

The Influence of Social Media as a Tourism Marketing Tool in Negros Oriental, Philippines

Ryan O. Tayco*, Millard Vaughn Tubog, Glennen Y. Zamora
Negros Oriental State University, Dumaguete City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: ryantayco@norsu.edu.ph

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Abstract. The study aimed to determine the influence of social media as a tourism marketing tool for Negros Oriental as a tourist destination. Utilizing a descriptive method and a correlational technique, this research focused on both local and foreign tourists visiting Negros Oriental. A total of 392 tourists were selected through convenience sampling to participate as respondents. Results indicate that the majority of respondents are female, unmarried, aged between 18 and 30, and heavily rely on social media for information, particularly when planning activities and trips. A significant portion of respondents are college-educated Filipinos, who spend an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes daily on social media. Most respondents are employed and use social media for both professional and personal purposes. Findings reveal that most travelers visit Negros Oriental for relaxation and extensively use smartphones for travel-related purposes. Facebook emerged as the most commonly used platform, significantly influencing travel decisions and planning. Socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, civil status, educational level, and occupation were found to influence social media usage patterns and travel decisions. The study concludes that social media is an effective tourism marketing tool, capable of influencing tourists' decisions regarding their visits to tourist destinations.

Keywords: Tourism industry; Social media; Social media marketing; Tourism marketing tool; Negros Oriental.

1.0 Introduction

Social media is an important information source influencing tourists' travel choices (Liu et al., 2020). In just one decade, social media have revolutionized many people's lives and thus attracted much attention, not only from one industry but also the tourism industry. The advent of new technology, such as social media, has penetrated many tourism industries and altered the way customers seek information about the tourism product of a tourist destination as the basis for their decisions to travel. Hence, this study determines the influence of social media as a tourism marketing tool in Negros Oriental as a tourist destination.

Tourism is an important sector of the Philippine economy. In 2022, tourism contributes 6.2% to the Philippines' GDP. In Negros Oriental, the latest data showed that for the entire year of 2022, tourist arrivals totaled 204,164. According to the Department of Tourism, Negros Oriental has boasted numerous tourist attractions, which also helped boost the economy. Negros Oriental is packed with many things to do, making it one of the top tourist spots in the country. Silliman University is the oldest American-founded University in Asia, and where the Silliman Anthropological Museum, is home to 2,000-year-old artifacts and information about the indigenous culture and history of the Philippines. Bais City is a popular tourist spot for whale and dolphin watching, due to its proximity across the Tañon Strait. Tourists consider the Apo Island Marine Protected Area in the Municipality

of Dauin as one of the best dive sites in the world. Festivals are also a significant tourist attraction in Negros Oriental, among the most notable, is the Buglasan Festival which is celebrated during the third week of October.

Online information and content regarding tourism sites has increased dramatically as a result of the development of social media communication (Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019). Travelers can access photographs of the site and information about tours through digital marketing and strategies, which impact their behavior (Khan et al., 2022). Social media platforms have evolved into web-based spaces where people may communicate, share content, and share ideas (Islam, 2021; Javed et al., 2020). The content on these websites affects people's daily life as well as several industries, including tourism (Islam, 2021). Information from digital marketing (online information) and social media platforms influences most decisions on travel (de Amorim, Sousa, Dias, & Santos, 2022; Islam, 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Magano & Cunha, 2020).

Travelers often use social media experience comparisons to help them choose places, purchases, and dining options. With the aid of GPS, social media enables travelers to check in on time and share their experiences on destination pages to assist other prospective and future travelers in planning their travel itinerary (Islam, 2021). How information from social media affects prospective visitors' confidence in the information offered by the tourism service provider is a major worry for tourist locations. Using the expanding internet technology, social media has become a new marketing strategy in the travel industry (Sahin & Sengün, 2015).

This study explored tourists' experiences using social media as a marketing tool. The results reveal the type of social media platforms respondents use and the significance of information from social media in influencing their travel decisions. These findings are vital for tourism service providers as changing customer demographics and behaviors necessitate the industry to rethink its marketing communication strategies and actively manage social media to reduce the risk of losing customers

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This is correlational research, in which the researchers measure at least two variables that seem to interact so that when you see one change, you have an idea of how the other will change.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted in Negros Oriental, Philippines. The study was carried out in the different hotels and resorts in Negros Oriental.

