

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITY AND PRESENCE IN FACEBOOK AND OTHERS SOCIAL NETWORKS OF THE TOURISM SITES OF THE SPANISH AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social networks has promoted the behavior of consumers talking to each other, comparing and recommending products and services, which has created the need for many companies integrate them as part of its commercial strategy. In recent years, the use of social networks in the field of e-commerce has increased to offer companies the opportunity to establish relationships with your potential customers.

The tourism sector is a changing sector, and it is shown that social networks participants are potential consumers, and is for this reason that the sector, should try to benefit from its use. For this reason, the main objective of this paper is to analyze the activity of the Spanish autonomous communities in the social media environment.

Firstly, for the development of this article, a review of the literature on tourism will be made, also social networks, portals and tourist brands, to subsequently, analyze a list of autonomous communities, autonomous cities and Spanish tourist brands. Once analyzed the behavior and the activities that they are carrying out in social networks, a number of conclusions will be draw finally.

2. THE BRAND AND IMAGE OF BRAND IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

The creation of the brand image, in a tourism sector so competitive arises as a result of a major effort to respond to the new demands of the market, giving to the product or service unique attributes that allows it to differentiate themselves from competitors. In this sense, consolidate the brand and position his image in the mind of the consumer requires time and dedication, since the perception the customer of the product or service is important. For this reason, taking care of the brand and make a constant analysis, to

assess whether if it is really representing the brand image that need to be displayed or if it is not communicated what is meant to, define the objectives and strategies to take to position in the consumer's mind.

2.1. Concept of brand and brand image

According to the definition of the American Marketing Association, a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of all of them, which seeks to identify the goods and services from a seller or group of sellers, and differentiate them from those of their competitors.

The tourism sector, defines the tourist brand as one that is composed of a name, a logo, a few symbols and values that are associated with a territory representing its identity, with the aim of creating a positioning and a positive view of the destination in the minds of their audiences (Huertas, 2014).

With respect to the brand image, Lambin et al. (2009), argue that the brand image can be defined as a set of mental, both cognitive and affective representations, which a person or a group of people has a brand or a company.

Thus, the brand image of a tourist destination can be considered a general impression or the collection of individual impressions of tourists on a particular destination (Millet, 2011).

2.2. Importance of brand and brand image in the tourism sector

Tourist brands looking for a concept of differential image, as a response to the wishes of a part of the market that bring them added value specific and unique, creating synergies and business for a certain area (Memelsdorff, 1998).

Brand image plays a fundamental role in the success of the tourist destinations, as it exerts a strong influence on the behavior of consumers in the tourism field. Tourists tend to have limited knowledge of the tourist destinations that have not visited and it is here where the image plays an important role in the measurement of those destinations with strongest images, distinct, recognizable and positive are more likely to be chosen by tourists. In addition, the perceived image of the destination after the visit also influences the satisfaction of tourists and their intentions to return to the destination in a future (Beerli & Martin, 2002).

3. SOCIAL NETWORKING IN THE TOURIST PORTALS

3.1. Concept and main social networks

Of the different existing typologies of social networks, were chosen the virtual social networks which are used in this analysis. Virtual social networks allow the interaction of thousands of people in real time (Fernandez, 2009) and they have become important tools of mass communication, especially to disseminate news and influence others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Thus, the virtual social networks are places on the internet where users can create profiles and can connect with other users to create a personal network (Liberos et al, 2010).

On main social networks, there are several studies that analyzes the use of social networks in Spain, highlights what are the main social networks in terms of number of companies users (Telefónica Foundation, 2014), number of users and level of activity in social networks (IAB, 2014). These studies it appears that most used social networks are Facebook and Twitter, followed by LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram.

3.2. Concept and brand of the tourist portal of the Spanish autonomous communities

A portal could be defined as an entry point between the content of a certain website and the user, where services are organized in such a way that they allow them to perform as needed in the network on a daily basis, or at least you can find there everything used on a daily basis without having to leave the site (García, 2001).

