

## **THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND SITUATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IN SATISFACTION AND DECISION OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES VIA MOBILE MARKETING**

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The democratization of digital media in touristic cities has transformed humans into bifunctional people (Human-Smartphone). Mobile devices have caused a paradigm change in how we make decisions about touristic activities when we travel; consequently, this conditions the level of global satisfaction a tourist experiences in his or her most immediate environment. Thus, both demographic and situational factors are the seeds of the decisions adopted on various activities such as searching information, new experiences, or the purchasing of products and services on a smartphone.

Tourism is one of the most complex and competitive business environments as it needs the support of the frantic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution at the same time it has to keep up with it. Not to mention, the sector has to attend to consumers who are not only more well-informed since they are digital experts tethered to mobile devices, but they are also consumers who are seeking new experiences on their own. The profile of the 'new tourist' is that of someone who carefully plans his or her trips according to his or her interest and priorities; it is someone who does not use traditional travel agencies but prefers to do all his or her booking online given that these online travel agencies provide better deals, and the possibility to compare prices and services. In other words, these new tourists have more freedom to choose their travel arrangements, and they know when and how what they want. Thus, in order to attract potential customers that will become real customers, marketing strategies need to follow this line ('new tourist') to increase the conversation rate.

Tourists manifest their behavior through the products and services they consume and purchase. This behavior is determined by their needs, attitudes, or personal motivations, which have been previously thought and adopted until they become true. In this regard, a person's attitude is very important since it is composed of his/her individual values, i.e., a person thinks about situations, products, brands, tourist destinations, gastronomy, etc.,

based on their values. To illustrate this point, a week trip to Bora Bora, where one can rest and enjoy the idyllic beaches, is a dream for many; however, as noted by Sánchez (2014), Chinese do not enjoy the beach, and many find sunbathing uncomfortable as it is seen more culturally acceptable to keep skin as fair as possible. These kind of attitudes have an effect on behavior, and on purchase intentions, frequency, and repetition. These are dynamics that undergo faster change than those of values.

Nevertheless, a tourist's behavior is also influenced by demographic and seasonal factors. These variables can change the behavior as well as the attitudes of similar profiles. Therefore, individuals of the same age, gender, and social class can behave and make different decisions. Hence, satisfaction, defined from a global perspective, is a valuation of the experiences had with a product, which is based on the evaluation of a company's ability to continue to provide the benefits and attributes sought after by the consumer. For this reason, in business, the measurement of satisfaction is a key reference of past, present, and future success (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994).

Wang, Xiang & Fesenmaier (2012) studied smartphone app reviews made by tourists, and they identified fourteen different impacts of smartphone use: problem solving, searching information, trip flexibility, emotions, experience sharing, and memory storage. It is important to highlight the fact that these studies showed that the use of location based technologies plays an important role in acquiring geographical knowledge, and in behavior; meanwhile, the latter contributes to different components that affect experience (Tussyadiah, 2012).

The main objectives on this study firstly focus on analyzing how the demographic and situational characteristics of tourists influences satisfaction levels and the decision-making process of purchasing touristic product and services on mobile marketing tools. Secondly, on studying which behavioral and technological factors will be taken into account when putting together marketing strategies in order to reduce the initial distrust consumers have in the decision-making process of purchasing via mobile marketing.

Based on the bibliography of this investigation, it is worth noting that in order to favor tourists' decision making process through mobile marketing, we have to take into account both the adoption of new technologies and the behavioral characteristics of the users or customers. Furthermore, I would like to point out that we have to bear in mind the word "adopt", which is defined by the Real Academia Española (English: Royal Spanish Academy, often abbreviated as RAE) as " {To} receive, {or} appropriate opinions, methods, doctrines, ideologies, fashions, etc., which have been created for other people.» Another definition given by the RAE is »Making decisions and agreements with prior examination and deliberation«. The two definitions are applicable to the behavioral and technological factors that customers have to adopt given that they do not only receive information, but they also have to manage an exogenous interactive process via their mobile devices, in which they have to make decisions that are priorly deliberated. In other words, customers are not initially receptive as they first adopt and interiorize both information and external processes; afterwards, they priorly deliberate their personal and situational characteristics, etc., and only then they make their decision. According to Jinzhu (2014), understanding the adoption of mobile innovation implies investigating, at an individual level, consumers' acceptance of products and services through mobile technology.

The uses that applications (apps) have to offer are numerous. As customers today have new demands, new apps, which we could have never imagined, are being developed for professional and leisure use. This creative synergy is promoting market niches in this field with the aim of attending to all the needs users may have, as well as offering them more personalized services. New smartphone users are bifunctional people, i.e., they control the world they live in while also benefiting from the virtual window offered by mobile devices. Without a doubt, this device has changed the way people behave and interact with their environment; it has created in our lives the parameters of Applied-Human-Mobility, abbreviated *HuMobAp*. Basically, humans move according to their needs and the incentives provided by apps (Florido-Benítez y del Alcázar, 2014).

As Wang, Xiang and Fesenmaier (2012) have stated, the constant access to online sources allows tourists to be more flexible as they can take advantage of planning online; thus, tourists can change their activities and plans when unsatisfactory events take place, ultimately making them more confident about their travel plans. Furthermore, we concur with the vast majority of the authors in the literature review herein since they support the idea that one is conditioned by one's culture, education, gender, age, income, experiences, and types of services offered through those (online) distribution channels while in the process of buying, getting information, or selecting touristic products and services. It is worth remembering that one is in an interactive and visual environment (in front of a small mobile screen with certain manual restrictions), where, above all, there is nothing indicating the quality of the product selected. In the end, all these variables need to be configured in smartphones as clearly and securely as possible since they will condition the product purchased, along with having a satisfactory experience.

Promotional managers of destinations and commercial enterprises that participate in tourism business activities, need to be aware of the importance that certain demographic and situational characteristics play in the decision-making process of purchasing products and services offered on their web page or tourist destination app. As it has been shown in this investigation, users are not only spending more time on their mobile devices, but are also consumers demanding more immediacy in information, products and services. Ubiquity is a fundamental element in the decision-making process of a consumer. For this reason, the interoperability between the different agents involved in offering and selling different products and services through a mobile marketing tool needs to be impeccable.

The atomization of the tourism sector has made both public institutions and private companies personalize their offers according to certain demographic and situational characteristics such as gender, marital status, income, occupation, nationality, experience, type of service, transversality in digital interaction, image, security, internet connection, etc. All these factors are entwined in a digital web in which a consumer's needs and preferences will condition how he or she evaluates the satisfaction obtained from the product consumed. As a result, all customers cannot be treated as the same. In this study we demonstrate how women are more predisposed to mass media, have a higher perception of satisfaction, inclination and habitual use of the internet than man. At the same time, the study also highlights the importance of taking into account the behavioral factors, such as race, culture, shopping habits, laws, etc., of the country in which one intends to promote or offer products and services to potential customers.

Finally, in this investigation one can see that as satisfaction is a multidimensional construct, the results obtained in a physical environment are not the same as those in an interactive one. In an interactive environment, investing in security must prevail over other technological factors such as creativity, image, usefulness, compatibility, etc. If businesses do not manage security well, a bad experience becomes a disadvantage for a customer, which in the end, averages out negatively in tourist's decision-making process as well as in his or her global satisfaction. The advantages of mobile marketing need to be strengthened in order to project more security and a better image in the small screen. To accomplish this, the creative team will have to work extra hard to get a concept, which is communicated in other mediums, across in a format adopted for the mobile -- especially to its screen size and moment of reception.

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