2.3 Research Participants

The respondents of the study are the tourists visiting Negros Oriental, Philippines. A total of 392 respondents answered the survey questionnaire. The researchers chose respondents based on proximity and did not consider whether they represented the entire population.

2.4 Research Instrument

The questionnaire checklist is used as the main instrument for data gathering. The survey instrument included socio-demographic questions covering various aspects such as age, gender, nationality, civil status, highest educational attainment, occupation, place of origin, reasons for visiting Negros Oriental, travel companions, digital technology use, the purpose of using social media platforms, and the time spent using social media per day. Then the social media usage by the respondents in getting information about travel destinations. Social media as a tourism marketing tool was assessed adapted from Sahin & Sengün (2015) on items on the influence of social media on tourism marketing, items on the social media usage levels and reasons for use during the holiday planning process were assessed adapted from Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides (2012), while items on roles of social media regarding tourists' decision making were assessed adapted from Liu, Mehraliyev, Liu, & Schuckert (2020), and items from the trustworthiness of social media as information sources about tourists' destination were assessed adapted from Ab Hamid, Akhir, & Cheng (2013). Slight modifications were made to reflect the exact situation of the study.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Questionnaires are personally distributed and retrieved by the researchers from the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed via online platforms such as Facebook Messenger and emails. The researchers employed convenience sampling to select respondents, specifically targeting tourists visiting Negros Oriental. The collected data underwent analysis using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. The weighted mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the sample and its measures. Additionally, multiple regressions were conducted to explore the relationship between the respondents' use of social media as a tool for tourism marketing and its impact on their travel decisions and to examine the connection between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their utilization of social media for tourism marketing.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, ethical considerations were followed, including obtaining consent from the participants and ensuring the protection of personal information per the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. The findings indicated that most respondents were females between 21 and 30, predominantly single, with college-level education, mostly Filipinos, and employed.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	f	%	Variables	f	%
Age range			Nationality		
81-90	2	0.51	American	10	2.55
71-80	3	0.77	Australia	4	1.02
61-70	11	2.81	Belgian	3	0.77
51-60	22	5.61	Canadian	4	1.02
41-50	25	6.38	Dutch	2	0.51
31-40	40	10.20	Emirate	2	0.51
21-30	184	46.94	Filipino	360	91.84
18-20	105	26.79	Irish	2	0.51
Gender			Italian	1	0.26
Female	242	61.73	Nigerian	1	0.26
Male	140	35.71	Spanish	1	0.26
Prefer not to say	10	2.55	UK	2	0.51
Civil Status			Occupation		
Divorced	4	1.02	Employed	143	36.48
In a relationship	4	1.02	Student	86	21.94
Married	91	23.21	Skilled Worker/Manager	78	19.90
Separated	9	2.23	Retired	30	7.65
Single	282	71.94	Housewife	14	3.57
Widow	2	0.51	Teacher	12	3.06
Highest Educational Attainment			Health Worker	6	1.53
Postgraduate	4	1.28	Owner/Industry Owner	5	1.28
With a master's degree	2	0.51	Businessman/Woman	4	1.02
College Graduate	87	22.19	Government Employee	5	1.28
College level	190	48.47	OFW	2	0.51
College Students	11	2.71	Place of Origin		
Senior High School Graduate	5	1.28	Foreign	35	8.93
Junior High School Graduate	85	21.68	Luzon	81	20.66
Junior High School Graduate	4	1.02	Mindanao	62	15.82
Elementary Graduate	3	0.77	Visayas	209	53.32
			Prepare not to say	5	1.28

N = 392

The data shows that the highest age range of the respondents is from the age range of 21-30 and 18-20 years old. The findings are supported by the recent research by the PEW Research Center on social media use in 2021, that global consumers aged 20 to 29 are the biggest users of social media. Those in this age group make up nearly one-third (32.2%) of all social media users worldwide. The data also explains that as age increases, social media use decreases.

Regarding gender, the majority of the respondents are female. The study by Karatsoli & Nathanail (2020) explains that when planning activities and making travel arrangements, women are more active on social media compared to men. Another study by Alnjadat et al., (2019), found that females use social media for educational purposes more than males. The study by Karatsoli & Nathanail (2020) finds that women are more likely than men to receive information from social media, more when planning activities and making travel arrangements.

