

## TOURISTS' MOTIVATIONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

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**Purpose:** The main objective of the paper is to determine whether latent variables (constructs) regarding tourists' motivations can be found in the studied social media use behaviour of tourists.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The study was carried out via an on-line survey questionnaire. Responses to questions were measured on a nominal or ordinal scale. Factor analysis was used in the data analysis. The subject of the study involves the use of social media by tourists and analyses their motivation.

**Findings:** Tourists' motivators for using social media were identified and these are: 1) Visibility in the crowd, 2) Obtaining information about nearby events, 3) Building relationships with the local community, 4) Relying on the opinions of others.

**Research limitations/implications:** The study was carried out only in one country. There are plans to expand the study area in the future in order to make international comparisons. Moreover, motivators were not identified by age group, which is planned in future studies.

**Practical implications:** Identification of tourists' motivation to use social media enables city managers, tourism organisations and tourism facility managers to have a targeted impact on tourist behaviour. These activities can result in the desired objectives being achieved, e.g. relations between tourists and the local community will be built. This will also enable the identification of people who are motivated to be visible in the crowd and offer them cooperation in the promotion of tourist destinations or attractions.

**Social implications:** Identification of tourists' motivators will make it possible to influence tourists in such a way that they will participate in solving problems of the local community or provide information on situations requiring intervention in the area of tourist attractions.

**Originality/value:** New insights on latent variables concerning tourists' motivation when using social media have been provided. The paper is addressed to city managers, tourism organisations and tourism facility managers what will help them to improve the quality of provided services.

**Keywords:** motivations, tourists, social media, smart city.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Modern information and communication technologies play a crucial role in the development of every area of life, including the functioning of cities and urbanisation processes. Implementation of intelligent solutions known from the smart city concept can help develop the competitiveness of cities. The smart city concept involves the use of networked infrastructure to improve the economic and political efficiency of resources and enable the smart and sustainable development of urban areas (Jonek-Kowalska and Kaźmierczak, 2020). Efficient city management requires the collection of a large amount of data and different types of information, especially from tourists. Cities for which tourism is a basis for functioning try to be more and more competitive in the tourism services market. However, it is important for city planners to have constant information sources. Tourists can be an important source of information because they visit places that are new for them and thus can share their views on the city's problems.

Currently, the most popular form of communication and channel for tourists to share information is social media. This is why, in order to increase the number of social media users, it is crucial to know the factors/motivators that make tourists use social media in a particular way. Research to date only looks at the motivation for tourist information sharing activities but does not explain the important motives for sharing experiences both during and after the trip (Ghaisani et al., 2017; Hysa et al., 2020). Motivation for information sharing activities is important as it can support city managers in the proper presentation of relevant information in terms of content and display. Having this in mind, it is important to learn about tourists' motivation for social media use during travels. This is why the main objective of the paper is to determine whether latent variables (constructs) regarding tourists' motivations can be found in the studied social media use behaviour of tourists. Thus a research question was formed: what motivates tourists to use social media during tourist trips?

The paper consists of 4 parts including introduction, literature review, analysis of data, discussion and conclusion.

## 2. Literature review

Nowadays we can observe a dynamic growth in the number of modern IT solutions offered both by public and private entities. Internet development enabled the creation of mobile applications (Druć et al., 2021) and social reality (Zawierucha, 2021), among other things. The offered solutions have gained the approval of the public, who use them to achieve both professional and personal goals. In January 2022, Poland had 32.86 million Internet users,

which constitutes 87% of the total population (Dataportal, 2022). Among the used IT solutions, the use of social media is noteworthy. In Poland, there were 27.2 million active social media users, which shows an increase of 5% in comparison with the previous year (Dataportal, 2022). The possibilities of social media use are diverse (Akram and Kumar, 2017), which makes it possible to use them both at work and in their free time (Mader et al., 2019; Zoonen et al., 2017).

