

Influences Instagram on Destination Image of a Country

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of this research has been to explore and describe the influence of Instagram on destination image of country. The purpose of this study was to understand how marketing tools can be achieved using Instagram. Based on the research question a literature review was formed. Methodologically a quantitative approach was used. Authors learned the Instagram account of famous bloggers and how it is influence on the image of the destination.

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Introduction

Nowadays in globalization of the world the role of social media is significant. Social medias are widely used in various fields of the life. In addition, tourism is no exception. While travel agencies use social media to advertise, promote and sell their tour products, the country's official tourism web networks share destination image of the region.

Destinations include a number of basic elements which involve the visitor to the destination and which satisfy their needs on arrival.

Social network sites are growing and the importance of them are increasing especially in tourism business and marketing (Mostaviskrae, 2018).

In the context of online marketing, social media has become one of the fastest growing communication technologies on the internet and for destination marketing as well (Harb, Fowler, Chang & Blum, 2019).

This is especially true in destination marketing where choosing a travel destination is a funnel-like process where people narrow their choices among of destination within their awareness. People will not even consider destinations that they are unaware of (Hahm & Severt, 2018). Therefore, it is essential for destination to be known if they want to be considered as a potential travel destination. If there is no perceived image of the destination or the perceived image is negative the chances of that destination being visited is limited (Hahm et al., 2018).

These are now a source of information sharing and opportunities for sharing tourism experiences. Today, the role of social networks is becoming more important in all areas. Especially in the field of tourism, the influence of social networks is significant. Perceptions of the image of the destination are formed in potential tourists through social networks, and among them the role of Instagram is inimitable. (Hahm, J., & Severt, K. 2018).

Literature review

There are many descriptions of authors in formation destination image and every of author's definitions

are different. We will compare theory of Gartner and Baloglu & McCleary in Wenn diagram (see figure 1).

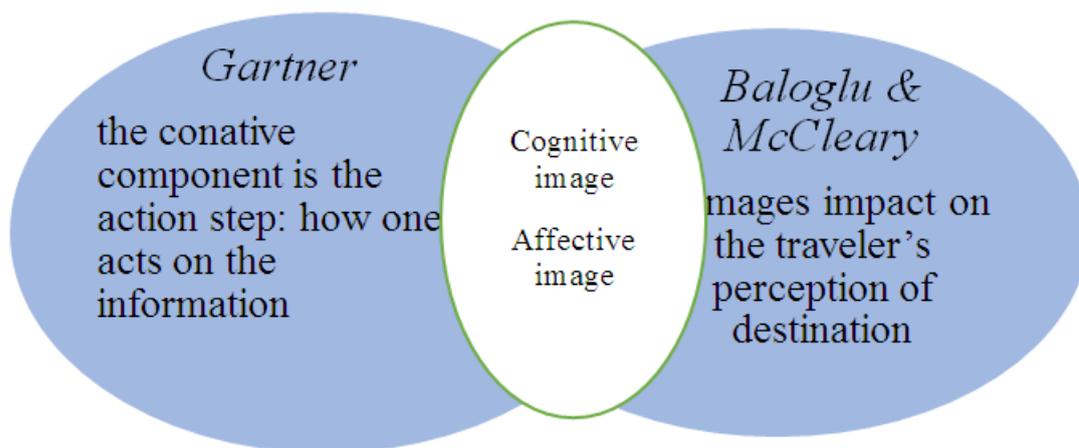


Figure 1. Wenn diagram analysis by authors

According to Gartner the image formation process involves 3 components: cognitive, affective, and conative. But Baloglu & McCleary argue that the image formation process involves 2 components: cognitive and affective which impact on the traveler's perception of destination. Also, Gartner argue "the cognitive component constitutes awareness: what someone knows or thinks they know about the destination. The affective component is based on how one feels about this knowledge. The conative component is the action step: how one acts on the information" (Konecnik, M. & Gartner, W. C. 2007). The cognitive image positively influences the affective image, forming together the overall destination image. Thus, we can argue that the cognitive and affective image impact on the traveler's perception of destination.

