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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FACTORS OF A TOURIST DESTINATIONS SUCCESS. A CASE STUDY OF CRACOW

ABSTRACT. The aim of the article is to verify the thesis that the social media as a source of information and promotion affect an economic success of a tourist destination. Path modelling allows to prove that although the social media do not directly influence an economic success of a destination, their role reveals an indirect effect by an organization of a tourist's stay. Therefore a function of the social media becomes important in such aspects as the length of a stay, a place of accommodation, the number of persons accompanying in a travel and the use of a tour guide services. The biggest influence on the organization of a stay has the first variable that is the length of a stay. To conclude, a well planned offer of products will decide about the duration of a stay, thus guests expenses which will translate into an economic success of a destination.

Introduction

Nobody can imagine everyday life without the social media nowadays. They take a significant place in a social and economic sphere. Thanks to them the products are sold on a greater or smaller scale. That applies not only to consumption goods of everyday use but also to seasonally purchased goods like tourists trips. Therefore there is a question concerning a connection between the social media and an economic success of a destination which is chosen by tourists for their target travel place. Does the use of social media by tourists translate into that success? This issue is significant considering the fact of strong competition between the areas of tourist reception revealing in the age of globalization when such kind of entities must attract customers.

The aim of the article is to show a role of social media in the development of a tourist destination success. The aim is verified by path models. The empirical base of the study are the findings of the research on the tourism movement in Cracow carried out in 2015 on the trial of 3528 people. The article assumes that spreading information in the social media

affects an economic success of a place of tourist reception as to the amount of expenses, intentions to revisit and recommend a destination to the other tourists by such variables as a motive for arrival, roots of a tourist in the reception country (in this case Polish descent), the use of air transport in the scope of availability to a destination but also length of a stay, accommodation, the number of accompanying persons and the use of tour guide services. The results of the analysis will be preceded by the theoretical dissertation on the role of social media as a significant source of information when choosing a travel target place.

1. Literature review

1.1. *Competitiveness of tourist reception places in the age of globalization*

With the increase of globalizations processes *the era of competitiveness* was born. „The supporters of the competitiveness credo – states the Lizbon Group – are deeply convinced that a competitive market economy is the only effective solution to the problems and challenges that are faced by the economies and societies in the world. (...) The greater the competitiveness of a company, a region or a country the greater their chance for survival. The lack of competitiveness means exclusion from the market, loss of power over the future and submission to the dominance of the stronger. Individual and collective social and economic prosperity, an autonomy of a region, security and independence of a country or a continent depend on a degree of their competitiveness.” (Limits of ..., 1996, pp. 135, 139). Therefore globalization led to development of competition not only between companies but also between tourist regions. Competitiveness of a tourist region means its advantage or a distance over the other tourist regions which become its competitors. In other words, it is an ability to create the most effective rank position in the existing competition compared with the other regions (Klasik & Kuźnik, 2001, p. 29; Ziolo, 2001, p. 33) to attract to their region not only tourists-customers but also private investors and to raise funds from the European Union, etc. (Hausner *et al.*, 1998, p. 185).

On the other hand globalization of the economic processes and development of technology facilitate the migration of people who are looking for the most suitable destination of their tourist trip. It is worth emphasizing that tourists do not compete for these places but cities, regions and countries wage competitive struggle for every tourist – both new and current customers.

One of the most effective strategies used for developing the market advantage of the supply entity is currently considered a creation of competitive value for a customer (Aeker & McLoughlin, 2007, pp. 6-7 and pp. 142-143). According to M. E. Porter a tool used for that is so called an internal value chain of a given entity which means the appropriate allocation of its resources and at the same time a synthesis of actions taken in it aiming at designing, manufacturing, promoting, providing and supporting of products based on these resources (Porter, 1985, p. 37). Generally speaking a competitive advantage of a tourist region is determined by its resources and products. The resources are the region features, such as its potentials and competences (e.g. landform features, water, a climate, historical monuments, a language and economy). They give a foundation to determine a target of a tourist journey, which means a motive for participating in tourism in a given destination. High or low competitiveness of one destination against the others, considered from the side of products, is the outcome of the use values and prices of these products. The advantage is achieved by this region or a country whose products, to a greater extent than the products of their competition, meet the expectations and fulfil the needs of tourists-recipients and provide them with a greater value. That means the products ensuring a good organization of a stay such as tourist infrastructure and services like accommodation or tour guide services.

