and successful use of social media as marketing tool:**

The complete analyses of all statistical data were used to develop the framework for the optimisation of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry and identify the key success factors. The implementation of this framework can assist tourism organisations in improving the effective and successful use of social media as marketing tool. The framework indicates the factors inhibiting the use of social media (from both a demand and supply perspective), the preferred social media site for travel and tourism, the factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as the attitudes toward the use of social media, and the key success factors that act as predictors for the different factors of the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.

- Ultimately, the results of all the analyses presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5 were used in the development of the framework.
- It is clear from Figure 6.1 that the core of the framework revolves around the factors inhibiting the use of social media and factors influencing the use of social media. It was evident that accessibility, technology and competency in terms of the use of social media are not problematic for respondents. Respondents are more concerned about content and trust.

Marketers should first take cognisance of the factors inhibiting the use of social media and overcome these obstacles. By considering the main factor for not participating in social media it should be the ultimate goal of the organisation to create a common awareness amongst their target



market that all information (content) shared by the organisation, regardless of the platform they are using to share this information, are trustworthy and truthful and that personal information of the tourists are considered and use respectfully. Another important aspect for tourism organisations to consider is the fact that tourists do have access to social media site, which creates opportunities for the tourism organisation to finally increase their market share through social media reach. However, these opportunities can only be successful once the issues in terms of content and privacy are taken care of. It is imperative for tourism organisations to firstly give attention to the factors inhibiting the use of social media. Therefore, these organisations should be taken care of before any social media marketing strategy can be developed and implemented.

- In the implementation of social media strategies tourism organisations should consider E-mail, Facebook and Trip Advisor as preferred social media tools, once they are successful in overcoming the factors inhibiting the use of social media. Tourism organisations should develop marketing strategies with specific actions and goals for Email, Facebook and TripAdvisor. Tourists indicated that these are the three main types of social media that they use for travel and tourism purposes. It is also important to determine the exact type of content and information that will be shared on these types of social media respectively, as well as what the purpose of each site will be.
- With regard to attitudes and critical success factors, it was found that trust, willingness, content accessibility and beneficial aspects predict the use of social media in a tourism context for information gathering which was novel to this study. Tourism organisations should carefully consider that attitudes and critical success factors that predict the factors of the use of social media respectively in the development of the social media marketing strategies. This will ensure that the correct