From Gartner and Baloglu & McCleary's description we learned what is destination image and how they impact in tourist's decision.

Lubbe proposes a framework that explains the construction of the primary image of a tourist destination, identified in figure 2.

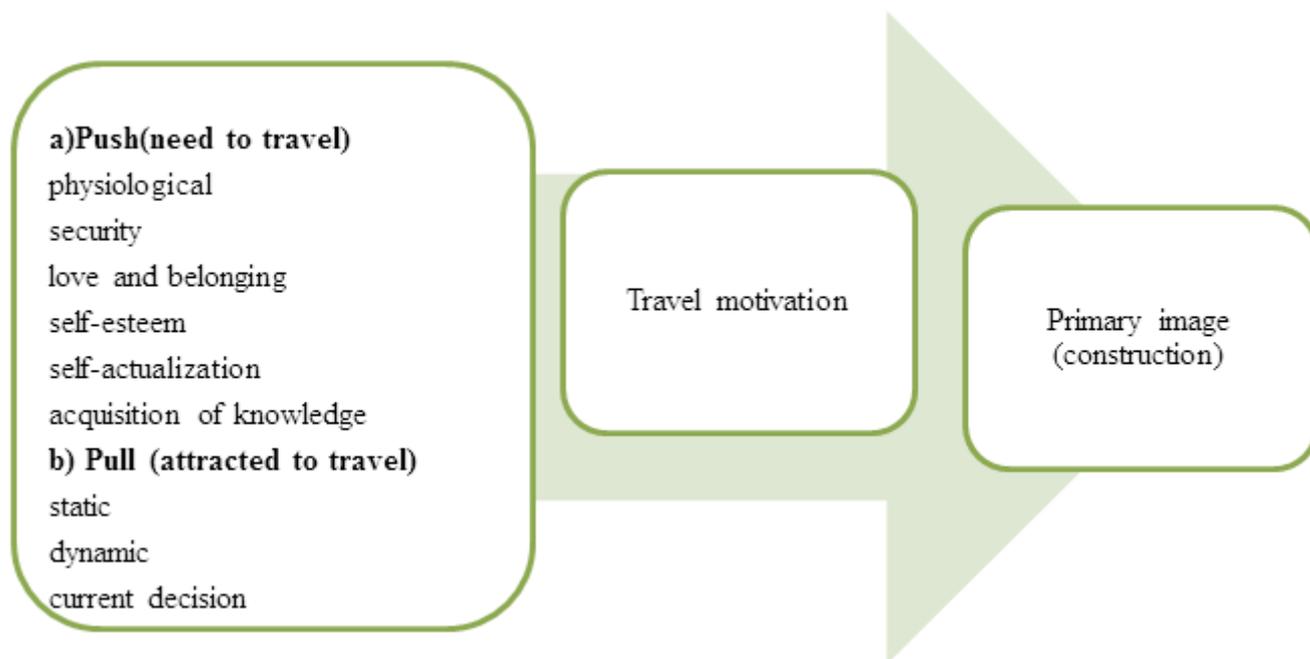


Figure 2. Construction of the primary image (Lubbe, B. 1998)

A number of authors like Safko and Brake, Weinberg, Zarella, Evans, Hettler, Kaplan and Haenlein,

Mangold and Faulds emphasise the relevance of social media marketing (SMM) as a new marketing paradigm. But there is only limited information on the use and effect of SMM practices as an influential information source for global enterprises. In terms of the benefits associated with SMM it represents an important approach in online marketing. In particular, SMM focuses on the achievement of direct customer contact through SM activities, specifically seeking product or service promotion through various platforms. (Hettler U. 2010).