Thus, a tourist portal could be defined as a web platform to raise awareness and promote the resources of a tourist destination.

3.3. Use of social networks by the tourist portals

The main card of a tourist destination on the Internet is its official website. It could be understood as the virtual gateway to the destination. As well, a destination that aims to be competitive need a presence on the web and social networks as effective and attractive as possible (Fernandez et al., 2014).

Tourists are influenced by the opinions of other travelers that are poured into the different social networks (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009;) Gretzel & Yoo, 2008) when choosing a destination for your vacation. The name “word of mouth” is adapted to internet (Dellarocas, 2003) what has been termed eWOM (electronic Word of Mouth) (Gruen et al., 2006). For this reason, companies must put every effort to forge a good digital reputation and manage the conversation in collaborative environments, attending the criticism to maintain the confidence of their current customers and not lose potential customers (Castelló & Pino, 2015).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sample

Seventeen official tourist portal of the autonomous communities and also the two autonomous cities, Ceuta and Melilla were selected to carrying out the study.

4.2. Collection of information

To obtain the necessary data, the collection of the information was developed in two phases. First, were consulted the website of the seventeen autonomous communities and the two autonomous cities, identifying each one of them the logo or the name of the social networks in which these involved.

Subsequently, was consulted for each of the brands their participation and activity in social networks. This phase included in the first place, the direct search for brands through each of the main social networks, to identify whether they had presence in them. Secondly, the search for the characteristics of each of the pages of brand on the social network Facebook, as this is the social network more used and finally, the activity that each of the brands set with the user through the social networking site Facebook.

Regarding the activity of the brands on Facebook, for his analysis was used the PRGS model, proposed by IAB Spain Research to carry out the “Study of the activity of the brands in social media” of the years 2012, 2013 and 2015. The PRGS model is based on 4 variables (presence, response, generation and suggestion) to measure the activity of the brands on social networks. In the field of the social network Facebook, these variables are measured as described below.

- *Presence*: Their measure is related to the activity of the brand and is given by the number of fans or followers, and the number of publications made by brand on the page.
- *Response*: Their measure is related to the activity of the user and is given by the number of “likes” that they generate to the publications of the brand.
- *Generation*: Their measure is related to the activity of the user and is given by the number of comments causing them to publications of the brand.
- *Suggestion*: Their measure is related to the activity of the user and is given by the number of shares that they generate to the publications of the brand.

Table 1
THE PRGS MODEL VARIABLES ANALYZED ON FACEBOOK

BRAND	Presence	Fans	P = n° post.
		Post	
USER	Response	Like	R = like / n° fans
	Generation	Comment	G = comment / n° fans
	Suggestion	Shared content	S = share / n° fans

Source: Own elaboration from the document II study activity of brands in social media, iabSpain 2013. It refers to the calculation to be performed and the values needed to calculate each of the variables in the model PRGS.

The presence variable is measured in absolute value, since it is considered that the activity that make the brand on your page will be regardless of the number of fans who possess. By contrast, response, generation and suggestion variables are measured in relative value, depending on the number of fans of the page, since the activity that the user makes in the page depends on or will be conditioned by this number (Giraldo and Sánchez, 2015; Giraldo and Martínez, 2015).

The information was collected manually, storing the data monthly from January 2014 to March 2015, being helpful tool Smetrica for the registration of the information concerning the activity of the brands on Facebook (number of fans, number of publications, number of comments, number of likes, number of shares).

5. RESULTS

5.1. Descriptive Analysis

After the first phase of collecting the information, identified that the tourist brands of the autonomous communities have logo or link to, at least, a social network. In relation to the second phase, related to participation and activity in social networks, after each of the main social networks was identified that all the autonomous communities, including the two autonomous cities, also participate in social networks.

Thus, Facebook and Twitter are social networks for excellence and participate in them 100% of the tourist brands. Also found the presence in social networks like YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram.

