Digital marketing impact on tourism in Portugal: a quantitative study

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Abstract

Almost two decades have passed since the beginning of the millennium, digital marketing and mobile technology are evolving so fast that has changed the way tourists travel, plan and experience their holidays, even more so with the newer generations, who are more propense to travel, discover the world and to use these technologies. The extraordinary increase of tourism in Portugal in the last decades, made it important to understand the role that digital marketing and mobile technology are playing in this area. Tourism in Portugal, is one of the most important economic sectors of the country, weighting 13,7% of the GDP in 2017, according to the Portuguese Republic and it's growing year after year. Some of the reasons for this success are obviously the unique characteristics of this small country (The Algarve, Douro valley, historical cities like Lisbon and Oporto, gastronomical and wine variety, a friendly and welcoming people, cheap prices for European standards, security). Digital marketing and mobile technology are key factors for the players in the industry of tourism, so we are going to try and determine how they are influencing tourists in their choices. Based on the use of a quantitative research and in view of the fact that it is intended to analyze attitudes, intentions and behaviors the data was collected through a questionnaire (Cunha, 2019).

Keywords: Portugal, digital marketing, tourism, mobile technology.

Introduction

Digital marketing is a new scientific area that registered a huge growth, being considered as the future evolution of marketing (Wertime & Fenwick, 2012), and is changing the way how tourists interact with travel destinations, when travelling around the world. According to Neuhofer et. al. (2013), mobile technology has the ability to significantly boost interaction between businesses and consumers in this context, guiding to a more personalized experience. Tourism related apps saw, in the uprising of the internet, an opportunity to easily expand business and to get more customers. Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and others play a big role in the "old mouth to mouth" publicity because there are so many people sharing their traveling experiences that can't be ignored by the tourism industry.

Hudson and Thal (2013), affirms consumers relation with brands has been significantly affected by this kind of marketing. The experience of purchase has changed from narrowing down to one brand from marketeer's competition for consumers attention, a moment known as Zero Moment of Truth (Lecinski, 2011; Hudson & Thal, 2013).

Younger generations like Millennials, have different needs than their parents or grandparents had, especially in the context of tourism (Cavagnaro, Staffieri & Postma, 2018).Trying to understand how Millennials use digital information and mobile technology can give tourism in Portugal a significant boost, according to Soares et al. (2017), this generation has to be considered a priority on the agenda of tourism business managers. Tomorrow's prototypical tourist is probably not one with a Hawaiian shirt and a huge camera around the neck awkwardly gazing at natives or distant landscapes but an individual with a personal digital device connected to a myriad of information sources, allowing for interactions with a global social network and supporting touristic gazes at an augmented reality that facilitates interactions with the environment in new forms (Gretzel, 2010).

Getting a better understanding of the demands and behaviors of this generation, according to (Soares et al., 2017) should be considered a priority on the agenda of tourism business managers.

Marketing

Marketing took the first steps over a hundred years ago and has its foundation in economics (McBee & Kruger, 1971). Along the way marketing has had many definitions, starting in the beginning of the twentieth century and continue to evolve with the influence of certain environmental factors (Brunswick, 2014). But why is the definition so important? First, it marks its place by setting boundaries and describing essential qualities. Second, an accurate definition guides marketeers and academics through consensuality about what is and what isn't marketing (Ringold & Weitz, 2007).

According to Ringold and Weitz (2007), the impact of marketing on the consumer, the organization and the society are three related subjects with strong impact on the conceptual domain of marketing.

American Marketing Association (1973) has been contributing to developing a definition of marketing over the past seven decades. In 2017, AMA approved a new and more actual definition of marketing: *"Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."*

Digital marketing: the mobile technology

Internet technology made a revolution in the rules of marketing and many traditional strategies ways of marketing have become obsolete with this technology (Kaur, 2017). With the advent of internet, digital marketing became a key factor for those who want to prosper in this area (Kaur, 2017). The author claims, internet consumers have today the ability to interact, not only with other users, but also with their favorite brands, and because of that, several opportunities had been created, towards a new relationship between stakeholders.

