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## THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CULTURAL TOURISM

### Kültür Turizminde Sosyal Medya Kullanımı

Şükran KARACA \*

Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi  
Turizm Fakültesi

Gülden POLAT

Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi  
Sosyal Bilimler Meslek Yüksekokulu

#### ABSTRACT

Social media, emerged due to the development of information and communication technologies, has become an integral part of people's lives and they have been making extensive use of it when deciding on any touristic activity. Social media has a very important role in cultural tourism, which is one of the alternative tourism types. People get information about the destination they will go through social media. At the same time, they increase the recognition and awareness of cultural tourism values through social media platforms. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the use of social media in cultural tourism. Within the scope of the study, social media, social media platforms, the use of social media in cultural tourism are discussed. At the end of the study, various suggestions that will enable the social media to be used more in cultural tourism are given.

**Key words:** Cultural Tourism, Types of Cultural Tourism, Social Media, Social Media Networks

#### ÖZ

Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin gelişmesiyle ortaya çıkan sosyal medya, insanların yaşamlarının ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir ve kişiler herhangi bir turistik faaliyete karar verirken sosyal medyadan yaygın bir şekilde yararlanmaktadır. Alternatif turizm türlerinden biri olan kültür turizminde sosyal medyanın çok önemli bir yeri vardır. İnsanlar, gidecekleri destinasyon hakkında bilgiyi sosyal medyadan elde etmektedirler. Aynı zamanda sosyal medya platformları aracılığıyla kültür turizmi çekiciliklerinin tanınırlığını ve bilinirliğini artırmaktadırlar. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın amacı, sosyal medyanın kültür turizminde kullanımını incelemektir. Çalışma kapsamında; sosyal medya, sosyal medya platformları, sosyal medyanın kültür turizminde kullanımına ilişkin konular ele alınmıştır.

\* Sorumlu Yazar: [sukrankaraca@gmail.com](mailto:sukrankaraca@gmail.com)

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Çalışmanın sonunda ise, sosyal medyanın kültür turizminde daha fazla kullanılmasını sağlayacak çeşitli önerilere yer verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültür Turizmi, Kültür Turizmi Türleri, Sosyal Medya, Sosyal Medya Ağları.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is generally defined as internet-based, limited and permanent mass communication channels that facilitate the perception of interactions among users and derive value from user-generated content (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Weber (2007) defined it as "an online place where people with common interests can come together to share their thoughts, comments and ideas". Social media has an important role in communication among people, communities and institutions (Kietzmann et al., 2011) and has become a communication channel where people can search and obtain information from different sources except for traditional ones. It has also been a tool where they can create new content, express their thoughts and experiences, and share information (Dickey & Lewis, 2011).

In the globalizing world, it is necessary to take part in the virtual world in order to gain new markets and competitive advantage or not to lose the existing market and advantage (Karaca, 2012). Web pages and social media provide an effective and unconventional way for companies in various industries to interact with their consumers, and make it possible to build strong customer relationships. One of these industries is the tourism industry. Since the advent of the internet, it has been one of the industries that most commonly uses websites to communicate with its customers (Ip & Law, 2011; Hemsley & Dann, 2015). This situation can be associated with the fact that tourism businesses offer direct reservations through their websites, providing a price advantage to consumers compared to other distribution channels (Lim & Hall, 2008). Recently, social media networks are actively used by consumers to search hotel, compare it with others and make reservation (Ghose et al., 2011; Siamagka et al., 2015). Therefore, some hotels have quickly adapted to social media in order to receive feedback, monitor trends, carry out promotional and marketing activities, achieve sales objectives and not fall behind the competition (Wang et al., 2011).

People widely use social networks to buy many tourism-related services. The results of the research conducted by EGM (Electrical Grid Monitoring) show that the tourism sector is one of the fastest sectors trying to reach its target audience by using the internet and social networks (Van Der Bank & Van Der Bank, 2015). In addition, in the studies conducted by Buhalis (1998) and Manap (2013), it was determined that the tourism industry was hand in and glove with new information and communication technologies.