In order to meet the challenges posed by residents and tourists, cities try to implement new IT solutions that support city management. This is why more and more cities become smart cities. L.G. Anthopoulos indicates that a smart city can be considered from different perspectives, but most respondents point to such measures as urban economy, mobility, environment, living, people and governance (Anthopoulos, 2015). The concept of a smart city focuses on many innovative activities that can significantly improve the lives of the local community (Sułkowska, 2021). Thanks to the implementation of these IT solutions it is possible to obtain information, inform about events, urban planning and management.

Local authorities use diverse communication channels to obtain information from residents and tourists. Among digital communication channels, we can distinguish, among others: a website dedicated to expressing opinions, suggestions, commenting, social media, urban mobile applications and digital information boards (Rożałowska, 2021). Moreover, in their information activities cities are increasingly using social media (Woźnikowski, 2021) which enable them to reach a huge number of potential customers effectively and directly (Śledzińska and Włoch, 2020). Among several classifications of social media, the most popular is the one that classifies them according to two groups of factors such as: social presence/ media richness and self-presentation and self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

The multitude of functionalities available on social media leads to them being used by diverse stakeholders to achieve their objectives. Social media can be used by cities for urban management (Gao et al., 2020), sites promotion (Aftab and Khan, 2019), behaviour analysis (Chua et al., 2021), adjustment of the offer to various age groups (Hysa et al., 2021), as well as sustainable tourism recovery (Hysa et al., 2022).

Social media users have an important meaning for their functioning. The value of services in social media and Internet instant messengers increases with the increase of the number of users (Śledzińska and Włoch, 2020). This is due to the fact that they are both information recipients and content suppliers. It is, therefore, crucial to know users' motivations for using this medium. Motivation is the force and direction of behaviour and the factors that make people behave in a certain way (Armstrong and Taylor, 2015). This is why, in order to increase the number of social media users, it is crucial to know the factors/motivators that make them use social media in a particular way. It has been found that employees use social media more often if their needs in terms of autonomy, competence and connections are met (Oksa et al., 2021). Research results show that there are differences in the motivation for using social media between women and men (Dedeoglu, 2018). Interestingly, motivation to disclose information

in social media can have interpersonal nature, which involves relational maintenance and social validation, and intra-personal nature, which involves self-expression/relief and the need for identity clarification (Luo and Hancock, 2020). In view of the diverse factors that can influence motivation, it is useful to identify the activities undertaken on social media by users.

Being active in social media ensures unprecedented levels of visibility (Uldam, 2018). Users of social media make self-disclosure, which allows for building loose relations as well as following each other's cues (Shane-Simpson, 2018). It has been observed that members of a social network participate in the development by sharing different opinions. Additionally, they are unconsciously motivated to create a homogeneous opinion, which is promoted by everyone as an opinion leader (Shareef et al., 2019). This indicates that activity in social media can influence opinion-shaping, behaviour and have a significant impact on decision making. What is interesting is that individuals are likely to be influenced by their peers in the use of Facebook apps but that their intention to use these apps declines as privacy concerns increase (Van der Schyff, 2020).

Tourism is an important market segment. In 2019 there were 1464 million international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2019). In 2021 there were 415 million international tourist arrivals, where 67% took place in Europe (UNWTO, 2021). Social media play an important role in tourism, as an information source and communication channel (AARP Research, 2020). It has been observed that social media are used by tourists to obtain information (Hu et al., 2017), share experiences (Graziano and Albanese, 2020) and plan journeys (Constantoglou and Trihas, 2020). Additionally, thanks to social media the users build relations with local communities (Oltra González, 2021), thanks to which it is possible to obtain information or solve local problems together. Social media are also used to plan a journey, during and after the journey (Hysa et al., 2021). However, diversification in motivation to share tourism experience has been observed (Munar et al., 2014), as well as in motivation to travel (Naidoo et al., 2015). This indicates a situation in which factors that make tourists use social media are diversified.

However, the literature lacks comprehensive research that would provide an analysis of motivation for the use of social media by tourists.

### **3. Analysis of research findings**

The objective of the analysis is to determine whether latent variables (constructs) regarding tourists' motivations can be found in the studied social media use behaviour of tourists. Research on the use of social media (SM) in tourism was conducted in Poland in the last quarter of 2019 and supplemented in 2020.