For the civil status, more than half of the respondents are single. This explains that single people often use social media. As revealed in the age range, they are mostly aged from 18-30 years which could better explain why they are still single. According to the PEW Research Center, young adults were among the earliest social media adopters and continue to use these sites at high levels while married individuals use fewer social media.

In terms of highest educational attainment, the Table shows that most of the respondents are college-level. The study of the PEW Research Center in 2021 found that there is a disparity of internet users by educational attainment in the Philippines. Some 86% of those with higher education, defined by the study as those who finish secondary education and above, use the internet, at least occasionally, or have a smartphone. Bumgarner (2007) explains that a large proportion of social media users are between 18 and 25 years old, and those are mostly university students.

On Nationality, it is expected that the majority of the respondents are Filipinos because the study was conducted in the Philippines, and this was followed by Americans. Digital Marketing Institute shows that as of 2021, the Philippines has the highest social media usage rate in the world and their internet use is 60% higher than the average. Filipinos spend an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes every day making them first worldwide, followed by Colombia.

The results show that most of the respondents are employed in terms of occupation. As published by Dixon in Statista in 2022, social media sites were primarily considered to be online communities for younger populations, however, people of all ages now routinely use such platforms, for matters of business, socializing, dating, politics, and daily communication. As the world's digital population grows, so do the reach and usage of social media. Social media are now part of everyday life and continue to transform the way we interact with one another on a global scale. As for the place of origin, it is anticipated that more than half of the respondents are from the Visayas since this is closer to the province of Negros Oriental.

3.2 Purpose for Visiting Negros Oriental

Table 2 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, including their reasons for visiting the province, travel companions, use of digital technology, purpose of using social media platforms, and average daily time spent on social media.

In terms of the purpose of visiting the province, the majority of respondents travel to Negros Oriental for recreational activities, rest, and relaxation. Negros Oriental is a well-known tourist destination in the Visayas, offering beautiful scenery, great food, and fantastic diving spots. The influx of tourists to Negros Oriental, particularly Dumaguete City, has increased due to various local and international sporting events hosted in the region over the last five years, attracting both local and foreign visitors seeking recreational activities and relaxation.

Most tourists visiting the province travel with their families and enjoy the various attractions and activities offered in Negros Oriental and its capital, Dumaguete City. What makes Negros Oriental such a charming province is the combination of multiple factors. It is a vibrant place that makes its way into the heart of each visitor for decades and is one of the reasons why visitors from all over the world find it easy to get around Dumaguete City and Negros Oriental.

Most tourists in the province rely on smartphones for their digital technology needs, using them as communication devices, planners, maps, travel guides, and restaurant locators. Smartphones are an integral part of many people's lives. Smartphones are communication devices, planners, maps, personal travel guides, and restaurant locators, among other things.

Most respondents reported using social media platforms to connect with friends, seek travel destinations and exchange views about products and services was less common. Social media is a widely used information source that allows people to share information and make connections, influencing tourists' travel choices. Nowadays, people generally recognize that the Internet is the most used information source (Lee & Choi, 2009; Sørensen, 2003). Billions of people around the world use social media to share information and make connections. On a personal level, social media allows you to communicate with friends and family, learn new things, develop your interests, and be entertained (www.usf.edu). Social media are acknowledged as an important information source that influences tourists' travel choices (Liu, Mehraliyev, Liu, & Schuckert, 2020). Most respondents spend 3-4 hours on social media daily, which aligns with the 2021 findings that Filipinos spend an average of 4.06 hours using social media daily.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the purpose of visiting Negros Oriental