As in many types of tourism, in cultural tourism too, consumers prefer to use social media as a source of information. Before and during the trip, tourists collect information about prices, hotels, attractions, activities, alternatives, weather conditions, local customs, food & beverage and religious structure pertaining to the destination. After the trip, they feel the need to share the gained knowledge with others. For tourists, so, social media serves as the main source of access to all kinds of information. In social networks, people do not only share their thoughts, but also read comments written by others (Buhler, 2006). In general, social networking sites encourage people to contribute by joining a network, and as this process grows, so do social networks. The main reason for this rapid growth is that the members of the virtual community

rely heavily on the user generated content (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2008). Therefore, social media has an important role in the development of cultural tourism, as in many fields and this role will become more and more important as information and communication technologies develop. In this context, the use of social media in cultural tourism has been examined in this study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Social Media

The use of ICT (information and communication technologies) in the tourism sector has brought various advantages for businesses and customers, and thus social media has become an indispensable part of daily life. It is a new effective tool for communicating with family, friends and organizations, so it should not be isolated from offline world. As a result of the widespread use of social media with the support of various technologies such as tablets and smartphones, there has been a social revolution in the way society communicates (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014).

To explain what social media means, various definitions have developed. It is defined as “a set of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Another definition is made by Merriam-Webster (2011), as “forms of electronic communication (websites for social networking and microblogging) created by online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content”. In other words, it can be any form of computer-mediated communication where individuals can create their profiles and content to show who they are, view the content of others’ and interact with them (Carr & Hayes, 2015).

Changes in social media definitions stand out due to its widespread usage. In this framework, Cohen (2020) shortened the discussion on the explanation of social media by detailing thirty different definitions and explained the important features as follows:

- (i) Social media uses online applications, tools and platforms, so it only needs information technology for technical operationalization,
- (ii) Social media refers to communication channels that allow for content creation and information exchange and collaboration between participants and the community, and leads to widespread changes,
- (iii) Social media connects users each other in a virtual community and as a result has the power to influence people's behavior in real life.

It is a new address where people connect easily by integrating ICT, social interaction, texts, pictures, videos and sounds. In fact, this new address is a channel where communication based on the content shared by people is carried out (Zeng, 2013). The social media presence has been a crucial turning point in the way both commercial enterprises and public institutions communicate with their markets. It has fundamentally revolutionized communication patterns and behavior through the internet, thus a new medium in which information is consumed and disseminated has evolved. Social media, with its unique features, makes it possible for consumers to communicate with each other as well as between brands / companies (Tuten, 2008). Thus, it offers an efficient way to reach and interact with current / potential customers (Neelotpaul, 2010). Social media platforms, integrating the concepts of design,

technology and society with new perspectives and innovations, continue to develop around new technologies (Baran & Baran, 2022).

The tourism industry encompasses many direct and indirect goods and services sectors. Within this framework, the destination marketing organization (DMO) aims to develop tourism in a particular city, state or region. DMOs try to achieve their goals by branding and advertising the space as a whole, for this they undertake the task of informing tourists about institutions, restaurants, accommodations, attractions and events in the region (Bradbury, 2011).

## 2.2. Social Media Platforms

The form of communication between customers and companies has changed drastically with social media usage (Aladwani, 2014) and social media has become a popular tool in communication. Social media platforms' popularity also highlights changes in media consumption (Twitter, 2014). Approximately 88% of companies such as media, information technology and telecommunications, FMCG and retail, travel and entertainment have started to use various social media platforms and approximately 42% have fully incorporated different social media sites into their marketing strategies (Rapp et al., 2013). Therefore, social media has become a more effective way to find new customers and retain existing customers (Luo et al., 2015). In addition, the Institute of Marketing Science (2016) has identified social media, whose users are increasing day by day, as one of the areas of research priority between 2016-2018.

According to We Are Social Digital's 2022 report, the number of social media users has reached 4.62 billion. Almost all social media users log into their social media accounts via mobile devices. Again in the same report, internet, social media and mobile user statistics are as follows: 4.95 billion internet users make up 62.5%; 4.62 billion social media users account for 58.4%, and 5.31 billion mobile users make up 67.1% of the world's population (We Are Social, 2022).

Social media platforms include photo sharing sites (Instagram, Flickr, Piccasa, Photobucket), social sites (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Myspace, Fourquare, Blogs, Forums), travel sites (Holidaycheck, Holidaywatchdog, Reviewcentre, Triphub, Tripadvisor), video sharing sites (Youtube, Metacafe, Dailymotion), professional networking sites (LinkedIn, Ning), Wikis (Wikipedia, Wikia) (Wilson, 2010; Civelek & Daldın, 2013). The most popular and widely used social media sites are Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Youtube, Whatsapp, Twitter (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016).