### 3.1. Methods and data collection

The research was conducted with the use of an on-line questionnaire with seven questions. The first three questions concerned the characteristics of the respondents' general behaviour in social media. Respondents were asked about the time and frequency of SM use as well as about SM profile settings. Responses to these questions were measured on a nominal or ordinal scale. The four remaining questions had an extensive structure, including the study of respondents' agreement with the opinions on the use of social media in tourism. Responses to these questions were measured using the Likert scale.

After the initial selection of collected questionnaires, 397 respondents were qualified for further analysis, which exceeded the minimum random sample size estimated at 386 questionnaires (for the assumed maximum statistical error rate of the sample of  $\pm 5\%$  and the confidence level  $p = 0.95$ ). Table 1 contains detailed information on the respondents participating in the survey.

**Table 1.**  
*Structure of respondents*

| Gender of respondents [%] |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Female                    | 59.4%  |
| Male                      | 40.6%  |
| Length of using SM [%]    |        |
| Under 6 years             | 78.84% |
| From 4 to 6 years         | 8.06%  |
| From 2 to 4 years         | 2.52%  |
| Up to 2 years             | 2.27%  |
| I don't remember          | 8.31%  |
| Never used                | 0%     |

Source: Based on own study.

To answer the research question regarding tourists' motivations for using social media during tourism trips, factor analysis was performed. For the purpose of the analysis, 3 questions from the survey questionnaire were selected (questions 4, 5 and 6) in order to find latent variables. While all variables from question 7 were treated as a separate construct called "Motivation for activities in SM". Question no. 7 was not considered in the factor analysis as it had a slightly different nature. While questions 4, 5 and 6 involved behaviours and the use of SM in terms of tourism, question no. 7 included direct statements on the motives and motivations for using SM in relation to tourism. Thus it was assumed that question no. 7 will be a separate construct (it was called Motivation for activities in SM). Then all the constructs (both those obtained from the factor analysis and the construct of Motivation for activities in SM) were analysed for validity and reliability. Questions covered by the analysis are in table 2.

**Table 2.**  
*Analyzed questions*

| Item | Description   |
|------|---|
| 4_1  | 4. [Negative opinions and comments in social media make me resign from a holiday]   |
| 4_2  | 4. [I use social media to plan a trip]  |
| 4_3  | 4. [I check opinions / stories on places I want to visit on social media]   |
| 4_4  | 4. [I use social media to learn about the history and culture of tourist places]  |
| 4_5  | 4. [In social media, I am looking for information about hindrances and problems that may arise in the places I intend to visit] |
| 4_6  | 4. [I use short term apartment rentals (e.g. Airbnb)]   |
| 4_7  | 4. [I use social media to establish relationships with the local community]   |
| 4_8  | 4. [Positive opinions and comments in social media encourage me to go on holiday]   |
| 5_1  | 5. [I use social media ongoing planning of further stages of a trip ]   |
| 5_2  | 5. [I use social media Obtaining information about the place of stay ]  |
| 5_3  | 5. [I use social media commenting on events taking place in the place of stay]  |
| 5_4  | 5. [I use social media making contact with the local community ]  |
| 5_5  | 5. [I use social media Obtaining information about current events (cultural, entertainment, etc.)]                              |
| 5_6  | 5. [I use social media current sharing experiences from a tourist trip ]  |
| 5_7  | 5. [I use social media making contact with other tourists ]   |
| 5_8  | 5. [I use social media obtaining information about current difficulties (e.g. traffic jams, accidents )]                        |
| 6_1  | 6. [I am sending email/text messages from a travel trip]  |
| 6_2  | 6. [I share the experience of a travel trip by photo/video album for friends (e.g. Facebook)]                                   |
| 6_3  | 6. [I use social media to share the experience of a travel trip by public photo/video album]                                    |
| 6_4  | 6. [I use social media writing reviews (e.g. TripAdvisor, Booking.com)]   |
| 6_5  | 6. [I use social media posting statements and photos in social groups/ forums]  |
| 6_6  | 6. [I use social media posting on blogs]  |
| 7_1  | 7. [I use social media because I want to help others in making a decision regarding a planned tourist trip ]                    |
| 7_2  | 7.[I use social media because I want to protect others from bad choices during a tourist trip ]                                 |
| 7_3  | 7. [I use social media because I want to participate in the creation of pages that turned out to be useful for me]              |
| 7_4  | 7. [I use social media because I want to maintain social contacts and friendships]  |
| 7_5  | 7. [I use social media because I like to share my impressions on the Internet]  |
| 7_6  | 7. [I use social media because I want to be more recognizable by publishing my experiences]                                     |

Source: Based on own study.