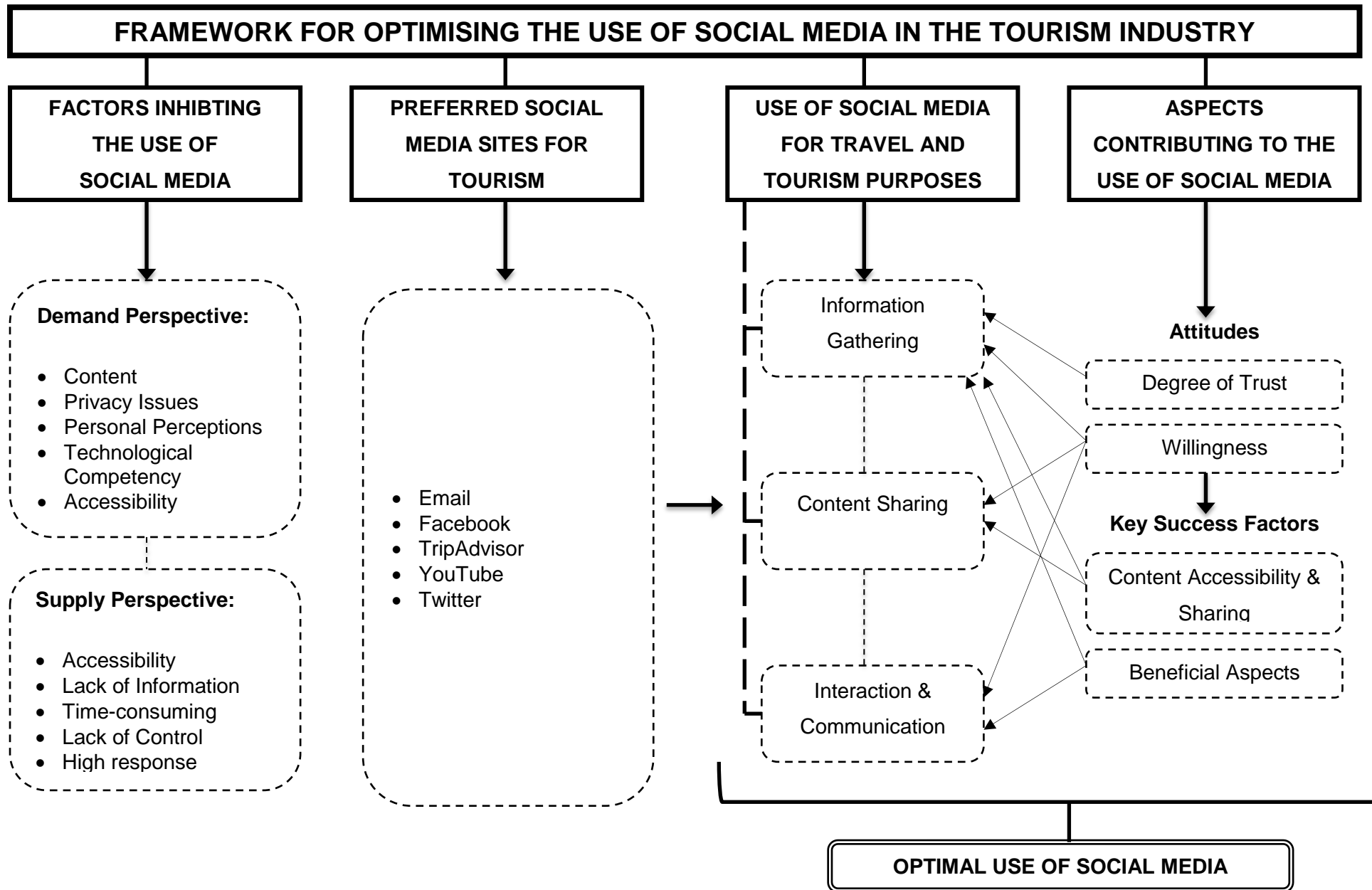


Figure 6.1: Framework for optimising the use of social media as marketing tool

resources are allocated to the specific actions, and that valuable resources such as time and energy are not wasted on actions that will not deliver on the determined outcome of the marketing strategy.

This novel framework reveals specific results for the travel and tourism industry that should be applied in order to optimise the use of social media as marketing tool, seeing that it emphasises the importance of being aware of the tourist and their role in the exchange as such a relationship can either be to the benefit of the organisation or not.

Should tourism organisations be successful in the implementation of this framework they will effectively optimise the use of social media as marketing tool. This will ultimately lead to increase in brand awareness, market share, referrals and online word-of-mouth, which will have a direct impact on the development of a loyal customer base and becoming more competitive

### **6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS**

The results of this research, delivered three-fold contributions: contributions in terms of the theory of the field, methodological contributions, as well as practical application contributions. The seven most important contributions will be discussed:

#### **6.3.1 Contributions of the study with regard to the theoretical landscape**

- The first major contribution this study makes toward the theoretical landscape, is the contextualisation of relationship marketing and its interrelatedness with regard to the concept of social media. A framework was developed to optimise and explain the interrelatedness of relationship marketing and social media (cf. 1.2: Figure. 1.1). This framework can be adopted by researchers and scholars to understand and argue that social media is closely related to the principle of building relationships, and more specifically a long-term relationship, between the tourism organisation and the tourist, in order to ensure the success of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry (cf. 1.2).