The direct aim of the management process of a tourist reception area by a customer value is to create the most suitable value for the guests visiting a destination. Taking into account the fact that it is impossible to create a value suitable for the all recipients¹ (especially because a tourist market shows a great dynamics – tourists have a progressively wider choice of diverse values provided by new destinations) and that not all the tourists are equally valuable for an area of reception (and as an economizing entity it should act rationally) (Rudawska, 2008, p. 161) it is necessary to determine key accounts (Reichheld, 1996; Gosselin & Bauwen, 2006), in other words strategically important tourists. Key accounts are the firm's single most important asset (Capon, 2001, p. xi).

1.2. Key accounts as generators of a destination economic success

Most of companies and other market entities on the supply side (including travel target places) take into account that customers are an aim and essence of their marketing activities and that all the efforts should be focused directly on them and around them (more specifically on creating a suitable value for them) in order to achieve a competitive position on the market. Unfortunately, only few offerers (including a few tourist reception regions) are conscious that not all the customers are equally valuable for them (Reinartz & Kumar, 2002), and thus not equally important in terms of an economic success of a destination; not all are worth interest and involving investment in order to continue cooperation and win their loyalty. What is more, despite the Pareto rule (saying that 20% of purchasers bring a company 80% of income)² has been known for many years a lot of offeres still have difficulties with recognizing these strategically important, that is key accounts (Piercy & Lane, 2009, p. xv). Trying to select them, they are taking into account mostly turnovers that they achieve within the current cooperation with the individual purchasers (McDonald & Woodburn, 2007, p. 26). However, they do not consider the recipients development perspectives as well as the future market trends and tendencies (Dębińska-Cyran *et al.*, 2004, p. 177). Whereas „a key account is a purchaser in whom we are able to invest the significant ammount of our company resources (time, people, money) with the conviction that a cooperation with them is the best way of fulfilling our long term business ambitions” (Cheverton, 2006, p. 75). A key account is then a customer being a source not current but a future income of the company or another institution (e.g. a destination), has an appropriate potential and at the same time enables achieving long term aims (Cheverton, 2001, p. 17). Therefore to this category belong those who are strategically important for the company/tourist reception area because for instance have a beneficial effect (authenticate) on acquiring new customers, they are ambassadors, advocates of a destination and its products in the area (including posts on the social media portals).

A lot of criteria can be used in order to identify key accounts (Zolkiewski & Turnbull, 2000). In case of a tourist reception area the following factors should be listed, incl.: the amount of visitors expenses, current and declared frequency of arrivals, spreading a positive opinion about a destination, sensitivity to a local unit marketing activities, resistance to activities of a competition (Seweryn, 2011, pp. 6-8). It is easy to notice that the significant majority of these criteria concentrate on (apart from profitability) tourist's loyalty. In contemporary market terms only keeping loyal recipients gives a chance for weakening competitors and ensuring an appropriate competitive long term position (Wanhill & Lundtorp, 2006, p. 146). On the other hand loyalty is significantly influenced by an appropriate service,

¹ Even though a tourist reception area will be able to prepare a value suitable for every individual tourist, surely from the economic point of view it will not be profitable.

² The 80/20 rule was first suggested by Vilfredo Pareto in his study of wealth distribution (Pareto, 1896), and has since been applied to the analysis of city population, product sales, and sales force management.

which means a service that makes the tourists will receive what they expect from the stay is a destination and thanks to that not only leave a large sum of money but most of all they will remain loyal and will tell the others about a nice experience. From this aspect expectations of tourists are really significant and these expectations are developed by a number of internal and external factors in accordance with the model of making decision about a choice of a travel destination.