Data analysis involved two stages. At the first stage, a factor analysis was used, which enabled the identification of latent variables (constructs). At the second stage, the validity and reliability of constructs identified through the factor analysis and the preconceived construct *Motivation for activities in SM* were studied. In order to ensure an adequate level of validity and reliability of the studied constructs, criteria included in table 3 were used.

**Table 3.**  
*Criteria for assessment of validity and reliability of constructs*

| Reliability and Validity Indicators | Criteria  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Indicator Reliability               | item loadnings > 0,708                                      |
| Internal Consistency Reliability    | Composite Realibility and Cronbach's alpha > 0,7 and < 0,95 |
| Convergent Validity                 | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0,5                      |
| Discriminant Validity               | Fornell- Larcker criterion                                  |
| Indicator Reliability               | item loadnings > 0,708                                      |
| Internal Consistency Reliability    | Composite Realibility and Cronbach's alpha > 0,7 and < 0,95 |

Source: Hair, 2011.

### 3.2. Results of research

#### Stage 1: Factor analysis for questions 4, 5, 6

To see if there was a basis for doing a factor analysis Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the KMO test were performed. The obtained results confirmed the validity of the factor analysis (Table 4).

**Table 4.**

*Results of tests to check the validity of use of the factor analysis*

|                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Alfa Cronbacha          | 0.88                           |
| Barlett sphericity test | Chi kw 3395,399 df210 p=0,0000 |
| KMO test                | General criterion KMO 0,872    |

Source: Own study.

Then eigenvalues were calculated to decide on the number of factors. With the use of Kaiser criteria, it was determined that these will be four factors that together explain 56.6% of data variability (table 5).

**Table 5.**

*Statistics of eigenvalue*

| Value | Eigenvalue | % of total variance | Cumulative eigenvalue | Cumulative % of variance |
|-------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1     | 6.515702   | 31.02715            | 6.51570               | 31.02715                 |
| 2     | 2.903380   | 13.82562            | 9.41908               | 44.85277                 |
| 3     | 1.296737   | 6.17494             | 10.71582              | 51.02771                 |
| 4     | 1.176229   | 5.60109             | 11.89205              | 56.62880                 |

Source: Based on own study.

When conducting the factor analysis, the Principal Components method was used as a method of distinguishing factors and Varimax rotation were applied. This way, the assignment of the variables under study to the four assumed factors was obtained. The results can be found in Table 6.

**Table 6.**

*Factor analysis results*

| Variables   | Loadings |        |         |         |
|---|----------|--------|---------|---------|
|   | f 1      | f 2    | f 3     | f 4     |
| 4. Negative opinions and comments in social media make me resign from a holiday   | -0.0026  | 0.0276 | -0.1895 | 0.6995  |
| 4. I use social media to plan a trip  | 0.0803   | 0.2653 | 0.2084  | 0.7149  |
| 4. I check opinions /stories on places I want to visit on social media  | 0.0790   | 0.2917 | 0.0831  | 0.7514  |
| 4. I use social media to learn about the history and culture of tourist places  | 0.1888   | 0.4472 | 0.2233  | 0.4153  |
| 4. In social media, I am looking for information about hindrances and problems that may arise in the places I intend to visit | 0.0185   | 0.4613 | 0.2323  | 0.4683  |
| 4. I use short term apartment rentals (e.g. Airbnb)   | -0.0338  | 0.1021 | 0.7363  | 0.2125  |
| 4. I use social media to establish relationships with the local community   | 0.2962   | 0.1107 | 0.7063  | -0.0092 |

Cont. table 6.