Variables	f	%
Purpose of Visiting the Province		
Culture & Learning, Studying	1	0.26
Educational purposes	3	0.77
For fun and wellness	1	0.26
Homeplace/permanent residence	6	1.53
Medical Purposes	2	0.51
Recreational activities, resting, relaxation	195	49.74
Visiting family and relatives	180	45.92
Visiting special someone	4	1.02
Travel companions		
Alone	21	5.36
Co-workers and friends	63	16.07
Family	198	50.51
Family and friends	34	8.67
Family and special someone	9	2.30
Special someone	12	3.06
Friends	55	14.03
Digital technology use		
Smartphones	279	71.17
Smartphones and Laptop	84	21.43
Smartphones and Tablet	4	1.02
Smartphones, Tablet, and Personal Computer (PC)	11	2.81
Smartphones, Laptop, and Tablet	10	2.55
Laptop	4	1.02
The purpose of using the social media platform		
Connecting with friends	125	38.89
Entertainment	90	22.96
Educational Purposes	66	16.84
Entertainment, Educational Purposes, Connecting with friends	84	21.43
Looking for a travel destination, Exchanging views about products and services	36	9.18
No. of hours spent on social media per day		
Less than 1 hour	15	3.83
1-2 hours	104	26.53
3-4 hours	120	30.61
5-6 hours	71	18.11
5-6 hours, more than 6 hours	3	0.77
More than 6 hours	79	20.15
N = 392		

3.3 Usage of Social Media

Table 3 presents the respondents' usage of different social media platforms, including the types they typically use, the platforms that influence their travel destination decisions, the most reliable sources of travel information, the platforms where they obtain travel destination information, and the platforms they use for gathering travel information.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the usage of social media by the respondents

Variables	f	%
Type of social media you usually use		
Facebook	326	83.16
Instagram	44	11.22
Twitter	22	6.61
Type of social media that influence your decision on choosing a destination to travel		
Facebook	302	77.04
Instagram	21	5.36
Twitter	7	.76
YouTube	23	5.87
Websites with guest evaluations (Trip Advisor, etc.)	39	9.95
Type of social media that is more reliable for travel information sources		
Facebook	305	77.81
Instagram	23	5.87
Twitter	9	2.30
YouTube	17	4.34
Websites with guest evaluations (Trip Advisor, etc.)	31	7.91
Type of social media you get information regarding a travel destination		
Facebook	315	80.36
Instagram	16	1.53
Twitter	9	2.30
YouTube	15	3.83
Websites with guest evaluations (Trip Advisor, etc.)	37	9.44
Type of social media use when gathering information about a travel destination		
Facebook	311	79.34
Instagram	14	3.57
Twitter	13	3.32
YouTube	20	5.10
Websites with guest evaluations (Trip Advisor, etc.)	34	8.67
N = 392		

The majority of respondents indicated that they use Facebook. In 2021, social media platforms such as Facebook were widely utilized in the Philippines to connect with friends and family, access news and information, stream video content, and discover products and services to purchase. A study by Mariani, Di Felice, and Mura (2016) explored the strategic use of Facebook by Italian Regional Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) for destination promotion and marketing. The findings of Leung & Jiang's study (2018) suggest crucial practical implications for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to harness Facebook marketing, focusing on the social influence of Facebook pages, especially in identification, and leveraging Facebook pages to reduce perceived behavioral control of potential visitors. Some researchers argue that consumer behaviors influenced by Facebook pages are more significant in evaluating Facebook marketing outcomes (Fisher, 2009; Tuten & Solomon, 2014).

3.4 Social Media Used as a Tourism Marketing Tool

Table 4 reveals the use of social media as a tourism marketing tool in terms of its influence on tourism marketing, social media usage levels and reasons for use during the holiday planning process, social media's roles in tourists' decision-making, and the trustworthiness of social media as information sources about tourists' destinations. To begin with, the respondents agree that they are influenced by social media marketing. The respondents agree that they are influenced by positive comments about tourist destinations/places to visit, food and beverage enterprises, hotel enterprises, activities during their stay, and tour operators/agencies. They strongly agree that positive comments about holiday destinations on social media influence them. The findings were supported by the study of Liu, Mehraliyev, Liu, and Schuckert (2020), who describe social media as an essential information source influencing tourists' travel choices. Social media has started being used as a new marketing approach within the growing internet technologies by the tourism sector (Sahin & Sengün, 2015). The advent of new technology, such as social media, has penetrated many tourism industries and altered the way customers seek information about the tourism product of a tourist destination as the basis for their decisions to travel.