Nowadays, the use of mobile devices is democratized, especially smartphones and an uncountable number of Apps regarding every aspect of our daily life, lead us to an era of unprecedented connectivity and endless access to the Internet (Cunha, 2019). The instant access to online features empowers tourists to access and share information regardless of the place or the time they are at (Wang et al., 2014; Cunha, 2019).

Tourists tend to easily adopt mobile technologies because they acknowledge the utility and the convenience provided by this software when accomplishing travel related tasks, such as

information search (No & Kim, 2014; Cunha, 2019), reservation and payment for services (Ozturk et al., 2016; Fong et al., 2017; Cunha, 2019) and moving around a destination (Lu, et al., 2015; Cunha, 2019).

Understanding Digital Marketing and starting to harness the power of digital media and mobile technology is crucial to achieve success in the tourism industry. When customers are looking for relevant information and searching for feedback in a digital environment, they're highly influenced by the element of trust (Kannan & Li, 2017). Stakeholders theory is referred by (Shankar, Urban & Sultan, 2002) and (Kannan & Li, 2017), as a new perspective of online businesses. They claim, trust can be reinforced by the confidence of customers on the treatment of their information when a purchase is made online.

Tourism as a regional development tool

Tourism is an extremely important economic activity and plays a decisive role in regional development, unlocking the natural and historical-cultural potential. An ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide have opened up to, and invested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development.

Driven by a relatively strong global economy, a growing middle class in emerging economies, technological advances, new business models, affordable travel costs and visa facilitation, international tourist arrivals grew 5% in 2018 to reach the 1.4 billion mark ("Int. Tour. Highlights, 2019 Ed.," 2019). This mark was reached two years ahead of UNWTO forecast. Simultaneously, export earnings generated by tourism have grown to USD 1.7 trillion. This makes the tourism sector as one of the most important drivers for economic growth and development, leading to the creation of more and better jobs and serving as catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship. In short, tourism is helping regional developing, improving lives for millions of individuals and transforming whole communities. Growth in international tourist arrivals and receipts continues to grow faster than the world economy and both emerging and advanced economies are collecting the

benefits from this growth of tourism revenues. For the seventh year in a row, tourism exports grew faster than merchandise exports, reducing trade deficits in many countries. With such growth comes more responsibility in ensuring effective destination management that minimizes any adverse effect of tourism. Managing tourism in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all is more critical than ever. We need to grow more in value rather than just in volume. Digitalization, innovation, greater accessibility and societal changes are expected to continue shaping our sector. Both destinations and companies will need to adapt to remain competitive, while at the same time embracing tourism as a means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building a better future for all ("Int. Tour. Highlights, 2019 Ed.," 2019).

Since 2009 Europe as seen tourism with sustained growth and it's the world most visited region. Southern and Mediterranean Europe led results, with most destinations enjoying double-digit growth. Among the larger destinations, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Croatia saw robust performance. Turkey continued its strong recovery, backed by a favorable exchange rate. After several years of remarkable growth in volume, Spain, the subregion's largest destination, showed solid growth in tourism earnings in 2018. Destinations in Central and Eastern Europe grew in line with the region's average. Visa facilitation led to an increase of Chinese tourists in some destinations. The Russian Federation hosted the 2018 FIFA World Cup and recorded double-digit increase in international tourism receipts. Positive performance in Western Europe was led by Belgium, which consolidated its rebound, and the Netherlands.

Northern Europe recorded flat growth with mixed performance among destinations ("Int. Tour. Highlights, 2019 Ed.," 2019).

The tourism sector activities have a huge impact on an economy whether through employment or the creation and development of tourism companies. Campos et al., (2006) and Nicolaides, (2015; 2019) add that tourism constitutes a sector of activity with a progressively rising level of importance and value to the national and regional economies and fundamentally developed through the provision of services stemming from the needs, expectations, demands and desires of tourist clients in conjunction with the activities ongoing at the respective destination. In essence tourism is generally viewed as the herald of economic and social benefits for a rural community, through especially the income and infrastructural development it brings to fringe communities and generally the impoverished and less economically developed areas (Nicolaides, 2019).