- Another major contribution to the theoretical landscape is the definition of social media developed through an analysis of current existing definition of the term/concept. Due to a lack of a universally accepted definition for the term 'social media', and analysis was done in order to assess the most common principles of the term, to develop the following definition that can be regarded as universally acceptable by tourism researchers and scholars: "Social media serves as an online platform for tourists to interact with one another by means of generating and exchanging a variety of content, through different channels and/or applications to facilitate travel decision-making. In essence, it allows tourists to create, share, communicate and comment on content shared by other tourists with regard to their experiences, opinions, and referrals of a tourism organisation, destination or product." (cf. 2.7).

### **6.3.2 Contributions of the study regarding the methodology**

- Due to a lack of a suitable questionnaire to gather the necessary information for the data analysis of this study, a new questionnaire was developed. The high internal consistency of the questionnaire allows for it to be adopted by other researchers in the field of social media and the tourism industry, irrespective of their location, in order to determine the factors inhibiting the use of social media, the reasons for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes, as well as the critical success factors for the use of social media for different tourism industries around the world (cf. 1.5.3.2.1).

### **6.3.3 Contributions of the research study regarding the practical application of the results**

- The results of the research study was analysed to reach the fourth objective of the study, namely to develop a framework to optimise the use of social media as part of tourism organisations' marketing strategies. This framework can be practically implemented by tourism organisations within the South African tourism industry to ensure the optimisation of online social media marketing efforts.

- This framework can be used for national and international markets, as their preferences in terms of social media do not differ.
- The specific insights as to which attitudes and critical success factors contribute to the usage of social media should be considered in social media marketing strategies.
- The framework was developed in a way that will ensure it is easily understandable, as well as the fact that it will comprise the minimum amount of effort when implementing the framework in the development of social media marketing strategies of tourism organisations (cf. 5.4.2.4: Figure. 5.2). The framework can be published both in academic and industry literature to optimize the use of social media sites in the travel and tourism industry.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the results of the study, certain recommendations with regard to the study, as well as future research are made in the following sections:

### **6.4.1 Recommendations regarding the study**

- It is recommended that the framework should be implemented by tourism organisations and destinations to optimise the use of social media.
- Factors inhibiting tourists to use social media should be dealt with in the development of social media strategies to overcome these obstacles before implementing the strategy.
- Tourism marketers should be aware of the fact that there are no significant differences with regard to the reasons why they do not participate in social media, between International and National tourists to South Africa. This implies that a universal social media marketing strategy can be developed and implemented in order to attract both International and National non-users to participate on the social media site of the tourism organisation, product, or destination. Ultimately, tourism organisations will reach a larger audience

through their online social media marketing strategies if they follow the success factors.

- With email and Facebook being the most popular forms of social media used by tourists for travel and tourism purposes, marketing managers should focus on the use of these two types of social media to communicate, interact and gather feedback with and from the tourists to ensure building trust and relationships with tourists, and to satisfy tourists needs with regard to their use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.
- Knowledge regarding the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes by tourists, will assist marketers in the development of effective marketing strategies, and implementing these strategies at a lower cost. Marketers should, in the case of this survey, focus very strongly on the information they make available and share on their social media sites, as well as tourists' ability to create and share content on the social media site, seeing that these are the main reasons why tourists participate in social media for travel and tourism purposes.
- Tourists' competency, degree of trust and their willingness to share information play a significant role in their use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. Marketing strategies should focus on creating social media sites that are easily accessible and user-friendly, and safe to use with almost no privacy and security issues for the tourists, in order to increase their willingness to interact on the site and share information regarding their experiences. The positive information shared by tourists' with regard to the tourism organisation/product/destination would directly lead to creating a positive online awareness amongst other tourists, as well as referrals and recommendations.
- Marketing managers of tourism organisations should understand that the level of trust in terms of tourists trusting the specific social media site, as well as the tourism organisation, and their concerns in terms of privacy and security

issues, act as the best predictors for information gathering. Thus, if marketing managers can ensure that the social media site is trustworthy, with no threat of possible security issues, tourists will most likely freely gather information from the social media site to make better-informed travel decisions. This can be done by developing online marketing campaigns focused on messages communicating the safe online environment that the tourism organisation creates from the use of their social media sites. These marketing messages can also be communicated through traditional marketing campaigns in order to reach current non-participants as well.

