

Social Media Marketing Performance a Success to Increase Consumer Loyalty in Tourism (Case Study: The Vlore Region)

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1. Introduction

This study aims to develop an appropriate model for organizations aiming at increasing their marketing strategy in social media. Foremost this strategies relevance will be analysed by evaluating their impact over consumer loyalty as their most important marketing objective of any organization.

Consequently, the most significant objective of this paper is that it aim at quantifying the effect that social media marketing performance has over of success to increase consumer loyalty.

In the survey will include two interest groups: managers of hotels and tourists of these hotels. They will be subject to the same question. The analysis will consist in comparing their responses in order to generate what are the requirements of consumers about the indicators and variables of social media marketing on one and the performance in meeting these requirements (by hotels) on the other hand.

In this way it is possible to identify performance gaps and enhance the dimensions where improvement is needed. Of course, furthermore it can be identified tourism areas where companies are performing well in social media marketing in order to reinforce these strategies.

1.1 Research questions

The main motivation for the development of this theme is to identify the key elements and different platforms of social media marketing in the tourism industry and the ways of their application in the region of Vlora.

To achieve this end, some research questions arise, seeking to rephrase the purpose in specific directions.

The main questions of the paper are:

- Which are the most important elements of social media marketing that influence the tourist behavior according Tourists?
- Which are the most important elements of social media marketing that influence the tourist behavior according Hotels?

There are several reasons why answering this questions it is important. Firstly, there is a lack of studies on the role of social media marketing in tourism. This research is undertaken, to increase the awareness of the role that social media marketing has over a business. Secondly, the new global trend in marketing is shifting interest towards inovator marketing strategies and new ways of doing marketing. Social media marketing is one of the most basic components of a new era of marketing management. Finally, this study is designed to serve as a starting point for more in-depth studies in this field.

2. Theoretical Approach

2.1 Variables Construct

This study uses a one sectorial survey to access the best models of social media marketing by measuring them against their contribution in strengthening or weakening consumer loyalty.

The independent variables in this study were grouped into four major groups: Useage Level of Marketing Channels, Marketing Content, Marketing Sales, Marketing Monitoring.

These four groups of independent variables measured the performance of social media marketing, an furthermore their impact over consumer loyalty was studied. In the table below, customer loyalty and variables of Social Media Marketing performance measuring are presented.

Table 1: Coding of variables involved in the study

Description	Variables		
Performance of Social Media Marketing	$X_i, \text{ for } i \in \{1,4\}$	Xi - Usage Level of Marketing Channels	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Profile in social networks 2. Relevant information in social networks 3. Seo social networks 4. Keywords search 5. Traffic generation in social networks
		Xi - Marketing Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication in social networks 2. Relevant content presence on social networks 3. Consumer experience feedback 4. Promotion offers in social networks
		Xi - Marketing Sales	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Message generated from social networks 2. Monthly email 3. Automated email service
		Xi - Marketing Monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analytics monitoring 2. Presence in social networks objective 3. Test of the new trends of social networks
Consumer Loyalty	$Y_j, \text{ for } j \in \{1\}$	Yj- Consumer Loyalty	

Above table shows the coding of variables, in order to present a theoretical explanation model. All the above variables are deducted from the literature review and will serve as leader for all phases this research analysis.

- **Hypothesis :** There are differences between hotel implementation and tourist demands in terms of impact that social media marketing performance has over customer loyalty.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research sample

Collection of data was a two-step process.

Firstly, from Taxation Department Database were randomly selected 70 hotels allocated in Vlora. These hotels were initially contacted via e-mail with an invitation to contribute to this research. After this, they were directly contacted in order to fulfill the questionnaire. Conclusion of all this were: 300 answers from people with a managerial level in these hotels.

In the second phase of data collection process, the same questionnaire was adapted and distributed to tourist people, which had visited these hotels. It resulted in a number of 300 tourists who were involved in the study.

A description of research sample is given in the table below.

Table 2: Research sample

Total research sample	N=600
Tourists consumers	300
Marketing manager in hotel	300

Source: Author (2016)

Surveys were conducted in the city of Vlora, in July - September 2015. Hotels and consumers are chosen randomly by applying statistical criteria for the sample size.

3.2 Research Model

As explained in the methodology section, the primary goal of this research is to evaluate the effect that the various elements of social media marketing have on the level of consumer loyalty.