|  |        |         |         |         |
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4. Positive opinions and comments in social media encourage me to go on holiday                        | 0.1487 | 0.3590  | 0.0143  | 0.5595  |
| 5. I use social media ongoing planning of further stages of a trip                                     | 0.0894 | 0.6774  | 0.2347  | 0.2994  |
| 5. I use social media Obtaining information about the place of stay                                    | 0.0585 | 0.7742  | 0.0862  | 0.2857  |
| 5. I use social media commenting on events taking place in the place of stay                           | 0.6393 | 0.1727  | 0.3515  | 0.0227  |
| 5. I use social media making contact with the local community  | 0.4355 | 0.2785  | 0.6356  | -0.1243 |
| 5. I use social media Obtaining information about current events (cultural, entertainment, etc.)       | 0.1206 | 0.7306  | 0.1144  | 0.0908  |
| 5. I use social media current sharing experiences from a tourist trip                                  | 0.7512 | 0.2460  | 0.0982  | 0.0301  |
| 5. I use social media making contact with other tourists   | 0.5623 | 0.1752  | 0.5458  | 0.0078  |
| 5. I use social media obtaining information about current difficulties (e.g. traffic jams, accidents ) | 0.1684 | 0.7125  | 0.0077  | 0.1064  |
| 6. I am sending email/text messages from a travel trip   | 0.7541 | 0.0735  | -0.0223 | 0.0887  |
| 6. I share the experience of a travel trip by photo/video album for friends (e.g. Facebook)            | 0.6886 | -0.0624 | 0.1255  | 0.0780  |
| 6. I use social media to share the experience of a travel trip by public photo/video album             | 0.2752 | -0.0418 | 0.5214  | 0.3028  |
| 6. I use social media writing reviews (e.g. TripAdvisor, Booking.com)                                  | 0.6344 | 0.1261  | 0.2340  | 0.1932  |
| 6. I use social media posting statements and photos in social groups/forums                            | 0.6380 | -0.0302 | 0.2648  | 0.0630  |

Source: Own study.

Based on the conducted factor analysis names of four constructs were identified. They are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.**

*Names of constructs identified in the factor analysis*

| No  | Construct                                   |
|-----|---|
| cz1 | Visibility in the crowd                     |
| cz2 | Obtaining information about nearby events   |
| cz3 | Building relations with the local community |
| cz4 | Relying on the opinions of others           |

Source: Own study.

### **Stage 2: Study of constructs' validity and reliability**

Then the 4 obtained constructs (cz1, cz2, cz3, cz4) together with a preconceived construct about the motivation for activity (cz5) were analysed for validity and reliability. Satisfactory levels of indicators were not obtained. In order to obtain constructs' validity and reliability at the desired level, variables with the lowest loading were removed. Thus satisfactory levels of validity and reliability were obtained (Table 8).



**Table 8.***Construct together with variables and statistics*

| Construct                                       | Item | Loadings | AVE   | CR    | CA    |
|---|------|----------|-------|-------|-------|
| Visibility in the crowd (cz1)                   | 5_3  | 0.754    | 0.580 | 0.873 | 0.819 |
|   | 5_6  | 0.810    |       |       |       |
|   | 5_7  | 0.743    |       |       |       |
|   | 6_2  | 0.753    |       |       |       |
|   | 6_5  | 0.747    |       |       |       |
| Obtaining information about nearby events (cz2) | 4_4  | 0.746    | 0.609 | 0.861 | 0.768 |
|   | 5_1  | 0.843    |       |       |       |
|   | 5_2  | 0.817    |       |       |       |
|   | 5_5  | 0.708    |       |       |       |
| Building relations with local community (cz3)   | 4_7  | 0.890    | 0.817 | 0.899 | 0.777 |
|   | 5_4  | 0.917    |       |       |       |
| Relying on the opinions of others (cz4)         | 4_2  | 0.790    | 0.654 | 0.850 | 0.740 |
|   | 4_3  | 0.818    |       |       |       |
|   | 4_8  | 0.818    |       |       |       |
| Motivation for activities in SM (cz5)           | 7_3  | 0.749    | 0.661 | 0.886 | 0.828 |
|   | 7_4  | 0.863    |       |       |       |
|   | 7_5  | 0.858    |       |       |       |
|   | 7_6  | 0.776    |       |       |       |

Source: own study.