Tourism is a strategic market identified by governments to improve economic development through an increase of jobs offered in the usual sectors of this branch of activity (Jackson & Murphy, 2002). Authors also claim this market must be able to maintain or increase the quality provided in order to sustainably satisfy clients, creating in that matter an attractive tourism integrated solution. To accomplish this goal, natural and built resources are extremely important, but not enough. It's critical to invest in human capacities, hard and soft skills, and these features all combined provide a perfect environment, attractive and safe, so tourists can embrace a new experience with joy.

Cabugueira (2005) affirms the value proposition offered as tourism products has its origin in natural or cultural diversity. This kind of singularities turns tourism core products into competitive advantages with the ability of leverage economies, by extending its effects to other sectors and improving productivity and ultimately leading to a better performance of these economies.

Rodrigues (2003) refers to how, in other economic activities, it is the product that travels to market, in tourism precisely the opposite takes place. To ensure the effective consumption of the tourism product, the tourist has to travel to the site of the support structure: the tourism destination. The author also affirms that there is no scope for disentangling any approach to the tourism product from the tourist destination itself given that the latter amounts to a central feature to tourism activities. Tourism also generates multiplier effects for economic activities, which reflect not only on important added value but also on capacity through driving the development of other sectors of economic activity (Cabugueira, 2005). According to (Botti et al., 2008), geographic proximity plays a relevant role in the perception as to the performance of tourism organizations within the scope of maintaining the sustainability of tourism firms and contributing towards enhancing the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

Mobile technology impact on tourism

Mobile technology has the potential to improve all phases of the tourist experience: anticipation; travel to destination; destination-based activity; return travel; and recollection, and it's also increases tourists' ability to engage in the pre and post consumption phases during the core consumption experience, removing the need for advanced planning and facilitating changes of plans (Wang et al., 2014). The tourist experience is altered by mobile devices and it can cause disengagement, leading to disembodied experiences, a loss of sense of place and lack of interaction with those physically present (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Mobile technology in tourism was initially undermined by the additional costs of use outside of the tourist's home country, however, legislation has reduced the costs of calls, texts and data roaming (European

Commission, 2015) and nowadays you basically pay the same if you are travelling inside the EU. Also, more widely available free Wi-Fi has almost eliminated this obstacle in most contexts.

The capacity of mobile technology to transcend space/time so users can be in two spaces at the same time is widely reported in other fields (Humphreys, 2010) and mobile devices have reshaped a variety of social practices (Llamas, R. & Belk, 2013) such as shopping, banking and working. Some people can work at home, while travelling and during tourism (Dickinson, Hibbert & Filimonau, 2016). This blurring of work and leisure, space and time, caused by the multiple things it is possible to do with the digital, has been referred to as 'fragmented time' (Klein, 2004) and 'digital elasticity' (Pearce, 2011). Mckay and Vogt, (2012) have used spillover theory to explore how technology used at home can transfer to tourism. It is arguably no longer normal to be disconnected and (Wang et al., 2014) found that tourists were influenced by subjective norms, specifically peer mobile use patterns, and that routines of smartphone use from everyday life pervaded the tourist experience. However, there are questions about whether this is desirable (Llamas, R. & Belk, 2013). For example, (Germann Molz & Paris, 2013) found remaining connected to work while a tourist can be a blessing, but also cause anxiety and sociologists have explored in general whether technology weakens, reinforces or supplements co-present sociability (Fortunati, Taipale & Luca, 2013). The use of mobile technology in tourism has led to a growing body of research which can largely be categorized into three streams (Wang et al., 2014): human computer interaction studies focused on optimizing design of systems (for example, tourism apps and guides); adoption of mobile information services mainly using the Technology Acceptance Model and its derivatives; and the impact of technology on the tourist experience. Studies largely assume connection is a positive thing and an opportunity to be harnessed by the industry that will enhance tourist experiences and business opportunities. The concept of 'technology dead zones' emphasizes negative connotations of places where connection is unfeasible, though this can lead to positive experiences (Pearce & Gretzel, 2012) and the selective nonuse of smartphones needs to be explored further (see for example, (Wang et al., 2014). Also, work on disconnection has been largely related to where backpackers find themselves unable to connect, though within this there is some discussion of purposefully choosing to disconnect, for instance when users temporarily want to hide their whereabouts (Germann Molz & Paris, 2013). There is also evidence from travel news media of a growing number of destinations and hospitality service providers offering tourism products where you can disconnect (see for example, Lay, 2014), although in her work on dead zones, (Gretzel, 2014) questions whether this will have much appeal. Outside the tourism field studies have shown extensive digital engagement can have some consequences for health (Harwood, J., Dooley, Scott & Joiner, 2014) and intrusion of technology has other negative effects (Llamas& Belk, 2013).