Regression coefficients give signs of partial effects of each of the elements of social media marketing over

consumer loyalty.

If with β_{ij} will mark X_i impact over Y_j level, then the level of Y_j as a result of a given level of X_i will be given by:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1 X_1 + B_2 X_2 + B_3 X_3 + B_4 X_4$$

Where:

Y - Consumer loyalty

X1 - Usage Level of Marketing Channels

X2 - Content Marketing

X3 - Sales Marketing

X4 - Monitoring Marketing

In order to evaluate this model, both groups of this research sample (businesses representatives and tourist consumers) will be given the same questionnaire; will be subject to the same analysis tools, in order to conclude in two regression equations, each of which will be submitted to interpretation.

At the end of the paper a comparison of analysis result will be performed.

4. Research Result

4.1 Business Analysis

4.1.1 General test of relationship

The first step in a multiple regression analysis is to describe general test of linear relationship between consumer loyalty and various elements of social media marketing by business point of view.

The presence of relationship between the dependent variable and the combination of independent variables, is tested based on statistical significance of the final model. As evidenced by the analysis the existence of a consumer loyalty and relationship between the various elements of inbound social media marketing is confirmed.

4.1.2 Relationship strength of Multiple Linear Regression

Once the relationship existence is verified, the next step is to determine the strength of this relationship.

Evaluation of relationship is done the use of square values Cox & Snell R and R squared Nagelkerke, which provides an indication of level of dependent variable variation explained by independent variables.

Table 3: Indicators of statistical significance of the model set

Indicators of Statistical Significance	
Multiple R	0.23193713
xR Square	0.05379483

Source: Author (2016)

As seen from the results, multiple R coefficients is 35.7%. This value that is considered good, in the sense that indicates a relatively strong relationship between dependent variable and independent ones, since the value is close to the maximum absolute value of 1 (Maurice, 2012) ..

Furthermore, $R^2 = 0.12$, ie. about 12% of all of the variation of customer loyalty is explained by: level of use of Channel Marketing, Content Marketing, Sales Marketing, Marketing Monitoring.

4.1.3 Significance of variables Model

Once the connection of regression is tested as a whole, the need to test the importance of all regression indicators one by one emerges. The procedure followed along with interpretations is shown below:

$$Y = 0.347268 + 0.282533 X_1 + 0.173758 X_2 + 0.132647 X_3 + 0.107503 X_4$$

Table 4: Significance of variables Model

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	-0.36192485	0.93462307	-0.38724151	0.69885664
X Variable 1	0.33663963	0.16855222	1.99724228	0.04671717
X Variable 2	0.26161484	0.55145151	0.47441132	0.6355576
X Variable 3	0.32726262	0.1421205	2.3027122	0.02199089
X Variable 4	0.18352656	0.0838695	2.18823956	0.02943633

Source: Author (2016)

Hypotheses that arise to test the significance of the regression coefficients are:

H₀: β_i = 0 (β₁ Statistically not important)

H_a: β_i ≠ 0 (β₁ Statistically important)

Testing the significance of the regression coefficients can be done through two tests: t and p, as following.

t Criteria

Critical t is 1.7056.

Given the assessment criteria we have: t calculated > t critical, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Rejection of null hypothesis implies that all regression variables are statistically significant, with the exception of marketing content.

p Criteria

Evaluation criteria: null hypothesis is rejected if $p < \alpha = 0.05$

It is noted that the actual $p < \alpha = 0.05$ for all independent variables, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected even by this test (with the exception of marketing content).

Based on test data according to both test it can be concluded that: all independent variables included in the equation are statistically significant, with the exception of content marketing.

4.1.4 Model Calculation and Interpretation

After we spent the first three steps (analysis of: the existence of a relationship, relationship strength and significance of each independent variable) this thesis will proceed with the evaluation of multiple linear regression parameters.

4.1.5 Regression coefficients

Based on the coefficients obtained from statistical output, the evaluation of the regression coefficients is as follows:

$$Y = 0 - 0.36192485 + 0.33663963 X_1 + 0.32726262 X_3 + 0.18352656 X_4$$

Where:

Y - Consumer loyalty

X₁ - Usage Level of Marketing Channels

X₃ - Marketing Sales

X₄ - Marketing Monitoring

It is important to note that from the regression equation for hotels, one variable emerged from literature was omitted. Marketing content was removed because it was found hotel data do not consider it statistically significant.