- Tourists' willingness to share their personal information has a direct effect on their use of social media to interact and communicate for travel and tourism purposes. Therefore, should tourism organisation have the ability to ensure tourists that their personal information will only be used in a professional manner to reach organisational goals for example, with no obscurity or the possibility of identity-theft, tourists will most likely interact and communicate on the tourism organisations' social media site without any safety and security concerns. This can build a stronger online community, ensuring the growth of the online target community, with more tourists being reached and influenced to positively react toward online marketing efforts.
- Marketing managers should also make tourists aware of the beneficial aspects gained when participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes, seeing that this will influence their level of interaction and communication on social media sites for travel and tourism purposes. This can be done through competitions and special offers to be made available to the online community of the tourism organisations' social media site to encourage tourists' participation, interaction and communication with other tourists and the tourism organisation. By doing this, more accurate feedback can be obtained directly from the tourists, almost instantly.
- Tourism organisations' marketing managers should develop marketing strategies based on the implementation of the framework developed in this

research study. This framework serves as a direct indication of the aspects of tourists' attitudes regarding the use of social media, as well as the most important aspects influencing the use of social media, serving as critical success factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. If marketing strategies are developed accordingly, tourism organisations will increase tourists' degree of trust and willingness to participate in social media for travel and tourism purposes by focusing on the content accessibility and sharing, and the beneficial aspects gained when participating in social media for travel and tourism purposes. This will ultimately lead to a higher level of trust between the tourist and the organisation, more loyal tourists with increased visits, better referrals and recommendations, cost-effective marketing to reach a larger audience, and a better online (and possibly offline) presence to build long term relationships with these loyal customers, to ultimately increase revenue and market growth.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations regarding future research**

An analysis of the results of this research study covered various research gaps but from this study the following research can still be considered in the future:

- Determine if any differences exist for tourists from different age groups in terms of their use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.
- Determine the differences in the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes with regard to tourists with different income levels and from different social classes. Thus, research can be conducted to determine if the low cost of the use of social media influences tourists from lower-income levels to gather information to make better-informed travel decisions.
- Determine the role of tourists' travel behaviour in their travel decision-making process and their use of social media for travel and tourism purposes. For example, do tourists use social media to gather information for their weekend trips, but consult other media to gather information for their annual holidays, or are there no significant difference.



- Due to the vast development of technology, research should be conducted on a continuous basis to adapt marketing strategies to the differences and changing trends, for example changing preferences in terms of the type of social media sites used.
- Determine the impact of the visual content shared on the social media site on the tourists' travel decision-making process.
- Determine a specific tourist profile for a specific tourism organisation/product/destination, and the tourists' inclination towards the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.
- Determine the successful implementation of the framework developed in this research study for a specific tourism organisation/product/destination to determine to what extent the social media success rate of the tourism organisation's/product's/destination's has increased.
- Seeing that the social media landscape changes persistently, users' trends and likings change, and that marketing managers have little to no control over the content shared on social media sites, it is of utmost importance for research to take place on a continuous basis to ensure that the critical success factors for the use of social media in the tourism industry stay relevant to the online social media marketing strategies of the tourism organisation.

## **6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- From the analysis of the research study, it was clear that the study was limited by the lack of information regarding the use of social media as marketing tool in the tourism industry. Both qualitative and quantitative research was conducted in order to solicit the results for the effective and successful implementation of social media as marketing tool.

- Furthermore, the study was limited by the lack of tourism organisations that effectively use social media in the South African tourism industry, which participated in the semi-structured interviews to determine the opinion of the use of social media by the supply side of the industry. The findings of the qualitative analysis are therefore considered broad statements that inferred from specific cases in the South African tourism industry.
- The results revealed that the demographic profile of the tourists participating concluded an average age of 54 for mainly male respondents. This also limit the study in the case of determining the factors for the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes for a younger market, that can offer more opportunities for tourism organisations to target new markets. However, since the findings indicated no significant difference between International and National tourists, it can be important for tourism organisations to determine if age has a significant impact on the use of social media for travel and tourism purposes.
- Lastly, tourists' reasons for travel were not determined in this study. Therefore, it might indicate that the reason for travel has a direct impact on the type of social media tourists use. Thus, it is imperative for tourism organisations to determine whether the tourists they have access to that use social media are influenced by their reason for travel when identifying the type of social media to use for their travel arrangements and decision-making.