Dimensions in the use of social networks and mobile technology

First dimension: information

The essence of the tourism products in an online context is centered on information, which makes it a research product, whose evaluation goes through the consultation of information related to it. Similarly, because most of the times the product cannot be tested in advance, it must be evaluated by the consumer as a reliable product (Bhat & Shah, 2014).

Second dimension: trends

Erner (2005:104) explains that it is called a trend "any polarization phenomenon by which the same object – in the broadest sense of the word – simultaneously seduces a large number of people." The difficulty to predict when an impulse will stop, as well as what will replace it make

the author characterize the tendencies as a modern circus, an organization- in theory - without organizers. The phenomenon of the polarization causes apprehension to the industrialists, which require a constant survey of the trends of the moment.

Third dimension: customization

According to Prahalad and Ramaswany (2004), the value creation of the supplier to the consumer happens in multiple points of interaction, through joint experiences that occur throughout the service life, and not just at the time of the meeting. For the authors, the creation of value will exist and evolve by means of personalized experiences, in which the consumer is one of the active elements.

Fourth dimension: interactivity

In the physical world, the multisensory experience of digital marketing is regarded as an important basis for business (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008). Digital technologies can work both ways in a B to C relationship related with tourism, and it's an opportunity to organization to create value for all stakeholders. Depending on the ability of firms to develop digital technologies interactions with the environment, and the ability to create strategies and tactical operations, the outcome can be increased.

Fifth dimension: word-of-mouth

Given the growth in the use of the Internet and its key role in e-commerce, the eWOM (digital word-of-mouth), which represents the exchange of mouth-to-mouth messages in the digital environment, has been altering consumer decisions and behaviors. People rely on the information and opinions of other users and often make offline decisions based on information they collect online (Lee et al., 2008).

Sixth dimension: brand value

In a way very succinct, brand equity is related to the fact of obtaining with a brand different results from those that would be obtained if the same product or service was not identified by that brand (Keller & Machado, 2006). However, as regards a concrete definition, the authors Christodoulides and De Chernatony (2009) state that the literature on brand equity remains substantial, largely fragmented and inconclusive.

Seventh dimension: purchase intent

The intent of purchase is defined as the predisposition of the consumer to make a possible acquisition, according to certain factors or motivations of the general framework of the decision-making process of the consumer (Kotler & Keller, 2009). The intention is, therefore, one of the stages of the purchasing process and is seen as a conscious response by the individual to different stimuli to which he is subject.

Methodology

Research objectives

The literature review has exposed some concepts of tourism and the importance of mobile technology in their communication. Some of the main dimensions that may relate to this relationship between tourism and the consumer of mobile technology were also addressed. So, the purpose of this article was to answer these three questions: How does social networks, affected tourism stakeholders? Is brand loyalty affected by digital marketing in tourism? What are the characteristics that consumers most value in digital marketing?