**Facebook:** It is the most popular and most visited social media network. It has 2.910 billion users. (Statista, 2022). It is a social networking service created by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. Although originally designed only as a means of communication among Harvard students, it is now the largest social network worldwide. It is constantly improving its features such as private messaging, creating stories, sharing photos or videos, updating status, tagging, live broadcasting and commenting (Junco, 2013). A person can use Facebook to engage in active social interaction (phone and video calls, messaging), create and share his own content, interact with others' content (Facebook, 2021).

**Whatsapp:** It was developed as an alternative to standard messaging. It supports sending and receiving many different types of media such as audio and video calls, texts, photos, videos, documents, locations, and also provides the opportunity to create stories (Whatsapp, 2020).

Whatsapp and other messaging applications facilitate communication by meeting the basic communication needs of individuals better (Karapanos et al., 2016).

**Twitter:** Founded in 2006, it is a microblogging site where its users interact with their followers in "real time" (Stec, 2015). As one of the most popular microblogging sites in the world, it is used for information sharing, social interaction, information search, content and new technology satisfaction etc. (Liu et al., 2010). It is widely used in many countries to disseminate and follow important news and developments (Zhao et al., 2011). According to Twitter ad audience data, total user number is 353.1 million, with a higher male user rate (We Are Social, 2021).

**Pinterest:** It is a social networking platform where all kinds of images are shared and works with the clipboard system. It was first conceptualized by Ben Silbermann, Evan Sharp and Paul Sciarra in December 2009 (Wikipedia, 2021). As of the fourth quarter of 2021, Pinterest had 431 million monthly active users worldwide (Statista, 2022).

**Instagram:** It is the fastest growing social media site with its popularity among teens and adults (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). It allows users to take, filter and share photos, live stream and create stories. According to Digital's 2021 report, Instagram ad audience data, the total number of users has reached 1.22 billion and the rate of female users is relatively higher.

**Snapchat:** It is a social media mobile application that allows its users to send and receive time-sensitive photos/videos, which expire after viewing (Stec, 2015). Users can determine how long sent snapshots can be viewed and it creates an unlimited number of stories for 24 hours. The ability for its users to choose the audience that views their content has also been embraced by Instagram. Users can post their photos or videos to their own stories, public stories or privately to other users (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). According to Snapchat ad audience data from We Are Social 2021 report, the total number of users is 498.2 million, with a higher proportion of female users and the 13-20 age group uses Snapchat more.

**Youtube:** Founded in 2005, YouTube is the largest online video platform with user-generated and corporate media content such as music videos, video blogs, educational videos, TV clips. It serves a wide audience both amateur and professional (Xu et al., 2016). It enables its users to interact with the site by using methods such as rating, uploading videos, commenting and sharing (Khan, 2017). According to YouTube ad audience data, the total number of users is 2 billion and the male user rate is higher. One billion videos are watched daily in one hour on YouTube and 70% of the videos are watched on mobile devices. YouTube ads are mostly aimed at the 25-34 age group (We Are Social, 2021).

**LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a professional social networking and social networking platform for business people to communicate and exchange information with others. Founded in December 2002, LinkedIn's web page was launched on May 5, 2003 (Wikipedia, 2021). According to LinkedIn ad audience data, the total number of users is 727.6 million, with a higher male user rate and the 25-34 age group uses LinkedIn more (We Are Social, 2021).

According to the Alexa ranking of We Are Social Digital's 2021 report, Facebook is the most used social media platform, YouTube is the second and Instagram is the third. WhatsApp comes first in messaging platforms. According to the age distribution of social media users, the 25-34 age group is the segment that uses social media predominantly. There is a negative relationship between age and social media use. Looking at the distribution of the average time spent on social media by age, young people between the ages of 16-24 are the segment that

spends the most time on social media. Considering the average time spent on social media platforms on a monthly basis, approximately 20 hours per month are spent on Facebook and 23.2 hours on YouTube. On average, a social media user spends 2 days a month with Facebook and Youtube. While an average of 1 hour and 51 minutes was spent on social media per day in 2015, daily social media usage approached 2.5 hours in 2021. In the research where the question of “why are you using social media” was directed, users stated that they used social media for (Dijilopedi, 2021):

- following current news and developments (36.5%),
- accessing entertaining content (35%),
- spending spare time (34.4%),
- staying in touch with friends and follow what they do (33%),
- sharing photos or videos (27.9%),
- searching for a product (27.5%).