1.3. Decision making process concerning the choice of a travel destination according to S. Um and J. Crompton's model

Taking into account consumers-tourists market behavior it should be emphasized that the product they purchase is mainly a decision about allocation of specific funds and free time for a trip. The analysis of the travelers motivations is an incredibly important tool for companies functioning in the tourist sector and preparing such kind of offer. Since in terms of developed market economy tourists-purchasers have a wide range of diverse products to choose from. They compare the way of fulfilling their needs by a given good or service, the amount of money spent, advantages and disadvantages of individual offers and benefits and costs resulting from that comparison.

The decision making process on the tourist market can be divided into two stages. The first of them is a choice of a travel destination and the second – the choice of a definite set of goods and services which constitute an offered tourist product. The stage of making decision about a choice of a travel destination is characterized by three features (Żemła, 2010, p. 88):

1. Many-sidedness – it is a complex and complicated process which involves making a lot of partial decisions at the same time, such as the reputation of an organizer and their position on a market, type of accommodation services, the individual factors of a tourist set.
2. Sequentiality – making one decision obligates to making another.
3. Continuity – the initial decisions significantly influence or limit a set of next decisions.

So far S. Um and J. Crompton's and A. G. Woodside and S. Lysonski's models are the most popular models in the world's literature concerning the choice of a travel destination by tourists. They provide details on both internal and external factors of a made decision. The first are connected with the features of a tourist product and the factors of its purchase, whereas the second are oriented on the characteristic features of a purchaser and their consumer behaviour. In the S. Um and J. Crompton's model the authors imply the tourists' limited knowledge about the potential, not known so far, reception places and that the information about them they acquire most frequently from media or friends who, in a specific way, present a subjective assessment of existing attractions, location or tourist development of an area. Created in such a way an image of destination has a significant effect on the final target choice (Um & Crompton, 1999, p. 82).

The specific role of information in developing a decision about a travel destination choice in this model should be emphasized. Its effect is clear in the first and fourth stage of this process.³ Hence the great challenge that the creators of tourist products face to develop a positive image (of themselves and the whole destination) and inform visitors about their offer honestly. In order to win tourists' hearts and minds, and by that their money (which means to

³ The process of choosing a travel destination has five stages: 1) reconstruction of already possessed knowledge (acquired in a passive or/and random way) about the attractions of a places, regions and tourist countries; 2) drawing up a list of potential travel destinations; 3) initial assessment and choice of the most probable travel possibilities from all the known before; 4) formulating opinions about the most probable possibilities of travel in the context of their attractions by active searching for information; 5) the choice of the definite travel destination from the most probable options. Cf. (Niemczyk & Seweryn, 2008, pp. 135-143).

win and keep the key accounts) one should be loyal to promises they make. There also ought to be noticed that at present the informal sources, particularly social media portals, give a chance to spread information about a travel place (destination).