Instrument, sample, and procedures

For the development of the investigation, we used the quantitative method of the survey type, with a self-completed questionnaire survey. The survey is suggested by Quivy and Campenhoudt (2008) as a method of gathering information, as a way to ascertain ways of life, behaviors, values, knowledge, expectations, opinions and attitudes towards options.

Its use is recognized and applied in various fields of analysis, such as consumer behavior (Wimmer & Dominick, 1996), and therefore its design should be based on clear, concise questions, according to the research objectives. In other words, its structuring must, on the one hand, integrate clear and unambiguous questions and secondly, allow researchers to collect accurate information.

Regarding this last point, Quivy and Campenhoudt (2008), report that the quantitative treatment of data resulting from the application of a questionnaire survey implies the pre-coding of the questions, aiming to establish limits of responses by the respondents. The use of the survey by questionnaire and the quantitative analysis of data by means of different techniques and statistical methods can be observed in a multiplicity of research work. The quantitative method is conclusive, and it aims to quantify a problem and understand its dimension. In short, this type of research provides numerical information about consumer behavior (Cunha, 2019). The data collected through this method directly impact decision making, as well as those provided by qualitative research. However, in practice, they can better express the information to be presented, especially when the objective is to convince themselves about some direction.

Because of its statistical nature, the sample size is very important for quantitative research and should be defined with great care. This is because quantitative research generates accurate metrics that are based on a given sample — they can even be replicated to the universe studied as a whole.

Conventionally associated with the social area, the survey is, according to Babbie (1999), particularly similar to the type of research of 'census', where what differentiates the two surveys is that the survey examines a sample of the population, while the census usually implies an enumeration of the entire population. A Survey, according to Babbie (1999), can have one of three purposes:

1 - Description: it aims to discover the distribution of certain traits and attributes of the population studied. The investigator's concern is not the reason for the distribution, but with what it is.

2 - Explanation: it aims to explain the observed distribution. In this case, the researcher is concerned about why the existing distribution.

3 - Exploration: it aims to function as an exploratory mechanism, applied in an initial investigation situation of some theme, trying not to let critical elements cease to be identified, presenting new possibilities that can subsequently be worked on a controlled survey.

The questionnaire used consisted of two parts. Firstly, a set of questions about the demographic profile, the individuals and their habits of mobile technology consumption were put in place. The second part of the questionnaire was elaborated based on the Yadav and Rahman scale (2017). The use of this scale is extremely important since it intends to measure the perceptions of consumer attitudes. Having already been tested in another investigation becomes more reliable, facilitating the comparison of results. A 5-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the scale.

The Yadav and Rahman scale (2017) was adapted and translated into Portuguese for the purpose of measuring the perceptions of consumer attitudes with the mobile technology. The final version of the questionnaire was pre-tested with 50 consumers. After small semantic adjustments were made, the questionnaires were then distributed to self-completion, obtaining a non-probabilistic sample of convenience consisting of 607 individuals. The results, also used as a basis for analyzing the use of mobile and travel apps in the tourism industry (Magano & Cunha, 2019), are discussed in the following section.

Results analysis

With regard to the sample, it can be affirmed that a convenience sample was used. This technique is very common and consists of selecting a sample of the population that is accessible. That is, the individuals employed in this research were selected because they are readily available, not because they were selected by means of a statistical criterion. Usually, this convenience represents greater operational ease and low sampling cost.

In terms of characterizing the general profile of the sample, more specifically regarding age, the individuals were grouped into six age groups, as can be analyzed in Table 1.