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## **APPENDIX 1: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- What types of social media do your organisation currently make use of and why?
- How important is it to assign human resources to social media and is it worth it?
- How many staff members are currently involved in managing your social media sites?
- Do you think social media is an effective and useful marketing tool?
- List some of the difficulties or challenges that you currently experience by making use of social media as marketing tool.
- Why do you consider the above-mentioned as difficulties or challenges?
- What do you think need to be in place to ensure effectiveness of social media use?
- What, in your opinion, are some of the critical aspects for the success of social media as marketing strategy?
- Why do you think is it important to have a very specific strategy for the use of social media, with specific goals?
- What do you think are some of the main factors that inhibit the use of social media?

## APPENDIX 2: QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR OFFICE  
USE ONLY:

International

Arrivals

South Africa

Domestic

Departure

Other

Dear respondent, Thank you for your willingness to partake in this research study. It is of utmost importance for us to receive as many quality responses as possible in order to improve your experiences. The questionnaire consists of 19 questions and we request of you to complete the questionnaire as accurately as possible. Please note that the information in this questionnaire will be considered confidential and that no direct reference whatsoever to any respondent will be made in the reporting of the data.

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. In which year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Level of education

Matric	1
Diploma/Degree	2
Professional	3
Post-graduate	4
Other	5

4. In which Province are you currently living?

Gauteng	1
Mpumalanga	2
North-West	3
Free-State	4
Eastern Cape	5
Western Cape	6
Northern Cape	7
KwaZulu-Natal	8
Limpopo	9
Outside SA borders	10

5. What is your current marital status?

Single	1
In a relationship	2
Married	3
Married with children	4
Divorced	5

### SECTION B: TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

6. How many weekends did you break away over the last 12 months?

\_\_\_\_\_ weekends per year

7. How many holidays did you go on over the last 12 months?

Once	1
2-3 times	2
4-5 times	3

More than 5 times	4
Never	5

8. What is the average amount of nights your holiday consisted of over the last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_ nights

## SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

9. Do you currently participate in any form of social media?

Yes	1
No	2

***IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO QUESTION 9, ONLY ANSWER QUESTION 10.***  
***IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 9, ANSWER QUESTION 11 - 18.***

- Please indicate which of the following reasons are applicable for **not** using social media:

I do not use social media because:		Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree
10.1	I am sceptical about social media and do not use it at all	1	2	3	4
10.2	I am curious about social media but have not used it	1	2	3	4
10.3	I have tried using social media but am not comfortable with it	1	2	3	4
10.4	I find the use of social media somewhat annoying	1	2	3	4
10.5	I am unimpressed by social media	1	2	3	4
10.6	I find social media too difficult to use	1	2	3	4
10.7	I find social media too expensive to use	1	2	3	4
10.8	I am not at all interested in social media	1	2	3	4
10.9	I do not have the need for the information provided through social media	1	2	3	4
10.10	I do not have access to a computer device	1	2	3	4
10.11	I do not have access to a Smartphone device	1	2	3	4
10.12	I do not have access to social media sites	1	2	3	4
10.13	I do not have access to the Internet	1	2	3	4
10.14	I am afraid that someone might steal my identity	1	2	3	4
10.15	I am concerned about my privacy being violated when using social media	1	2	3	4
10.16	I do not have full control of the content I share	1	2	3	4
10.17	I am afraid if I use social media people might exploit my trust	1	2	3	4
10.18	I have heard of too many people who had bad experiences with social media	1	2	3	4