The review of literature has revealed that SMM is a new marketing phenomenon that has augmented, but not replaced traditional marketing practices. SMM primarily makes use of various online SM platforms to provide content to consumers or other institutions. Generally, this is achieved through a two-way direct communication approach. This new marketing paradigm has evoked from electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication and also resulted in viral marketing, which is used to spread a message like an epidemic across the Internet.

Besides the use of information sharing and communication, the new development has made expressing feelings and emotions through social media possible (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis 2014).

According to Xiang and Gretzel, social media is an internet-based application that involves media impressions created by customers, especially informed by related experiences and shared online for access by other users (Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010).

So in the question why we learned influence of Instagram in destination image of a country, we can answer with definition of Fatani about Instagram (Fatani et al., 2015): *Instagram originally started as a tool for photo sharing has evolved to an effective advertising, marketing and promotion tool.*

For the reason that, Instagram challenges the creativity of tourism actors to promote tourism destinations all over the world (Hanan & Putit, 2014).

Methods

To demonstrate the essence of creating the destination image of country's theoretical research methods has been used: deduction and induction, analysis and synthesis, comparison, systematization and interpretation of results. Also we compared authors definition in Wenn diagram.

Results and discussion

Since its launch in October 2010, Instagram has seen a meteoric rise to 1 billion active users, making it one of the top 4 social networks worldwide.

We investigated all segments in Instagram. According to Statista, in October 2021, 32 percent of global Instagram audiences were aged between 25 and 34 years. Over two thirds of total Instagram audiences were aged 34 years and younger and this makes the platform especially attractive for marketers (see table 1).

Table 1.

Ages of instagram users	13-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Procents of instagram users	8%	31%	31,2%	15,9%	7,9%	3,9%	2,2%

Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of October 2021, by age group
[Source:<https://www.statista.com/statistics/325587/instagram-global-age-group/>]

From the Table1, we can conclude that the most Instagram users are age of group from 25 to 34. Thus, with this information we can enclose that if we want to attract age of groups from 25 to 34, certainly, we need to use Instagram.

Instagram is a popular platform for users to share pictures and videos such as travel picture. Instagram is

one of the most popular social networks worldwide which, particularly popular in India and in the United States, which have respectively 201 million and 157 million Instagram users each. We investigated and analyzed in Figure 3, countries, with much audience on Instagram.

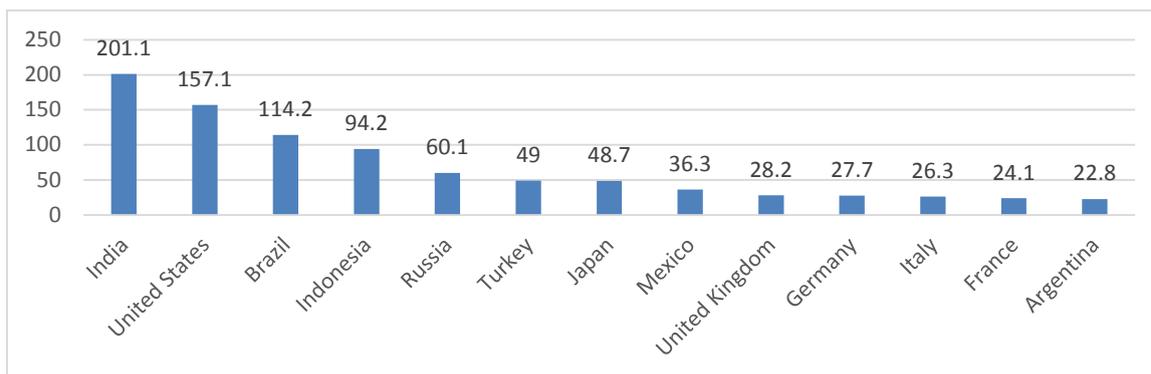


Figure 3. Leading countries based on Instagram audience size as of October 2021

Furthermore, in Figure 4 we learned accounts with most followers also.

