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## Review of Social Media Potential on Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration in Tourism Industry

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### Abstract

Social media have revolutionized communication in tourism industry. Review of the current literature revealed that previous studies have examined the role of information technology in tourism, but still there is a lack of study to reveal how social media promote knowledge sharing processes. To this end, the authors review extant related articles in knowledge management in tourism. The purpose of this study is understanding of knowledge sharing in social media in tourism sector. Specific concentration is on integration of tacit knowledge sharing during pre-travelling decision making. Finding of this study contribute to researchers, organizations and policy makers in tourism industry.

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*Keywords:* knowledge sharing; social media; tacit knowledge; pre travelling processes; tourism

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Social media In Tourism

Tourism, a highly knowledge-based industry, is a consequence of current developments in information and communication technologies allowing the extensive use of the transferring and sharing, reusing and storing, and generation of knowledge. Tourism is also an information-intense industry. Thus, it is essential to trace

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transformations in technologies and consumer culture influencing the distribution as well as accessibility of travel-related information (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Recently, social network websites have played a significant role in marketing and tourism promotion in the travel industry worldwide. Indeed, social media make individuals enable to interact with each other based on their interests. It has also transformed the nature of communication among people, particularly travelers (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Social media, a group of Internet-based applications, exist on the Web 2.0 platform. Such media give internet users opportunity to have interaction and communication and relationship (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Today, travelers, especially leisure travelers, can decide on a destination through social media. Indeed, this phenomenon has changed the way thinking and making decision. Tourism industry should consider travelers' attitudes towards social media, and find approaches to popularize information available on social media. For instance, hotels can have interaction with their customers through websites such as, Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, and share information, modify their services or to refine their brand (McCarthy, Stock, & Verma, 2010). Furthermore, social media websites such as online travel community play a significant role in internet marketing and electronic commerce (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalú, 2010).

Nowadays, Travel has become an information - intensive industry that makes travelers enable to have access to information easily through internet (Qu & Lee, 2011). Online travel websites help travelers to arrange their trip for themselves and gain knowledge - based information. The most important challenge in promoting a virtual society is the supply of knowledge that is the desire to share knowledge with other people (Reychav & Weisberg, 2009; Zhang & Sundaresan, 2010). Social media gives tourism industry the opportunity to understand and discover consumers' demands. By analyzing the comments on online communities such as Virtual tourist and Trip Advisor, tourism industry can achieve better understanding of people's desires, demands, and interests. Thus, hotels and travel companies can promote their quality when they know about their customers' preferences (Leung, Law, van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013). Parra-López, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutiérrez-Taño, and Díaz-Armas (2011) observed that travelers' participation in social media is attributed to their expected social, hedonic and functional profits.

Furthermore, Kasavana, Nusair, and Teodosic (2010) examined Facebook potential in persuading travel agencies to follow international electronic marketing. Several studies have demonstrated that social media are becoming highly significant in tourism industry (Leung et al., 2013). Furthermore, cyberspace technologies such as search engines or online travel booking websites, accelerate the information exchange between online travelers and "online tourism domain" (Xiang, Wöber, & Fesenmaier, 2008). Indeed, travel websites enable people to check the best prices, destinations and even flights (Shang, Li, Wu, & Hou, 2011). Travel planning process would be increasingly influenced by electronic word-of mouth from social media (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007). Hence, the use of social media in the three phases of the traveler's travel planning process including pre-trip, during-trip and post-trip were highlighted as the consumer-related research streams. This study attempts to investigate the role of social media in pre-trip processes of travel panning as a tool for knowledge sharing.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Knowledge management implementation in Tourism industry*

Knowledge management (KM) is highly significant in tourism industry (Shaw & Williams, 2009). In fact, it is known as a competitive tool in tourism industry (Cooper, 2006; Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). KM can provide customers with timely well-informed knowledge regarding travel cost, destination, flight, etc. Scholars in the area of information system are interested in investigation the function of shared knowledge both explicit and tacit levels. In the area of knowledge management, a large amount of knowledge is tacit. Tacit knowledge is the hidden knowledge acquired over a period of time. Thus, it is difficult to convey and transfer this sort of knowledge to other people. On the other hand, explicit knowledge can be codified and transmitted in a formal or systematic language (Davidavičienė & Raudeliūnienė, 2010). The relationship between these two sorts of knowledge led to the SECI model (Nonaka, 1994). It includes four processes: Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization.

As shown in Figure 1. Socialization (tacit to tacit) can facilitate the exchange of tacit knowledge through joint

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