In addition, most of the respondents agree on the social media usage levels and reasons for use during the holiday planning process. They agree that they used social media when beginning to search for ideas on where to go for holidays, to confirm that I made a good destination choice, seeking ideas and information on accommodation options, seeking ideas information on excursions and other leisure activities, and to have ideas as an inspiration

for my following holidays. Others strongly agree that they use social media when narrowing down their choice of destination and finding information about specific attractions and leisure activities.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the social media used as a tourism marketing tool

Variables	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Influence of social media on tourism marketing	4.10	0.76	Agree
Positive comments about holiday destinations on social media influence me	4.24	0.71	Strongly Agree
Positive comments about tour operators/agencies on social media influence me	4.07	0.72	Agree
Positive comments about hotel enterprises on social media influence me	4.08	0.77	Agree
Positive comments about food and beverage enterprises on social media influence me	4.14	0.78	Agree
Positive comments about activities influence me during my stay on social media	4.08	0.74	Agree
I am influenced by positive comments about tourist destinations/places to visit on social media	4.20	0.71	Agree
Social media influences my buying decision	3.86	0.90	Agree
Social media usage levels and reasons for use during the holiday planning process	4.16	0.76	Agree
I am a regular visitor of travel-related social media, so to have ideas as an inspiration for my next holidays	4.18	0.78	Agree
I used social media when beginning to search for ideas on where to go for holidays	4.14	0.79	Agree
I used social media when narrowing down my choice of destination	4.25	0.73	Strongly Agree
I used social media to confirm that I made a good destination choice	3.91	0.88	Agree
I used social media to seek ideas and information on accommodation options	4.15	0.73	Agree
I used social media to seek ideas and information on excursions and other leisure activities	4.16	0.69	Agree
I used social media to find out information about specific attractions and leisure activities	4.29	0.69	Strongly Agree
Roles of social media regarding tourists' decision-making	3.86	0.82	Agree
Social media influence my decision-making.	4.02	0.81	Agree
Social media can create initial awareness about the place and generate interest or need that lures users to travel.	4.13	0.73	Agree
Social media can remind the viewer about a destination and support his/her need and desire to travel there finally.	3.62	0.87	Agree
Social media can also work as a guide for tourists to find places to visit and things to do at the destination.	3.74	0.89	Agree
Social media play the role of approver before final travel choices are made.	3.78	0.81	Agree
Trustworthiness of social media as information sources about tourists' destination	3.89	0.77	Agree
I can obtain helpful information about tourist destinations from social media.	3.79	0.87	Agree
I feel safe doing business through social media	3.77	0.76	Agree
I can rely on the services posted on social media	3.71	0.77	Agree
Electronic word of mouth has a positive impact on purchase intention.	4.11	0.74	Agree
I trust more the comments made by members of an online community.	4.05	0.73	Agree

The study by Amaro et al. (2016) supports the idea that the widespread use of smartphones and access to the mobile Internet significantly influence how tourists gather information and make decisions, playing a crucial role in the overall travel process. Additionally, research by Fotis, Buhalis, and Rossides (2012) indicates that social media is mainly used for sharing experiences after holidays, and there is a strong link between the perceived influence of social media and changes made in holiday plans before the final decision. Various studies on social media and tourism explore how consumers obtain information to aid in trip planning and the types of online content used to make well-informed decisions about destinations, accommodations, restaurants, tours, and attractions (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Ruzic & Bilos, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2009).

Furthermore, respondents agree that social media plays a significant role in decision-making. It can create initial awareness about a place, spark interest or a need to travel, serve as a reminder, guide finding places to visit and things to do, and help finalize travel choices. Understanding the multifaceted role of social media in tourists' decision-making emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of how social media platforms impact tourists' information search and decision-making processes (Cox et al., 2009; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Hudson and Thal (2013) also suggest that social media is influential throughout all stages of the travel process, shaping consumers' journey from consideration and evaluation to purchase and even post-purchase experiences (Hudson & Thal, 2013; Öz, 2015). Social media is an impactful information source that influences tourists' travel choices (Liu et al., 2020). Tayco and Sequiño (2014) explain that changes in climate and weather patterns at tourist destinations can significantly impact travelers' comfort and choices.

Additionally, respondents express trust in social media as a source of information about tourist destinations. They find valuable information through social media, feel secure conducting transactions, and rely on the services

advertised on these platforms. Electronic word of mouth positively impacts purchase intention and trust in the comments made by members of online communities. This aligns with Kane et al.'s (2012) study, which suggests that social media enhances awareness and influences tourists' perceptions and attitudes in the long term rather than leading to immediate behavioral changes. Song and Yoo (2016) also demonstrate that social media has a crucial role in tourists' purchase decisions during the pre-purchase stage, with functional and monetary benefits positively affecting their willingness to purchase, intention to purchase, and decision-making.