It is worth noting that hotels are not yet aware of the importance of marketing content in their social media marketing networks.

An increase (decrease) of one unit of Marketing Content do not cause a reaction in customer loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing are kept constant.

4.1.6 Interpretation:

0.33663963- Usage Level of Channel Marketing - an increase (decrease) in one percent in Usage Level of Channel Marketing will cause an increase (decrease) of 33.66% in Consumer Loyalty when other elements of social marketing are kept unchanged. As understood, this value is relatively large and should serve as an alarm bell for hotels.

0.32726262- Sales Marketing - an increase (decrease) with one percent of Marketing Sales will cause an increase (decrease) of 32.72% in customer loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing are kept unchanged. Sales opportunities through social media marketing are the third element of social media marketing that positively contribute to the strengthening of consumer loyalty.

0.18352656 - Marketing Monitoring - an increase (decrease) with one percent of Marketing Monitoring implies an increase (decrease) of 18.35% of customer loyalty, when other elements of social marketing are kept constant. The value of marketing monitoring impact over consumer loyalty is small in size, but still is a positive contributor to building and strengthening of it.

4.2 Client Analysis

To the same process of analysis has been submitted the data collected from questionnaires distributed to customers. The following paragraphs will be focused on the most important indicators of the analysis.

4.2.1 General test of relationship

This step tests the following hypotheses:

H0: There is no difference between the model and the model of independent variables with independent variables.

Ha: There is a difference between the model with independent variables and independent variables model are rejected.

According to the results, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted, which demonstrates that there exist a difference between the model with independent variables and the model without them. So relationship between consumer loyalty and the various elements of social media marketing, is statistically significant.

4.2.2 Relationship strength of Multiple Linear Regression

But how strong is the relationship between the dependent variable and independent ones? Statistical data confirms that R square is 84%, ie. 84% of consumer loyalty is explained by inbound marketing.

Table 5: Indicators of statistical significance of the model set for clients

Statistical Significance Indicators	
R Square	0.2483652
Multiple R	0.0616853

Source: Author (2016)

R2 explains how much of the variation in the dependent variable explained by the variation of the independent variables taken together.

4.2.3 Significance of variables Model

Once the relationship of regression is tested as a whole, emerge the need to test the importance of all regression indicators taken one by one. The procedure followed along with interpretations is shown below:

$$Y = 0.601395 + 0.206866 X_1 + 0.068672X_2 + 0.154258 X_3 + 0.120056 X_4$$

Table 6: Significance of variables Model

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	0.4257346	0.2708248	1.5719929	0.1170241
X Variable 1	0.2400855	0.0911551	2.633812	0.0088886
X Variable 2	0.0549095	0.0588189	0.9335342	0.3513077
X Variable 3	0.2181944	0.092482	2.3593167	0.0189602
X Variable 4	0.0348401	0.0875197	0.3980825	0.6908573

Source: Author (2016)

Hypotheses that arise to test the significance of the regression coefficients are:

H₀: $\beta_i = 0$ (β_1 Statistically not important)

H_a: $\beta_i \neq 0$ (β_1 Statistically important)

Testing the significance of the regression coefficients can be done through two tests: t and p. Let's get on.

t criteria

Critical t value is 2.0141.

Given evaluation criteria we have: t calculated > t critical for every independent variable, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Rejection of the null hypothesis implies that all regression variables are statistically significant, except for the variable of content marketing and marketing monitoring.

p criteria

Evaluation criteria: null hypothesis is rejected if $p < \alpha = 0.05$. Praising the results, we can conclude that rejecting of the hypothesis should be made for all variables.

Based on two test results it can be concluded that: all independent variables included in the equation are statistically significant, except for the variable of content marketing and marketing monitoring.

4.2.4 Model Calculation and Interpretation

Based on the coefficients obtained from statistical output we have the following evaluation for regression coefficients, derived from the data collected from customers:

$$Y = 0.601395 + 0.2400855 X_1 + 0.2181944 X_3$$

Where:

Y- Consumer loyalty

X1 - Usage Level of Marketing Channels

X3 – Marketing Sales

4.2.5 Interpretation:

0.2400855 - Usage Level of Marketing Channels - an increase (decrease) in one percent of Usage Level of Marketing Channels will cause an increase (decrease) in Consumer Loyalty with 24% when the other elements of social marketing are kept unchanged. Related with the values of other social media marketing coefficients impact over customer loyalty, this is the highest figure.