1.4. Social media in the structure of information sources

Changes taking place dynamically in a market economy determine not only development of companies but also create new trends in fulfilling purchasers' needs because in the 21st century a consumer became a conscious, courageous and demanding. The product they chose should meet their expectations and provide them with an appropriate value. Additionally a lot information that authorizes it should be available because it enables not only familiarity with trends or brands but also the best choice of a product from a lot of other products (Firlej & Żmija, 2015, p. 6). One of the most important sources of information for a contemporary tourist-consumer are the mass media such as the press, radio and television and recently the Internet (Peresadko *et al.*, 2014). Their main advantages, and the inherent features, are the speed of transmitting information and the low cost of acquiring it; but unfortunately it is often connected with its low credibility. The mass media usually provide the information about for example the dynamics of economic and political changes, technological changes, law changes, demographic changes, fashion, domestic and international markets, economic trades and sectors. The contemporary public relations world demands, however, using modern techniques which are to support the communication of a producer or a seller with a final recipient of a product. The perception from this perspective of the mass media demands the change of the activities viewpoint in the field of creation of multimedia content and other tools orientated at their addressee. Since in the world economy the phenomenon called „crisis of overproduction” is often met, we should analyse and use other market possibilities including the social media. Reviewing the attempts of interpretation the term of social media it is difficult to definitely determine one of them as the most accurate option. They are defined as the modern media technologies tightening relations of informal social groups and enabling leading a dialogue that distinguishes them from the classical media (Safko & Brake, 2009, pp. 3-5); as a group of applications using the network technologies, ideological and technological basis Web 2.0 enabling constructing and exchanging content by the users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 59). In Polish and foreign literature it could be found plenty of definitions of social media. According to A. Kaplan and M. Haenlein's definition the social media is a set of the Internet applications using ideological and technological Web 2.0 basics and enabling a construction and distribution of individually created content (Kaplan & Andreas, 2010, pp. 59-68). M. J. Piskorski states that the social media enables communication with outside entities by the use of the Internet platforms, an example of it can be maintenance of pages on the popular public social services and the Internet pages (Piskorski, 2011, pp. 116-122). A. McAfee claims that organizations use the social media both for external and internal communication as well as social interaction and they can also fulfil a few additional communication functions (McAfee, 2009). On the other hand C. Haythornthwaite considers the social media services as deliberately organized tools enabling communication and an opportunity to meet a variety of people who do not know each other and can share their views in the area of their common interests (Haythornthwaite, 2005, pp. 125-147).

In literature we can also find that they give the users great possibilities of interaction, integration and customization of the websites for the Internet users in an international and global dimension (Czubala, 2012, p. 229); that the consumers gather just in them and just in them there is a discussion about brands and products (Kaznowski, 2007, pp. 70-71); or that they focus on the topic of contact between people connected by the profile of interests, job

they perform, experiences and the e-companies use these resources more gladly counting on an easy communication with a customer and they are open to criticism listening to consumers' voices (Tkaczyk, 2011, pp. 164, 168).

Although social media have the short history they are becoming more and more important in functioning and promoting companies and tourist destinations. It is a well-known fact that these media possess a wide range of possibilities and advanced technologies which may be used as a support of advertisement and a promotion tool of entities from the market supply side. Creating a community around a product, the possibility of getting to know its advantages or disadvantages and the constant interaction – these are the immanent features of the social media. They facilitate the communication with friends as well as making new contacts which priority is to exchange experiences, opinions and viewpoints or information about novelties, trends and offers. These features cause that the popularity of the social media is growing (Seweryn, 2015, p. 440). Nowadays it is possible to use such tools as a blog, a microblog, social networks, a virtual reality of games and a virtual world of social networks. The biggest number of users have such social networking services like Facebook and Twitter. Taking into account a growing circle of people taking part in this kind of information exchange (dialogue) the companies and other entities functioning in the contemporary economy, including empowered local units such as the tourist reception areas, started seriously consider the role of the social media in planned and implemented marketing strategies including those serving building competitiveness and achieving a market success.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Hypotheses

In the light of the presented content the following study hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Social media as a source of information and promotion directly affect an economic success of a tourist destination.

This is the thesis which results from the accepted assumption formulated in this article. We make an assumption that the social media significantly shape the process of fulfilling tourist needs as well as functioning of tourist supply entities. It is interesting to verify the role of the social media in relations to this second group of entities, specifically – reception areas. In the territorial aspect the tourist product is mostly developed by diverse tourist enterprises that specialize themselves in the specific offer but also by non-commercial institutions often with the support of the local tourist policy entities, for example the local authorities. Cooperation between these institutions, being the base for creating multiproducts, and revealing in these circumstances a synergy effect, increases the chances for satisfying fulfilment of a tourist's needs and these tourists will spread in the social media positive opinions about a destination contributing to its economic success (Niemczyk, 2014, pp. 79-100).

H2: An economic success of a tourist destination is determined by the organization of a stay.