Each user uses social media platform more than one. Additionally, 98% of Facebook users and 100% of Reddit users use other social media platforms. In fact, a social media user using one platform uses at least 3 other social media platforms, too (Dijilopedi, 2021).

### **2.3. Cultural Tourism**

The tourism industry, including many sectors, provides job opportunities for many people. Having a very fragile structure, the industry is affected very quickly by the events in the world. Another challenging aspect of the sector is the quality and relativity of services. While economic value in service was seeked in the past, tourists now want to buy experiences and stories. They also desire not only to rest and relax, but also satisfy the emotional needs. The trend seen in tourism at the moment is towards “personalization” (Van Der Bank & Van Der Bank, 2015).

In today's world, where more and more people travel, service concept for individuals is in demand. In this context, cultural tourism comes to the fore and these developments make cultural tourism an expanding sector. It can be considered a market activity with a high profile of tourists (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). Because those who participate in cultural tourism are individuals with a higher education level, more curious, more interested, more independent, and have more time. In addition, cultural tourists do not hesitate to spend money, and desire to know different cultures. They are more sensitive to activities, and are more willing to get to know the local people (Pekin, 2011).

The diversity seen in the cultural tourist typology also manifests itself in the definition of the concept. As one of the alternative tourism types, cultural tourism is defined as “a tourism activity in which the main motivation of the visitor is to learn, discover, experience and consume tangible and intangible cultural values/products in a tourism destination” (UNWTO, 2020). Cultural tourism can be defined as “activities mainly for cultural motivations such as study trips, performing arts and cultural tours, festivals and other cultural events” (Saçılık & Toptaş, 2017). Dark tourism, heritage tourism, ethnic tourism, diaspora tourism, faith tourism, event tourism, creative tourism are culture-based tourism types.

According to the data of the World Tourism Organization, cultural tourism is among the most developed tourism types. Its market size is estimated to comprise around 40% of international

tourism travel (UNWTO, 2018) and this rate is expected to increase further in the following years. In this type of tourism, several different themes emerged, such as heritage, art, gastronomy, film and music, and tourism based on the creative industries (Richards, 2018). Cultural tourism typology is as diverse as cultural tourism values. It can be counted as heritage tourism, art tourism, creative tourism, urban cultural tourism, rural cultural tourism, indigenous cultural tourism and experiential cultural tourism (Smith, 2009).

This diversity of cultural tourism poses several difficulties in defining the 'cultural tourist' and measuring the effects of cultural tourism. Some are due to changing mobility patterns. As people spend their time in other cities and countries, the roles of locals and tourists become more complex (Richards, 2018). In Barcelona, with the change of citizenship law and regulation, tourists were redesigned as "temporary citizens", thus transforming the tourist from a pure consumer to a consumer of culture (Richards & Marques, 2018).

#### **2.4. Social Media and Cultural Tourism Association**

While social media usage increases, the importance of using social media as a marketing tool for all industries increases. Its channels are increasingly used in the tourism industry, which has been greatly influenced by destination image, user reviews, dissemination of information and word of mouth in recent years (Peco-Torres et al., 2021). Turning social media into DMO's marketing strategy in situations like the "Pure Michigan campaign" and the "Discover Chicago campaign" has shown remarkable measurable results in visitor rates and satisfaction. In another example, Alhambra (Granada), the most visited monument in Spain, has come to the fore among the largest international cultural tourism sources and brands (Patronato de La Alhambra y Generalife, 2016), because this monument is frequently featured on social media and is in constant interaction with the public (Comunidad IEBS, 2013).

Cultural tourism resources form the basis of cultural tourism development and play a decisive role in the selection of touristic destination (Covarrubias, 2014). Therefore, they must be strong enough to attract tourists to the region. Destinations often gain this power by placing natural resources beside their cultural resources. Cultural features such as arts and entertainment, handicrafts, traditional architectural areas, economic activities, traditions and ceremonies, man-made features such as theme parks, casinos, special events such as festivals, fairs and sports competitions are values that constitute cultural resources (Tinuoye, 2020). Because of their specific characteristics, these resources require strategies to gain public appreciation attracting more visitors and keeping customers. These strategies should also respond to the need to increase brand engagement among visitors. In this sense, conveying the brand personality through social media can be an effective strategy in interacting with travelers interested in cultural tourism (Liasidou, 2018).