Table 1. Age groups

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age groups	18-25	105	17
	26-35	123	20
	36-45	197	33
	46-55	111	18
	56-65	58	10
	66-79	13	2
	Total	**607**	**100**

Source: Own

Table 2. Gender

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	235	39
	Female	372	61
	Total	**607**	**100**

Source: Own

Table 3. Professional status

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Professional status	Student	38	6
	Unemployed	82	14
	Self-employed	73	12
	On behalf of another person	409	67
	Retired	5	1
	Total	**607**	**100**

Source: Own

Table 4. Academic level

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Academic level	Secondary	240	39.5
	University	291	47.9
	Graduate	76	12.5
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Table 5. Area of residence

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Area of residence	North	228	37.6
	Central zone	246	40.5
	South	101	16.6
	Islands	32	5.3
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Regarding the gender of the 607 individuals present in the sample, the existence of a balanced relationship between the two genders was verified. However, the existence of a number of women higher than the number of men does not have the pretension of a proportional statistical rigor, respecting, however, the tendency of Portugal signed by the National Institute of Statistics in 2019.

Regarding the sociodemographic characterization of the sample, it seems important to understand its origin at a professional level. With regard to the academic level of the sample, the sample shows that 240 of its elements, (corresponding to 39.5% of the total of respondents) hold qualifications at the secondary level, 291 of the individuals (47.9% of the sample) have a university level and only 76 individuals (12.5% of the total sample) are holders of qualifications such as, post-graduate, master's or doctoral degrees.

As a way of completing the socio-demographic characterization, it is important to perceive its geographic origin. Thus, it is possible to verify that the sample in question is composed of individuals from the North Zone of Portugal in a total of 38%. The center of Portugal presents 41%, and the south with 17%, finally the islands of Madeira and the Azores emerge with only 32 individuals (5% of the sample).

Analysis of the internal consistency of dimensions

After the characterization of the sample and since latent variables were used, each consisting of several items, the first step was to verify the internal consistency of the scales. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to do this. We proceeded to analyze the internal consistency of the scales so that they could be subsequently fused into the respective composites since each of the dimensions to be analyzed consisted of several items and this would make the analysis more difficult.

Cronbach's Alpha (α) as an important statistical indicator of reliability, is sometimes called a reliability coefficient of a scale. The greater the correlation between the items of a dimension or scale, the higher the Cronbach's Alpha (α). For this reason, it is also known as internal test consistency. Cronbach's Alpha (α) can take values between Zero (0) and one (1) as mentioned in Table 6.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha - reliability

Cronbach´s Alpha	Reliability
Alpha > 0.9	Excellent
Alpha between 0.8 and 0.9	Good
Alpha between 0.8 and 0.7	Reasonable
Alpha between 0.7 and 0.6	Weak
Alpha < 0.6	Unacceptable

Source: Cunha (2019)

Since this study came from dimensions built beforehand in a previous investigation, it was intended to confirm the internal consistency of these dimensions using Cronbach's alpha. According to what can be seen in Table 7, all dimensions are above 0.7, considered acceptable. The next step, the verification of the average values between the items of each dimension. Thus, the dimensions were transformed into variables for later analysis.

Table 7. Internal consistency of dimensions - Cronbach's Alpha

Dimensions - Cronbach's Alpha	
Information	
Webpages provide useful information about your tourism	
The information these pages offer is easy to understand	0.741
The information these pages offer allows you to stay informed	
Trends	
The content published on the social networks of tourism show the latest trends	
Tracking these pages means being really trendy	0.883
Everything that is tourism is posted on these pages	
Customization	
The social networking pages of tourism give recommendations for purchases that meet the consumer	
These pages satisfy the needs of consumers	0.866
These pages make it easy to search for personalized information	
Interactivity	
The social networking pages of tourism allow consumers to share content	
These pages make it easy to interact with colleagues and friends	0.734
These pages interact regularly with your fans and followers	
Mouth to mouth	
Share the social networking pages of tourism with their colleagues and friends	
I would recommend these pages to your colleagues and friends	0.788
I would advise your friends and colleagues to visit these pages	
Brand value	
I consider some digital tourism brands to be strong	
These brands have quality services	0.884
These brands are very well known	
Purchase Intent	
I'm willing to buy travels in the future	
I intend to buy travels	0.741
The products of some agencies are on my list of future purchase	

Source: Own

Descriptive analysis of dimensions

It was considered important to make a descriptive analysis of these dimensions. It is noteworthy that for this analysis it was taken into account that these variables were measured with a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree.