The organization of a stay is understood in this case as an outcome of such variables as the length of a visit, a place of accommodation, the use of tour guide services and the number of persons accompanying in travel was treated as a source of a reception area economic success. That results from the following assumptions:

- the length of stay determines the amount of a tourist expenses,
- lodging place/accommodation brings definite associations/memories giving the basis for revisit or recommendation,
- the number of persons accompanying in travel affects the amount and kind of expenses in a tourist reception place,

- using tour guide services is correlated with the number of persons accompanying in a tourist trip. It is assumed that travelling in a large group inclines to using tour guide services. This component of the organization of a stay affects the amount of expenses in a tourist reception place as well as a recommendation of this place through the knowledge, experience and a tour guide personality.

H3: The economic success of a tourist destination is determined by the character of an arrival.

- The character of an arrival is in the examined model determined by such variables like a motive of an arrival, Polish descent and making use of Balice airport while arriving in Cracow. A motive of an arrival is determined mainly by tourist advantages of the given place. They determine the main aim of a tourist's stay. The Polish roots that a tourist shows may determine various arrival motives at a given place especially when it is their another visit. Finally, the character of an arrival is determined by using Balice airport in Cracow. Since destinations seek for airports, in which they see an economic potential because of an easy availability to them and bigger guests capacity.

H4: Social media as a source of information and promotion affect indirectly, by the organization of a stay, an economic success of a tourist destination.

- The social media may be a source of information concerning the organization of a tourist stay. Using the social media at the stage of preparation for a travel, choosing a destination, a place of accommodation, using tour guide services enables a good stay organization and determines indirectly an economic success of a tourist destination.

2.2. Participants and Procedure

Trying to exemplify the above theoretical dissertation and striving to verify the formulated study hypotheses we used the findings about the tourist movement in Cracow carried out by a questionnaire method from May to September 2015 on commission of the Municipal Council under the supervision of Malopolska Tourist Organization⁴. They analyse 3528 people visiting the city both tourists and one-day guests diversified in terms of demographic and social features (see *Table 1*). In the population being surveyed the following groups dominated: visitors from abroad (53%), women (51%), people at the age of 19-45 (68%), professionally active (57%), with good financial status (60%). The biggest number of respondents had university education (49%) and came from a big city (36%).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Characteristic	n	%	Characteristic	n	%
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Sex			Financial status		
Female	1800	51.02	Very bad and bad	50	1.42
Male	1559	44.19	Medium	807	22.87
Age			Good	2115	59.95
Under the age of 19	139	3.94	Very good	386	10.94
Between the age of 19 and 30	1264	35.83	Size of a place of residence		
Between the age of 31 and 45	1136	32.20	Small village	66	1.87
Between the age of 46 and 60	564	15.99	Big village	134	3.80
61 years of age or older	321	9.10	Town	1044	29.59
Education			City	1277	36.20
Primary	82	2.32	Big city	883	25.03

⁴ More about the methodology of the study (Borkowski (Ed.), 2015, pp. 5-8).

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	1	2	3	4	5	6
Secondary		1431	40.56	Country		
University/Higher		1720	48.75	Poland	1567	44.42
Other		48	1.36	Great Britain	309	8.76
Professional status				Germany	257	1.28
Pupil/student		828	23.47	Italy	184	5.22
Professionally active		1994	56.52	France	164	4.65
Housewife/househusband		177	5.02	Spain	157	4.45
Unemployed		41	1.16	Russia	80	2.27
Pensioner		93	2.64	USA	75	2.13
Retired		255	7.23	Other country	632	17.91

Note: Statistics were based on all valid responses. Missing responses were present for all characteristics.

Source: Own calculation.

2.3. Measures

The verification of the assumed hypotheses is done with the use of the structural equation models and their analysis (so-called the path analysis) measures a direct and indirect effect between the variables as well as a degree in which a certain variability is determined by individual causes. The path analysis is a recursive model and allows only causal unidirectional relations (Konarski, 2009, p. 28). It is characterized by the following rules resulting from the casual arrangement of variables (Gołata, 1992):

1. Response variable Y should be the last in the causal arrangement chain. Variables causally later than Y should not be taken into account.
2. Assessing an effect of a variable X on Y all the variables causally earlier than X should be determined.

These rules may be presented by the following formula:

$$X_a \rightarrow X \rightarrow X_b \rightarrow Y$$

where: X_a – a set of variables earlier than X, X_b – a set of variables later than X, Y – response variable.