10.1 9	I am afraid it might destroy my image	1	2	3	4
10.2 0	I am not willing to share any personal information about myself on social media sites	1	2	3	4
10.2 1	I fear that I might interact in dishonest behaviour online	1	2	3	4
10.2 2	I do not trust the opinions or content shared on social media sites	1	2	3	4
10.2 3	It is too time consuming to participate in social media	1	2	3	4
10.2 4	I do not have the technical skills to use social media	1	2	3	4
10.2 5	I do not use social media because I find it difficult to keep up with the speed of technological development	1	2	3	4
10.2 6	I do not use social media because I do not know how to connect to/on social media sites	1	2	3	4
10.2 7	I am unfamiliar with what the concept of social media entails	1	2	3	4
10.2 8	I am unfamiliar with the different types of social media	1	2	3	4
10.2 9	I have never heard of social media before	1	2	3	4
10.3 0	I find the content that people share on social media sites suspicious	1	2	3	4
10.3 1	I find the information shared on social media sites difficult to contextualise	1	2	3	4
10.3 2	I do not find the content shared on social media sites trustworthy	1	2	3	4
10.3 3	I find the content shared an overload of information	1	2	3	4
10.3 4	I do not find the content shared on social media sites trustworthy	1	2	3	4
10.3 5	The use of social media affects my productivity	1	2	3	4
10.3 6	People who use social media loses track of the real world	1	2	3	4

***IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 9, ANSWER QUESTION 11 - 18.***

11. Please indicate which social media you are currently interacting (choose all applicable social media).

Facebook	1
Twitter	2
MySpace	3
YouTube	4
LinkedIn	5
Flickr	6
Blogging	7
TripAdvisor	8
Instagram	9
Pinterest	10
Email	11
Other	12

12. Please indicate on which site did you spend the

Facebook	1
----------	---

most  
time this week.

Twitter	2
MySpace	3
YouTube	4
LinkedIn	5
Flickr	6
Blogging	7
TripAdvisor	8
Instagram	9
Pinterest	10
Email	11
Other	12

13. Please indicate how much time did you spend on average  
this week on social media sites.

0 - 1 Hour	1
2 - 3 Hours	2
4 - 5 Hours	3
More than 5 Hours	4

14. To what extent do you agree with the following **general reasons** for your participation in social media?

I enjoy participating in social media because I:	Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree
14.1 Connect with like-minded people	1	2	3	4
14.2 Connect with others who has the same interests	1	2	3	4
14.3 Interact with others	1	2	3	4
14.4 Engage in video conferences	1	2	3	4
14.5 Participate in discussions (exchanging messages with others online)	1	2	3	4
14.6 Communicate with family/friends/colleagues	1	2	3	4
14.7 Build/deepen my relationships	1	2	3	4
14.8 Get product updates	1	2	3	4
14.9 Get product tips	1	2	3	4
14.10 Learn more about organisations	1	2	3	4
14.11 Get information on specific programmes (for example holiday programmes for children)	1	2	3	4
14.12 Get more information about unfamiliar/new environments (for example tourism destinations I have never visited before)	1	2	3	4
14.13 Share links to content	1	2	3	4
14.14 Create my own content	1	2	3	4
14.15 Exchange content	1	2	3	4
14.16 Share information	1	2	3	4
14.17 Share content (videos, pictures, music, etc.)	1	2	3	4
14.18 Share my opinion	1	2	3	4
14.19 Share my experiences	1	2	3	4
14.20 It enables me to share any content at any time	1	2	3	4

14.21	Comment on specific content	1	2	3	4
14.22	Share feedback about a specific organisation	1	2	3	4
14.23	It is a free platform	1	2	3	4
14.24	Promote a business or cause	1	2	3	4
14.25	Participate in competitions	1	2	3	4
14.26	Can quickly access information	1	2	3	4
14.27	Can easily access information	1	2	3	4
14.28	Can make money	1	2	3	4
14.29	Gain recognition from others	1	2	3	4