Thus, it was possible to verify that the respondents positively value the five dimensions related to the publications of tourism in social networks (information, trends, personalization, interactivity, and mouth-to-mouth). In addition, they express appreciation for these marks due to the positive classification that gives the brand value dimension. Finally, they show the intention to buy through a positive score (Table 8).

Table 8. Descriptive analysis of the dimensions

Dimensions	Average	Standard deviation
Information	3.99	0.77
Trends	3.91	1.17
Customization	3.91	1.01
Interactivity	3.99	0.76
Mouth-to-mouth	3.88	0.90
Brand value	3.91	1.17
Purchase intent	3.99	0.77

Source: Own

Correlational analysis between dimensions

In order to understand how the variables correlated with purchase intent, a Pearson correlation was performed. According to Pereira (2006), the statistical correlation procedure determines the degree of association between variables. The correlation coefficients may vary between -1 (a negative association) and +1 (perfect positive correlation). The zero value indicates the absence of a linear relationship enters the variables. According to Table 9, it can be verified that the correlations presented are all positive and statistically significant. In view of the positive result of the correlation, it was advanced to perform the linear regression.

Table 9. Correlational analysis between dimensions

2. Brand value	1					
3. Mouth-to-mouth	.501**	1				
4. Information	.997**	.500**	1			
5. Trends	.511**	.494**	.511**	1		
6. Customization	.507**	.988**	.506**	.498**	1	
7. Interactivity	.958**	.629**	.954**	.511**	.638**	1

** Significant correlation for α ≤ 0.01

Source: Own

Linear regression

The aim was to evaluate the dimensions related to social networks that can best predict the value of the brand. For this, a multiple linear regression was performed using the dimensions related to the publications of the tourism fashion brands in social networks (information, trends, personalization, interactivity, and mouth-to-mouth) as independent variables and the dimension "Tag value" as the dependent variable (Table 10).

The final model, relative to the dependent variable: the value of the marks, found explains 99.4% of the total variance of the data. The "Trends" and "mouth-to-mouth" dimensions were only retained in the final model. The independent variable with the greatest predictive power, in this case, is "tendencies", with a positive relation (β = 0.896). The "mouth-to-mouth" dimension arises with a lower impact on the dependent variable (β = 0.114). Subsequently, we attempted to determine the impact of the variable "brand value" in the "Purchase intent", and a simple linear regression was performed in which the latter was assumed as a dependent variable (Table 11). The final model found explains only 26% of the total variance of the data, and the variable "brand value" assumed a positive value (β = 0.515). Figure 1 summarizes the final model resulting from the regressions performed.

Table 10. Multiple linear regression

Independent variable: tourism dependent variables	Tag value	Beta t-value	Sig
Trends	0.896	75.549	0.000
Mouth-to-mouth	0.114	8.832	0.000
R2 0.994			

Source: Own

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Table 11. Multiple linear regression

Independent variable: tourism dependent variables	Tag value	Beta t-value	Sig
Brand value	0.515	14.393	0.000
R2 0.26			

Source: Own

Conclusions and Contributions

The growing diffusion of digital channels, driven by the rapid development of information technologies, mitigated physical distances and triggered profound changes in the way of researching, communicating and shopping. Companies have diversified their ways of interacting with customers and doing business. Consumers have modified their purchasing behavior and started using different digital channels throughout their journey. This constant channel swap also extends to contact points. We, therefore, witnessed the creation of a new journey of consumption, driven by digital channels, which places an alert on organizations that aspire to attract customers and retain them in a loyalty cycle. Social networks are a platform used to have social exposure, develop an awareness of the website, are vehicles for the implementation of marketing campaigns and frequent interaction with consumers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Rawat & Divekar, 2014). They are also a channel of advertising, consumer research, provides them with a voice through interaction and sharing of opinions with the network (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Yadav & Rahman, 2017).