In the tourism sector, where information will always remain important, Gartner (1993) defines tourism-related information sources depending on who created and controlled: stimulated, autonomous, and natural. Today, tourists use all of these sources to get information about the destination. However, for tourists, informational content known as user-generated content (UGC) is much more reliable as it is created without any expectation of profit.

From a cultural tourism perspective, user-generated data and contents serve as a promising resource both for collecting macro-level mobility statistics on visits to tourism destinations and for understanding (and potentially predicting) mobility patterns for specific cultural attractions and events. In addition, textual data sent by visitors as Twitter messages or

comments on photos shared on platforms such as Flickr helps analyze people's sensitivity and interactions to certain POIs (potential tourism points of interest), reveal visitors' interests, and understand what activities visitors are actually engaged in different sites (Kalvet et al., 2020).

To summarize, cultural tourism is particularly concerned with three aspects of social media (Europetour, 2015):

- Professionalism and resource management: What is needed to target visitors through social media marketing, increase visitor numbers, improve the quality of products and services in a professional and timely manner? What resources are needed?
- Social media marketing as part of regional and trans-regional strategic objectives: how to successfully connect and network with public and private partners to achieve and support each other's goals in the cultural tourism process?
- Measuring performance and success: How to measure the performance of various social media campaigns and identify where (and how) improvements need to be made?

Social media is an excellent medium for presenting emotions in cultural tourism and thus serves to connect people who share the culture (Europetour, 2015). Social media platforms allow tourists to digitize and share online information (Buhalis & Law, 2008), emotions and experiential moments (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012) much more than in the past. As a result of these shares, the content of the site is constantly contributed (Streitfeld, 2011) and it allows the creation of virtual communities with common points (Kozinets, 1999).

Social media offers many opportunities for the development of cultural tourism, especially in rural areas. Urban cultural tourism has witnessed the emergence of high-quality, attractive and personalized tourism services that meet the needs of cultural travelers. However, this development has not yet occurred in rural areas. Rural areas in Europe are home to equally attractive cultural offerings compared to cities. They often offer unique cultural heritage sites. Despite this fact, it is seen that cultural tourism management is still in the development stage. In particular, service management on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets has not been strategically positioned yet (EuropeTour, 2015). When these obstacles are overcome, it can be ensured that rural areas, which have many unique cultural values, take an active part in cultural tourism with the help of social media.

## **2.5. The Use of Social Media in Cultural Tourism**

Consumers are much more influenced by recommendations about the products experienced, so this is expected to be the case for the tourism industry as well. For consumers, online information resources are user-generated content where travelers can identify and review text, videos, graphics, and photos posted online by other users or experienced travelers (Manap, 2013). Online chats provide users with a wide range of interaction opportunities, from communication to multiple video conferences and from exchange of e-mail messages to participation in blogs and discussion groups (Campbell, 2010).

In cultural tourism, which has a fairly large arena, some major cultural attractions (eg. popular palaces, castles, museums) may have highly professional organizational and management structures, as well as financial and personnel resources. For example, smaller and perhaps less popular tourist destinations in rural areas may have to be operated with few employees and limited budget. This can lead to significant differences in the application of information and communication technologies across cultural domains, which may affect the way business



processes are handled and information is managed and shared. However, visitors are no longer satisfied with just "information". New technologies and web databases can help cultural and heritage institutions share knowledge, promote and sell their offerings, as well as enhance the visitor experience. Visitors can be regularly informed about activities and events. Moreover, cultural institutions can offer different interpretations of artifacts. Thus, new technologies can increase visitor engagement and interaction (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt & Aljas, 2009).