As well as all other analyzes of this study indicate, the Usage Level of Marketing Channels is one of the elements of marketing social media that mostly affects the consumers loyalty and in the same time represent the indicator for which there exist a the greatest gap in terms of recognition / use / initiative / innovation from tourist hotels. The results of the data collected from customers are converging with those collected from businesses.

+ 0.068672 - Content Marketing: an increase (decrease) of Content Marketing by one percent, will cause an increase (decrease) by 6.86% of Consumer Loyalty, when other elements of social marketing are kept constant. As noted, this figure is at low levels and it indicates that social media has useful components which have the potential to increase the level of customer loyalty higher than any social marketing instrument.

+ 0.2181944 - Marketing Sales - an increase (decrease) of Marketing Sales by one percent will increase (decrease) customer loyalty by 21%, when the other elements of social marketing are kept unchanged. Sales opportunities through social media marketing are the third element of social media marketing that mostly positively contribute to the strengthening of consumer loyalty, according the data collected by consumers.

5. Conclusion: Comparison of Analysis According to data collected by businesses and those collected from customers.

In the following paragraphs, a summary and conclusion of data gathered from questionnaires distributed to clients and businesses. Which are the commonalities and differences between results taken from the two stakeholders who were analysed from this research with the same questions? What does these data indicate regarding relationship between the most important elements of social marketing in influencing consumer loyalty?

Below is a comparative table of similarities and differences of each steps of the analysis.

Table 7: Comparison of results between consumers and businesses

	Business	Client
Regression equation	$Y = 0.0.36192485 + 0.33663963 X1 + 0.32726262 X3 + 0.18352656 X4$	$Y = 0.601395 + 0.2400855 X1 + 0.2181944 X3$
General relationship test	Relationship between consumer loyalty and various elements of social media marketing is statistically significant.	Relationship between consumer loyalty and various elements of social media marketing is statistically significant.
Relationship strength of Multiple Linear Regression	5.3% of consumer loyalty is explained by inbound marketing.	6.1% of consumer loyalty is explained by inbound marketing.
Validity of explanatory variables	X1 - Usage Level of Marketing Channels- statistically significant X2 - Marketing Content - statistically insignificant X3 - Marketing Sales - statistically significant X4 - Marketing Monitoring - statistically significant	X1 - Usage Level of Marketing Channels- statistically significant X2 - Marketing Content - statistically insignificant X3 - Marketing Sales - statistically significant X4 - Marketing Monitoring - statistically insignificant
Model Calculation and Interpretation		
Usage Level of Marketing Channels	An increase (decrease) by 1% of Utilization Level of Marketing channels we cause an increase (decrease) by 33.6% of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.	An increase (decrease) by 1% of Utilization Level of Marketing channels we cause an increase (decrease) by 24 % of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.
Marketing Content	An increase (decrease) with one unit of Content Marketing will cause no response of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.	An increase (decrease) with one unit of Content Marketing will cause no response of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.
Marketing Sales	An increase (decrease) of Marketing Sales by one unit (%), will cause an increase (decrease) by 32% of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.	An increase (decrease) of Marketing Sales by one unit (%), will cause an increase (decrease) by 21.8% of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.
Marketing Monitoring	An increase (decrease) with one percent of Marketing Monitoring will cause an increase (decrease) by 18.35% of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant.	An increase (decrease) with one percent of Marketing Monitoring will cause no effect of Consumer Loyalty, when the other elements of social marketing kept constant..

Source: Author (2016)

Statistical analysis comparison resulted in important conclusions: (1) Relationship between customer loyalty and elements of social media marketing is statistically significant, (2) Usage level of Marketing Channel, Marketing Content, Marketing Sales and Marketing Monitoring are important elements of social media marketing, with the exception of content marketing for hotels (3) the two variables that most influence consumers loyalty are: Usage Level of Marketing Channels and content Marketing, and (4) less contributing variables of social media marketing toward customer loyalty are: Marketing Sales and Marketing Monitoring.

After comparing differences and similarities between customers and businesses results, statistical analysis revealed: there is a need to better address inconsistencies (gaps) of social media marketing implementation. This necessity is highlighted by comparing the desired level of performance for each element of social media marketing (imposed by customers, according to responses they have provided in answering the questionnaires) and the actual level exhibited by each element (according to business responses received from this research questionnaire).

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