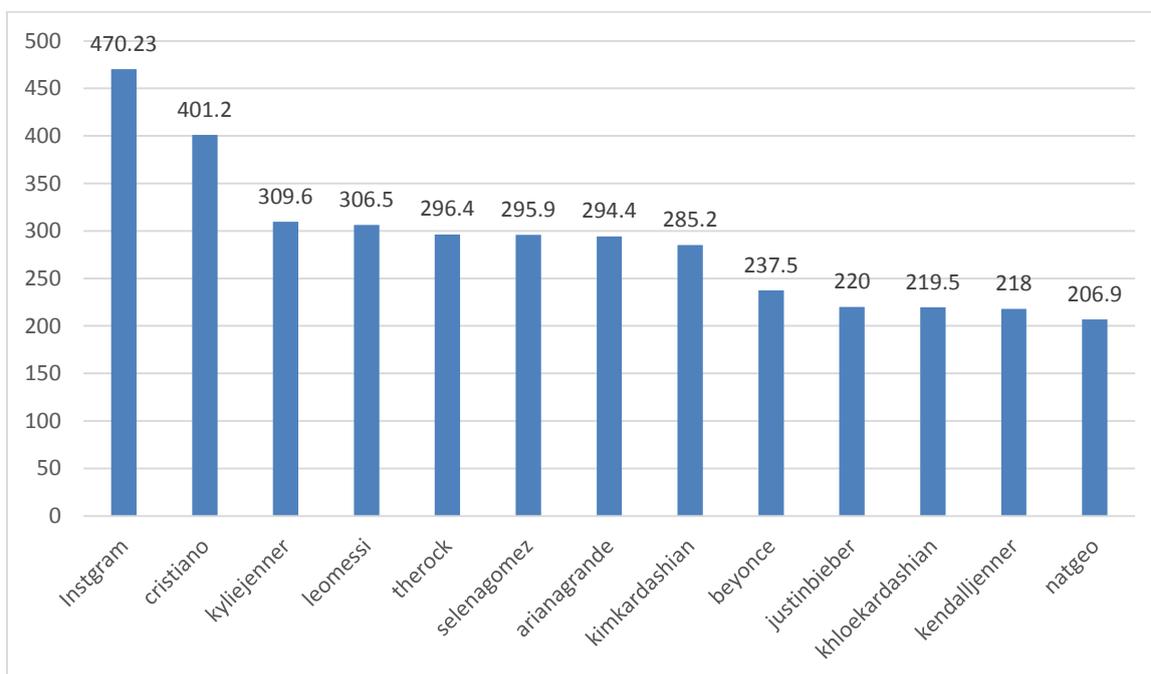


Figure 4. Instagram accounts with the most followers worldwide as of February 2022

[Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/421169/most-followers-instagram/>]

As described in figure 4, Cristiano Ronaldo worldwide Portuguese footballer who has 401.2 million subscribers, Kylie Jenner American media personality, socialite, model and businesswoman has 309.6 million subscribers, Leo Messi worldwide footballer 306.5 million, Dwayne Johnson an American actor, businessman, and former professional wrestler 296.4 million subscribers, Selena Gomez American singer, actress and producer 295.9 million subscribers, Ariana Grande American singer, songwriter and actress 294.4 million subscribers, Kim Kardashian American media personality, socialite, model and businesswomen 285.2 million subscribers, Beyonce American singer, songwriter, and actress 237.5 million subscribers, Justin Bieber Canadian singer 220 million subscribers, Khloe Kardashian American media personality, socialite and model 219.5 million subscribers, Kendall Jenner American model, socialite and media personality 218 million subscribers, National Geographic – American TV channel 206.9 million subscribers. So why do we need this information? These people have the most users (subscribers) on Instagram. Through these bloggers, we can promote country’s destination image to the whole world, and through it we can attract many potential tourists.

Conclusion

Authors make the following suggestions to improve destination image of the country with Instagram:

1. identify the most popular bloggers on Instagram and promote the image of the destination of the country by them;
2. Analyze the number of most Instagram user countries in order to identify the segment we need.

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