Tourism is experiencing rapid developments, particularly in new uses of mobile positioning data, web scraping and open application programming interface (API) data, sharing data, and collaborative economy and passenger data (Kalvet et al., 2020). One of the most important indicators derived from mobile positioning data (MPD) that can be used to evaluate the impact of cultural tourism on destinations is the number of tourists that destinations host daily. MPD also makes it possible to catch visitors who do not stay overnight at destination. In addition, MPD often includes information about tourists who do not stay in accommodation facilities, such as people staying with friends or family, or using Airbnb rentals, which are often not included in official accommodation statistics. According to MPD statistics, the number of tourists that destinations host daily may not count as much as traditional data sets. The use of MPD in tourism analysis allows for detailed temporal and spatial tracking of visitors. Thus, it is possible to analyze the daily, weekly and seasonal visits of the visitors (Kalvet et al., 2020).

Although cultural tourism products can be consumed all year round, visitor numbers still show that arrivals are not evenly distributed throughout the year. There are still high and low seasons in Rome or Paris, with many activities for cultural tourists all year round. One of the most well-known solutions to shorten the low season is to organize major tourism events. Concerts, exhibitions, fairs and other similar major events attract both locals and travelers' interest. Thanks to MPD which enables to evaluate the hinterland of events by analyzing the origin of the visitors, from which places they come, how long they stay and which other places they visit, to analyze the recurring identities in the database over the years and to determine all the visits made by a person in the data period are possible (Nilbe et al., 2014).

Studies dealing with the use of social media in cultural tourism are not numerous in the literature. This situation increases the necessity of further studies on these two concepts. One of the studies related to concepts was carried out by Munar & Ooi (2012). Researchers studied the digitization of tourists' heritage experiences and analyzed the impact of social media and user-generated content on the consumption of heritage sites. They also discussed new forms of authenticity in tourism technology. Analyzing data collected on Tripadvisor, their research provides insights into the role that tourists' online reviews play as mediators of the tourism experience and highlights an emerging virtual tourism culture. In another study, Marinakou, Giousmpasoglou, & Paliktzoglou (2015), who used social media to examine the potential impact of cultural centers on the development of Bahrain cultural tourism, concluded that people used Tripadvisor to gather information about Bahrain and to share their experiences with others.

Chatzithomas et al. (2014) applied content analysis to the websites of the most powerful companies in the USA and Greece to make cross-cultural comparisons of issues and trends in the use of social media advertising techniques. The findings indicated that USA advertisers tended to use social media for advertising purposes more frequently than their Greek counterparts. In both countries, high-tech companies were pioneers in the use of Web 2.0 tools

for advertising purposes, while traditional companies lagged behind these applications. In addition, B2C (business to consumer) companies appear to be active in developing social networks and expanded virtual communities mainly through Twitter and Facebook.

In their study, Surugui & Surugui (2015) investigated the development of heritage tourism entrepreneurship and from the evaluations of social media platforms, concluded that there were Romanian heritage tourism values, but these assets needed to be increased. So, heritage tourism businesses should create question and comment sections in order to attract tourists to the determined social media platforms, and they can also develop various activations and competitions to increase interaction on their platforms.

Yoo & Lee (2015) analyzed USA six historic hotels' facebook contents, and concluded that the most shared Facebook message topic was general hotel information and the media type consisted of texts. Hotels used Facebook to convey their messages to their customers instead of chatting. This showed that the historical hotels' operators did not communicate effectively with their customers.

Farahani et al. (2018) examined three social media platforms; Flickr, 500px and Instagram (these three websites are popular between users to share images) for the city of Shiraz. An image analysis was conducted in four steps: (1) finding images, (2) categorising images, (3) coding, and (4) finding patterns. Analyzing the images, they investigated how the historical city of Shiraz was remembered in the eyes of social media users. Based on the initial photo audits, Nasir-al-Molk Mosque with more than 74 published images was the most published building.

Nguyen et al. (2017) conducted a study based on the collection and promotion of cultural heritage, which was a new trend in social media. They collected a series of geotagged photos of cultural heritage attractions in Vietnam and Korea from Flickr and Instagram using the location of visitors and created dataset. The results indicated that the combination of semantic tags and media data bring out much more useful information for users during their cultural travels.

Qi et al. (2018) conducted the study based on TripAdvisor contents to reveal an empirical typology of international cultural tourists visiting Macau. They hoped that the model they created by analyzing user-generated content data would automatically show the potential of any tourist to become a cultural tourist. They determined five cultural tourist typologies as sightseeing cultural tourist, purposeful cultural tourist, serendipitous cultural tourist, incidental cultural tourists and casual tourists.