The starting point in the path analysis is a construction of a quality diagram showing the relations (connections) between the variables developed on the basis of the researcher's knowledge. Among these variables the following are mentioned: explicit, implicit, exogenous and endogenous (Cwalina, 2000, p. 16).

In the path analysis the causalities between the variables are represented by a path coefficient which informs which part of variability of the dependent variable X_i (measured by standard deviation of standard variable, so equalling unity) is represented by variability of the response variable X_j assuming that the rest of the factors are constant (Szwarc, 2005, p. 313).

The premise of the study undertaken for the use of this article was to verify the thesis that the social media as a source of information and promotion influence an economic success of a tourist destination, selecting direct, indirect and total effects. In the hypothetical model (Fig. 1) the following variables (X) shaping the response variable (Y) were specified, which is an economic success⁵ of a destination⁶:

⁵ An economic success of a destination is described by such variables as: the amount of expenses (to 100 PLN, 101-500 PLN, 501-1000 PLN, 1001-2000 PLN, more than 2000 PLN), the intention to revisit the city (definitely not, rather not, I don't know, rather yes, definitely yes), the intention to recommend the city to the other visitors (no, I don't know, yes).

⁶ More about these variables can be found in the part: Hypotheses.

1. Information and promotion of the region treated as the information coming from the social media and other sources of information that are also the tools promoting a destination⁷.
2. The character of arrival seen from the angle of a motive of a visit, ethnicity (meant as the Polish descent) and making the use of the local Balice airport while arriving in Cracow⁸.
3. The organization of a stay which includes: length of a stay, accommodation, using tour guide services and the number of persons accompanying in travel⁹.

In the statistical analysis carried out for the use of this study explicit exogenous and endogenous variables were subjected a procedure of standardization because the part of the quality indicators was presented on the ordinal or nominal scale (Sroka, 2009, p. 197). Using the SEPATH module available in the statistical package STATISTICA based on the path analysis the dependences between the individual variables were recognized; these dependences concern their occurrence as well as their force and direction (Korol & Szczuciński, 2005).