In this article, several studies have been exhibited that refer to the importance of exploring the dimension of persuasion, conversion, loyalty, and bonding. For example, Teng et al. (2017) created a conceptual model to test the determinants of the persuasion of word-of-mouth messages between users of social media, known as eWOM, and the impacts they have on changing attitudes and behavior of consumers. Enginkaya and Yılmaz (2014) explored the conversion phase from the point of view of consumers' motivations to interact with and on touristic brands in social media. LaRoche, Habibi and Richard (2013) explored how communities of brands established in social media, influence brand loyalty and relationships between customers and brands, products, companies and other customers.

The quality of the information captures the quality of the content and the value perceived by the client and includes characteristics such as updated information, accuracy, informative and relevance (Hernández, 2009; Huizingh & Hoekstra, 2003; Lopes & Melão, 2013). The content can be seen as useful, but it can also be an important source of pleasure if the use of the website is intrinsically a motivator (Treiblmaier & Pinterits, 2010). These aspects were addressed in the conceptual part of this article, which also highlighted the main dimensions that are present in the consumer's perception of the publications on tourism in social networks.

The empirical component of this study allowed us to answer the previously placed research questions:

1: Applicability of the model of Yadav and Rahman, (2017) to the Portuguese context: The study showed that the model of Yadav and Rahman (2017) can apply to the Portuguese reality since the analysis of the internal consistency of the dimensions demonstrates that there is robustness in the model.

2: Consumers' attitude towards the components of "information", "Trends", "interactivity" and "mouth-to-mouth": All the dimensions of the model proved to be pertinent for Portuguese consumers since positive responses were obtained in all of them. Consumers especially value the informative and disseminating component of trends that can have the publications of these touristic brands on social networks. However, it is also noteworthy how important is the personalization of communication and the interactivity that is provided by these channels. Thus, the results emerging from the analysis elaborated on the impact of each of the variables in question demonstrate very reasonable and even high levels in some cases. The impact of the credibility of the publications and the cognitive and emotional involvement in the publications as well as the mouth-to-mouth showed that the credibility of social networks is on the high. This result is in line with that proposed by Lu et al., (2014), which indicate that the fact that consumers believe and seek content contributes to a positive attitude towards touristic travels, which will have a positive impact on the future service, as well as in the dissemination and sharing.

3: Correlations between the dimensions: It was found that all dimensions correlate with each other. Moreover, they correlate with the brand's value dimension, demonstrating that they can, in fact, have an influence on the component of consumer attitudes. Thus, it is verified that the main motivations of buying tourism services are not only with the characteristics of the brand itself, but also with some factors relevant to the consumer, as is the case of quality and exclusivity, but also by hedging characteristics and also by the consumer's lifestyle (Cunha, 2014).

4: Existing correlation between the value of the tourism brands and the intention to buy them: There is also a correlation between the value attributed to these marks and the intent of purchase demonstrating that the behavioral component is also implicated and is stimulated by those dimensions. Therefore, the results showed a positive correlation in the case of purchase intent, which is in agreement with the studies by Lu et al. (2014). Therefore, it is confirmed that consumers reveal a positive attitude towards publications, which in turn impacts the intention.

Studies show that tourism brands when they are present in social networks and online platforms "win" value. The results of this study point in the sense that the brand value increases

the purchase intent. There are limitations that should be mentioned and, if possible, mitigated in future contributions in this context. The questionnaire, made available online, proved to be quite extensive. Future contributions in this area are advised to simplify or even limit issue items.

Regarding data collection, although the sample was reasonable, it has some limitations, such as the fact that it is of convenience. A larger and more diversified sample may reveal other relationships between the variables in studies and make the results more robust. The results obtained provide important guidelines for future investigations. It is recommended to develop the model presented, with successive interactions, with a view to be improved and rugged. A larger sample, if possible, collected by a probabilistic criterion, with other statistical analyses, could give new visions and orientations. In fact, the theme of social networks and their use in the communication of the brand is broad and essential in the current panorama of marketing, which makes pertinent the continuation of this line of research in the future.

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