Pratiwi (2020) purposed to describe the implementation of place identity and local distinctiveness in Betawi Cultural Center BCC Setu Babakan, and how current visitors perceived this social media application with UGC and electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM). The results showed that BCC Setu Babakan creative planning could encourage visitors to give some reviews and ratings concerning place identity and local distinctiveness, with plenty of reviews on the Google Review platform and fewer numbers on Trip Advisor.

Vázquez et al. (2020) conducted a study to analyze the effectiveness of the official Facebook fan pages of the autonomous communities organisms (Navarre, Aragon, La Rioja, Castile-Leon & Galicia) in Spain to promote tourism. They conducted a series of analyzes taking into account the variables Presence/Visibility, Engagement/Interaction, and Content. The results

revealed that some of the analyzed regions needed to better optimize the interactive potential that Facebook offered them in order to improve their future position as a tourism destination.

Based on 9074 blogs published between 2011 and 2020 on Weibo.com, one of the most popular social media platforms in China et al. (2021) conducted a research to examine the structure and relationships among the cognitive elements of ICH (intangible cultural heritage) tourism. Cognitive image of ICH tourism on social media consisted of seven dimensions: institutions, ICH and heirs, tourism products, traditional festivals and seasons, tourism facilities and services, visitors and regions. Among these dimensions, institutions had the greatest power to regulate and control ICH tourism activities, and folklore appeared to be the most common type of ICH resource that could be converted into tourism activities.

In their study, Peco-Torres et al. (2021) aimed to analyze the effect of social media use on brand personality perception within the framework of cultural tourism resources and to define its effect on customer brand loyalty. At this stage, the active profiles of Alhambra, one of the most important monuments of Spain, on Facebook and Twitter were analyzed. They concluded that the use of social media had a positive effect on the perception of brand personality, and likewise, brand personality had a positive effect on customer brand engagement.

In the study of Mele et al. (2021), who stated that there was an intercultural deficiency in the promotion of cultural tourism in social media, used the dimensions of Collectivism Individualism, Power Distance, and High-Context vs. Low-Context communication to analyze cultural value differences in Instagram posts promoting cultural tourism taking as reference the official accounts of the national tourism organization of four culturally different countries: Chile, United States, Netherlands, and Portugal. Results indicated that cultural tourism promotion on Instagram differs across cultures, highlighting the importance of adapting online content when addressing culturally distant markets.

Gorji et al. (2021) chose two official pages of the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in order to determine the main features of Iran image reflected on Instagram as a destination. It was concluded that the projected image of Iran, which is mostly preferred by religious tourists, consists of its rich historical and natural beauties.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Tourism industry continues to evolve with the adoption of social media platforms. In recent years, geotagged data from social networks such as Twitter, Foursquare, Flickr or Instagram provides an important source of data on people's movements (Kalvet et al., 2020). These geotagged social media data (GSMD) are used to estimate the number of incoming tourists and measure tourist activities in specific attractions. As it contains information about the traveler's country of residence, interests, other tourist attractions visited, it may be useful for users to create their profiles, but creates a privacy barrier (Chua et al., 2016).

Tourists use social media platforms to gather information before their travel, to share their memories and experiences during their travels, and to clearly reveal whether they are satisfied with their experiences after the trip. Thus, they either encourage or discourage others. So, tourism destinations should work in cooperation with all stakeholders, share all kinds of information that their customers need, and definitely get support from experts.

Social media allows businesses to create websites, emails, text messages, forums, etc. So, it makes possible to communicate with target groups more briefly and directly (Tinuoye, 2020).

Thus, destinations that want to promote their cultural tourism values have the opportunity to communicate easily with their target groups. At this point, destinations can increase their market shares by using various social networks professionally.

Social media platforms allow tourists to share their experiences instantly (Munar, 2010). The instant sharing of tourism experiences affects the decision of travelers who plan to go to the destination in the near future. Because these feelings and thoughts shared without any sense of benefit are quite reliable for potential tourists. In this sense, tourism destinations should ensure their consumers to leave the region with positive impressions. Thus, the satisfied customer will share positive content on social networks and will be able to relieve the indecisive segment.

As a result, social media contributes to the improvement of tourism service quality and enriches visitor satisfaction. Tourism entrepreneurs should adopt social media networks and internet technologies in their marketing strategies if they want to stay competitive in the market (Surugiu & Surugiu, 2015).

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