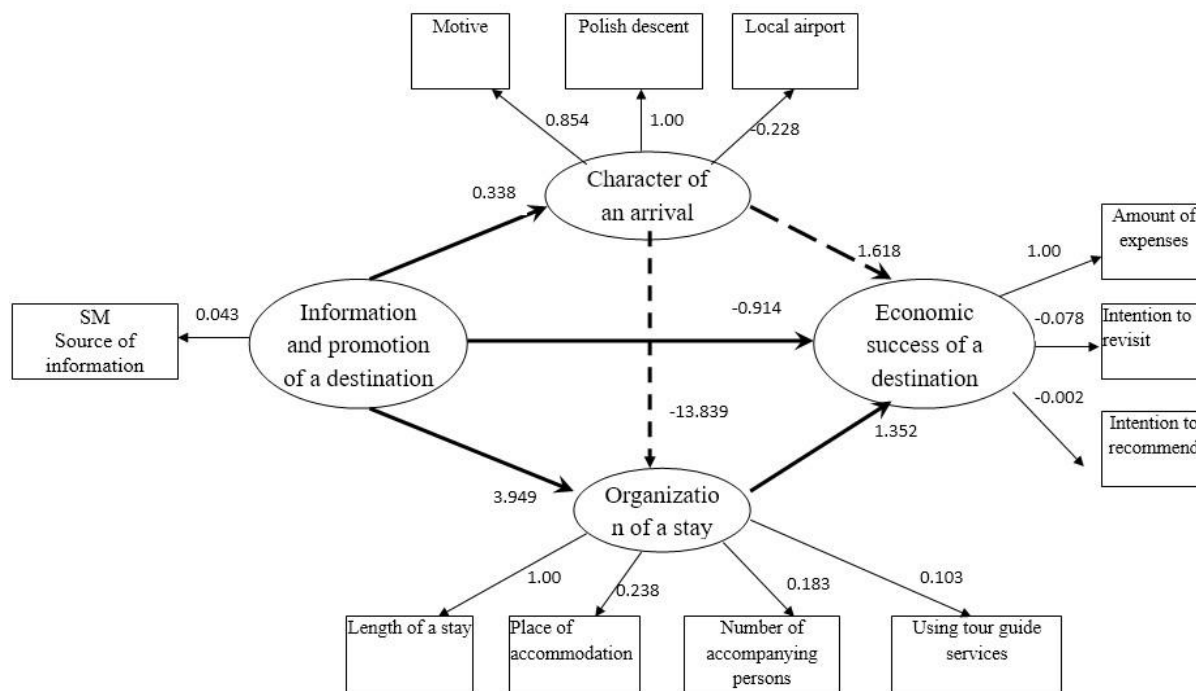
3. Results

The considered model (*Fig. 1*) is based on one of the implicit exogenous variables, which means the information and promotion of a region and on three endogenous variables which means the character of an arrival, the organization of a stay and an economic success of a destination. This model shows the causal dependencies between the described characteristics, and the path coefficients measure direct effects of the singled out factors. They should be interpreted as β parameters and their size proves the significance of the studied variable in the model. The higher value of a path coefficient the biggest effect of a variable on the studied phenomenon.

⁷ This variable was described as using social media, using other sources of information than social media.

⁸ This variable was described as: motives (leisure, business purposes, visiting relatives and friends, cultural purposes, other purposes); descent (Polish descent, other than Polish descent); a local airport (using Balice airport while arriving in Cracow, not using Balice airport while arriving in Cracow).

⁹ These variables were described as: length of a stay (1 day, 2-3 days, 4 days and more); accommodation (hotel facilities, other lodging places), using tour guide services (yes, no), the number of accompanying persons in travel (0, 1-6 persons, 7 and more persons).



The statistically significant dependences are marked with a solid line. The statistically insignificant dependences are marked with a broken line.

Fig. 1. The path diagram in the analysis of dependences between the use of the social media and an economic success of a tourist destination

Source: based on own studies.

In the considered model (Fig. 1) there is a statistically significant relation between the implicit exogenous variable *information and promotion of destination* and its coefficient variable – the social media as a source of information (0.043). In case of the variable *the character of an arrival* the most important for its description was the Polish descent (1.00) and the least important the use of the local Balice airport (−0.228)¹⁰. Analysing the dependences between the variable *the organization of a stay* and its coefficient variables may be noticed that the biggest role has the length of a visit (1.00) and the smallest – the use of a tour guide services (0.103). The implicit endogenous variable *the economic success of a destination* was described in a statistically significant way in the highest degree by expenses (1.00) and the less important was the intention to revisit (−0.078)¹¹.

Out of the all analysed variables, the factor having the greatest effect on *the economic success of a destination* was the organization of a stay (1.352). The influence of information and promotion (social media) on this implicit variable was also noticed but this influence was negative (−0.914), which should be interpreted that other than the social media sources of information directly influence an economic success of a destination.

The achieved results also allow to see the other dependences. The information about a destination and its promotion (social media) has a positive effect on the organization of a stay ($\beta = 3.939$; $p = 0.000$). Additionally, the path analysis reveals positive influence of the information and promotion of a destination (social media) on the character of an arrival ($\beta = 0.338$; $p = 0.004$). No influence of the character of an arrival on the economic success of a destination or the organization of a stay was noticed. However, the results of the modelling

¹⁰ This dependence should be explained that the other places ensuring availability to the city such as railway stations, bus stations or motorways, etc. influence the character of an arrival.

¹¹ The negative indicator proves that profitable tourists arrive in the city for the first time not another.

allow to state that although the information and promotion (social media) negatively influence the economic success of a destination (what is interpreted above), it positively influences this success by the organization of a stay (the total effect is 4.41).