In order to study the Discriminant Validity, Fornell-Lacker criterion was used. The highest scores on the main diagonal indicate a good level of Discriminant Validity (Table 9).

**Table 9.***Fornell-Lacker criterion*

|        | (cz2). | (cz3). | (cz4). | (cz1). | (cz5). |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| (cz2). | 0.780  |        |        |        |        |
| (cz3). | 0.350  | 0.904  |        |        |        |
| (cz4). | 0.596  | 0.237  | 0.809  |        |        |
| (cz1). | 0.400  | 0.620  | 0.324  | 0.762  |        |
| (cz5). | 0.303  | 0.520  | 0.248  | 0.717  | 0.813  |

Source: Based on own study.

### Summary of results

When answering the research question posed in the paper it has been found that tourists' behaviour in social media is related to the following latent variables concerning the use of SM: 1) Visibility in the crowd, 2) Obtaining information about nearby events, 3) Building relationships with the local community, 4) Relying on the opinions of others. Moreover, for the found constructs to have an adequate level of validity and reliability, these constructs should be defined by the following variables:

- construct 1 consists of the following variables: *I use social media to: comment on events taking place where I am, share experiences from the tourist trip on an ongoing basis, make contact with other tourists, keep a photo/video album on the Internet for friends (e.g. Facebook), post statements and photo reports in social groups/forums e.g. Facebook;*

- construct 2 consists of the following variables: *I use social media to: learn about the history and culture of tourist destinations, plan the next stages of my journey on an ongoing basis, to stay informed about the place I am in, get information about current events (cultural, entertainment, etc.);*
- construct 3 consists of the following variables: *I use social media to: build relationships with the local community, make contact with the local community;*
- construct 4 consists of the following variables: *I use social media to: plan the trip, check opinions/reports on social media about the places I want to visit, Positive reviews and comments on social media encourage me to travel.*

The analysis of validity and reliability has confirmed the accuracy of the preconceived construct 5 *Motivation for activities in SM* (statistical measures related to validity and reliability had satisfactory levels).

- construct 5 consists of the following variables: *I use social media to: help others make a decision about a planned tourist trip, warn others about bad choices on a tourist trip, participate in the creation of websites that have proved useful to me, maintain social contacts and friendships, share my experiences on the Internet, be more recognizable by publishing my experiences.*

#### 4. Conclusion

Modern technologies support efficient city management, which is influenced by the implementation of IT solutions that facilitate tourism management. This is due to the possibility of extracting information from large data sets and the implementation of smart city solutions. The possibility of social media use allows for achieving assumed goals both by the city authorities and the users. Due to the significant importance of the amount of data that are necessary for smooth city management, it is worth knowing the motivation of social media users.

The research conducted indicates the direction of behaviour of tourists who use social media. Based on the analysis of social media usage by tourists, four motivators of their behaviour were identified. They result from factor analysis of latent variables and they are: 1) Visibility in the crowd, 2) Obtaining information about nearby events, 3) Building relationships with the local community, 4) Relying on the opinions of others. Moreover, the analysis has shown a correctly preconceived construct concerning *Motivation for activities in SM*.

This paper has filled a research gap in the field of tourism management, smart city and the use of modern technologies. A proprietary research questionnaire was used in the study. Moreover, new insights were provided concerning motivators and behaviours of tourists when

using social media. This information can be used by city managers, tourism organisations, tourism facility managers. Thanks to identifying motivators for using social media by tourists, it is possible to take multi-faceted measures aimed at influencing tourist behaviour. These measures can result in the desired objectives being achieved, e.g. relations between tourists and the local community will be built. This will also enable the identification of people who are motivated to be visible in the crowd and offer them cooperation in the promotion of tourist destinations or attractions.

The paper's limitation is the fact that the research was conducted only in Poland. In the future, it is planned to conduct the research also in other countries in order to make international comparisons. Moreover, there is no identification of motivators in particular age groups. Therefore, an in-depth research is planned for the future, which would be directed at studying the intensity of individual motivators in particular age groups.

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