## SECTION D: SOCIAL MEDIA & TOURISM

15. Indicate in which of the following social media sites have you participated before for **tourism purposes**:

Facebook	Yes	No
Twitter	Yes	No
MySpace	Yes	No
YouTube	Yes	No
LinkedIn	Yes	No
Flickr	Yes	No
Blogging	Yes	No
TripAdvisor	Yes	No
Instagram	Yes	No
Pinterest	Yes	No
Email	Yes	No
Other	Yes	No

16. Indicate your level of agreement regarding the use of social media for **travel purposes**:

I use social media to:	Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree
16.1 Make bookings	1	2	3	4
16.2 Enquire about a booking	1	2	3	4
16.3 Get exclusive offers from tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.4 Get more information about tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.5 Get contact information of a specific tourism product/destination	1	2	3	4
16.6 Do some research about tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.7 Make better informed travel decisions	1	2	3	4
16.8 Collect relevant information about tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.9 Access a wide range of knowledge about tourism products/destinations at no extra cost	1	2	3	4
16.10 Plan my holiday or weekend breakaway	1	2	3	4

16.11	Share my experiences of tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.12	Create and share content about my visit to tourism products/destinations (content such as photos, videos, comments, etc.)	1	2	3	4
16.13	Tailor my own content about tourism products/destinations according to the reality of the tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.14	Share relevant information about tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.15	Compare tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.16	Recommend tourism products/destinations to others	1	2	3	4
16.17	Increase the awareness tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.18	Help tourism products/destinations gain credibility	1	2	3	4
16.19	Interact with other like-minded tourists	1	2	3	4
16.20	Interact with tourists who has the same interests as me	1	2	3	4
16.21	Communicate and interact directly with tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.22	Communicate directly with other tourists	1	2	3	4
16.23	Engage in open dialogues with other tourists by responding to the comments on the social media site	1	2	3	4
16.24	Ask for travel advice	1	2	3	4
16.25	Give travel advice	1	2	3	4
16.26	Ask for the opinions of other tourists on specific tourism products/destinations	1	2	3	4
16.27	Make suggestions based on my experiences of tourism product/destinations	1	2	3	4

## SECTION E: GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

17. Which of the following statements apply towards your **attitude** of use of social media for **travel purposes**?  
(Choose all applicable options)

17.1	I have tried social media but am just beginning to use it for travel purposes	1
17.2	I am using social media and consider myself a beginner	2
17.3	I am using social media often and are comfortable with it	3
17.4	I use social media and consider myself an 'advanced' user	4
17.5	I use social media as a regular part of my life	5
17.6	I consider myself an 'expert' when it comes to social media	6
17.7	I find the use of social media somewhat annoying	7



17.8	I am indifferent to the use of social media	8
17.9	I find the use of social media very useful	9
17.10	I trust the social media site of the tourism organisation	10
17.11	I trust the tourism organisation	11
17.12	I will willingly share all my personal information on the site	12
17.13	I will willingly share some of my personal information on the site	13
17.14	I have no concerns in terms of privacy and security issues when using social media	14

## SECTION F: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

18. Which of the following aspects do you consider very important for the effective use of social media

Social media is currently very successful because:		Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree
18.1	It is cost-effective	1	2	3	4
18.2	Information can be shared frequently	1	2	3	4
18.3	Social media sites are trustworthy	1	2	3	4
18.4	The content shared on social media sites are useful	1	2	3	4
18.5	Different types of content can be shared (for example photos, videos, comments, etc.)	1	2	3	4
18.6	Content can be shared any time of the day	1	2	3	4
18.7	Content can be accessed any time of the day	1	2	3	4
18.8	Content can be shared any day of the week	1	2	3	4
18.9	It enables me to interact directly with an organisation	1	2	3	4
18.10	It provides immediate feedback when I share/post something on social media sites	1	2	3	4
18.11	Social media sites can be easily accessed	1	2	3	4
18.12	It is very user-friendly	1	2	3	4
18.13	I am allowed to share content	1	2	3	4
18.14	I am allowed to respond to content shared by others	1	2	3	4

**THANK YOU**