To carrying out the study was analyzed specifically activity on Facebook since it social network is the most used in the tourism sector, and it is checked that tourist brands offered to users, which in turn are potential tourists, in addition to information, biography and photos, which are included by default social network page, other features like events videos, gastronomic tours, external publications and links to other social networks that have presence.

5.2. Analysis of Model PRGS on Facebook

As mentioned above, the analysis of the activity of the brands on Facebook was performed from the PRGS model. At the time of carrying out the analysis, of 17 brands of the autonomous communities (CCAA) and the 2 autonomous cities with presence in Facebook, 10 CCAA and Melilla were watched by the Smetrica tool, therefore, there were data available on the activity of 11 tourist, of a total of 19 brands, therefore these are the analyzed. The results obtained for each of the months analyzed are described below.

5.2.1. Presence

Tourist brands of the autonomous communities that have higher level of presence on Facebook, during the analyzed period are Region of Valencia, followed by Catalonia and Canary Islands, which has the highest number of publications in the months from July to September. This behavior is similar throughout the 15 month studied.

With respect to the presence as measured in terms of fans, Catalonia, with a total of 489.389 fans, stands as a tourism brand that has the largest community on Facebook between communities and autonomous cities analyzed, followed by Region of Valencia (90.509) and Asturias (88.726).

5.2.2. Response

The tourist brand of the autonomous community of Cantabria is the one that generates greater response among all brands of communities and autonomous cities studied, leading over the 15 months analyzed, with more than 60% of monthly sector response, exceeding even 100% in some months. The following tourist brands are Canary Islands, Region of Valencia and Asturias.

Other brands that stand out in this variable analysis throughout this period of time are Catalonia and Castile-Leon, whose monthly response rate is above the average calculated for each tourist brands.

5.2.3. Generation

Region of Valencia, Cantabria and Canary Islands lead the ranking 15 months studied. Tourist brands of such autonomous communities have maintained a constant activity of content generation. Then are Castile-Leon and Asturias, where the user has participated actively commenting on the publications made by the brands.

5.2.4. Suggestion

In this period of time, leads the ranking brand Region of Valencia. Below are Cantabria and Asturias and in the following positions, also include Castile-Leon and Canary Islands. This behavior is similar throughout the period analyzed.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Of the total of tested brands that make up the tourist portal of the autonomous communities and the autonomous cities, 100% participate in social networks. These data indicate that the use of social networking by this type of tourist portals is a reality and suggest, moreover, that the autonomous communities are committed to the use of social networks as part of its strategy to promote tourism and commercial.

Facebook and Twitter are two social networks for excellence and achieved a level of 100% of the total amount of the sample analyzed.

In this study, it is had tried to analyze activity tourist brands in the Spanish autonomous communities carrying out on social networking site Facebook model PRGS. So are Region of Valencia, Cantabria and Canary Islands as those tourist marks showing increased activity during the whole analyzed period. These tourist brands propose a series of options so that tourists can meet and enjoy the resources of these communities such as guided tours of the different cities, offers to get to know the historical and cultural heritage, landscapes, beaches, fairs, gastronomic breaks, fiestas of national tourist interest and competitions whose prize consists of tickets to concerts, festivals, or theme parks, among others. With all these actions, it is checked that tourist brands manage to increase your level of activity in the social network and encourage the participation and interest of users, since to show the attractions of destinations, hotels and environment in social media, not only allows to retain existing customers but it is a good way to attract new customers and offer them the best possible experience.

Results show that the success of tourism brands in social networks measured by the participation of the user, not only depends on the number of followers. Therefore, that brand has a greater number of active users is not necessarily to have highest number of followers, but it may largely depend on content that is generated by the brand itself, the type and quality of the published content is important, could already influencing the purchase decision of those potential tourists who are planning their holidays and offered a varied and attractive the offer information Tourism overall in Spain and at the same time specific for each target.