The assessment of the achieved values was made with the use of the absolute indicators: the test χ^2 , GFI, AGFI and RMSEA (Sagan, 2003). The obtained test value $\chi^2 = 547.397$ ($p=0.000$) may suggest that the model do not match to the analysed data. Although it should be emphasized that a lot of researchers claim that with big samples even a well matched model may be rejected by the test χ^2 which is very sensitive to the sample size (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996; Hair *et al.*, 2007). In such a case it is recommended to use the other tests. The conducted tests showed the accepted level matching of the model: GFI = 0.963 AGFI = 0.939, RMSEA = 0.059, information criterion Akaike = 0.226

4. Discussion

The aim of the article was an empirical verification of dependences between the social media as a source of information and promotion and an economic success of a tourist destination. The conducted modelling allows to draw the interesting conclusions. Although the social media do not directly influence an economic success of a destination, their role reveals in an indirect effect – by the organization of a stay. It should be stated then that the importance of the social media does not only reveal at the stage of an imagined travel but also at the stage of a real travel, which means a travel that is indeed realized. The information placed on the social media portals shape the tourists' expectations of accommodation, tour guide services or the ways of spending free time depending on the length of a stay and the number and character of accompanying persons, (that tourist may get to know/persuade to travel by also using the social media and who may suggest them to extend or shorten a visit). Taking into account that information in the social media coming from the other tourists who earlier made use of the products of a given destination are usually treated as more reliable than insistent, commercial, promotional argumentation of a region and functioning in this region tourist companies; there is a great possibility that the existing reality will meet tourists' expectations and they will be satisfied. The better accommodation than expected or the impressions as a result of for example a competent tour guide, the more often a tourist will have positive emotions and the bigger will be his satisfaction from the stay.

A tourist may share and inform in the social media about their experience with reference to each of these elements. If tourist's satisfaction is followed by their loyalty expressed by for example a recommendation of a place, the reputation of social media as a communication channel grows and affects an economic success of the city. The social media are also an information platform to arrange meetings during a stay in a given city. Then the meetings in so-called 'consumption temples' usually result in financial expenses. That in turn, as we are trying to prove in a theoretical part of the article, decide about an economic success of a destination. It should be also clearly emphasized that the biggest influence on the organization of a stay, as the model shows, has the length of a visit. A well-designed products offer of a city surely will decide about the duration of a travel and the same about the guests expenses, and as a consequence about the profits of a destination.

As a result it may be stated that cities and tourist regions should be 'alert' for a surrounding reality and develop a tourist attractions offer more and more varied that can be advertised in social media and as a consequence a potential tourist would not only like to come but most of all to prolong their stay. The longer stay is proved to be financial advantages for a destination.

Conclusion

In the light of the presented dissertation it should be stated that although a direct influence of social media on the economic success of a destination was not noticed, the tourist supply entities are not allowed to underestimate this tool of information and promotion of the region. This contemporary communication channel is, if not direct, an indirect generator of profits for the city.

Although the H1 hypothesis that the social media as a source of information and promotion does not have a direct impact on the economic success of a tourist destination was not proven, the H4 hypothesis was reasoned and it implies that the social media as a source of information and promotion influence the economic success of a tourist destination indirectly by the organization of a stay. The analysis that was carried on allows to consider the H2 analysis as true because it was proven that the most important factor influencing the economic success of a destination is a stay organization. The H3 hypothesis was rejected as a character of arrival does not influence the economic success of a destination. As a result the aim of the article was achieved.

In the summary it is stated that the authors realize the possibilities of modification of the presented model. It should be emphasized that the modelling was conducted on the basis of the findings acquired from the respondents' answers for the questions in the questionnaire designed for the needs of a permanent monitoring of the tourist movement in Cracow in 2003. Future research works in this field based on a specially prepared questionnaire should include more questions about a way, area and a range of using social media information in a decisive process while choosing a tourist destination and during a stay.

Additionally, the analyses carried out for the use of this article have been conducted for the first time. Their comparison with the findings acquired on the basis of the respondents' answers in the next years will provide knowledge on which the tourists' experiences and needs change in time and what factors affect their use of social media and their behaviour on a tourist market as well as confirm if this behaviour translates in the same aspects into an economic success of a destination.

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