3.5 Relationship Between the Usage of Social Media and Social Media as Tourism Marketing Tool

Table 5. Analysis for the relationship between the respondents' usage of social media and social media as tourism marketing tool

Usage and Social Media Marketing	Time Spent	Type of social Media	Type of Social Media Influence	Type of Social Media Reliability	Type of Social Media Information	Type of Social Media Information Used
	.027	.058	.065	-.021	.033	.000
Levels and Reasons	.589	.252	.202	.678	.514	.993
	392	392	392	392	388	392
	.002	.017	-.002	-.118*	.016	-.050
Influence	.964	.743	.975	.020	.757	.327
	392	392	392	392	388	392
Purpose of Using Social Media Platform	.001	-.065	-.018	-.008	-.116*	-.014
	.989	.199	.721	.880	.023	.788
	392	392	392	392	388	392

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 displays the link between the respondents' social media usage and the influence of social media on travel decisions as a tourism marketing tool. The findings reveal a negative correlation between the extent to which respondents' travel decisions are influenced and the reliability of the types of social media they use. This significant correlation at the 0.05 level indicates that as the influence of social media on travel decisions increases, the perceived reliability of social media decreases. In other words, if respondents heavily rely on social media for making travel decisions, they consider fewer types of social media as reliable sources.

According to statista.com, Meta platforms like Facebook and Instagram were the Philippines' most commonly used social media platforms in 2021. This is supported by Kim and Fesenmaier's (2017) study, which emphasized the value of Facebook for sharing travel information during or after trips. Additionally, some researchers highlight the critical role of Facebook in providing essential travel information for planning and making travel decisions. This suggests that Facebook is a reliable source of travel information across social media platforms.

Table 5 also demonstrates a negative relationship between the purpose of social media platforms and the type of social media information. This notable correlation at the 0.05 level suggests that as the usage purpose of social media platforms increases, the variety of relevant social media information decreases. Therefore, if respondents primarily use social media for a specific purpose, they have access to fewer types of relevant information.

Several researchers have studied the purpose of social media usage and the type of social media information. Kang and Schuett's (2013) study found that most social media users utilize Facebook to read and share activities, making it the primary platform for obtaining relevant travel information. Moreover, Dickey and Lewis's (2010) study explains that while firms increasingly use social media for marketing and branding, many feel uncomfortable due to the unpredictable nature of social media. Among the challenges social media companies face is the need to develop appropriate strategies to handle negative comments and maintain quality control and accuracy in shared information.

3.6 Relationship Between Socio-Demographic Profile and the Usage of Social Media

Table 6. Analysis for the relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and the usage of social media

Profile and Tourism Marketing	Age	Nationality	Gender	Civil Status	Highest Educational Attainment	Occupation
	.049	.120*	-.053	-.167**	.170**	-.065
Type of Social Media Used	.335	.017	.293	.001	.001	.200
	392	392	392	392	392	392
Type of Social Media Influence	-.030	.080	-.139**	-.098	.063	-.114*
	.555	.114	.006	.053	.214	.023
	392	392	392	392	392	392
Type of Social Media Reliability	-.069	.026	.086	-.066	.074	-.083
	.175	.612	.091	.190	.145	.103
	392	392	392	392	392	392
Type of Social Media Information	-.077	.068	.017	-.114*	.055	-.107*
	.129	.181	.733	.025	.284	.036
	388	388	388	388	388	388
Type of Social Media Information Used	-.025	.131**	-.038	-.118*	.061	-.078
	.623	.009	.450	.020	.228	.121
	392	392	392	392	392	392

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 illustrates the connection between the socio-demographic profiles of the respondents and their social media usage. Firstly, there is a notable link between the respondents' nationality and their use of social media information. The majority of the respondents are Filipino, and the study shows that nationality affects the type of social media users and their use of information from social media. Filipinos have a high usage rate of social media, particularly Facebook. As of 2021, the Philippines has the highest social media usage rate in the world and their internet use is 60% higher than the average. Filipinos spend an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes every day making them first worldwide. According to the PEW Research Center, in a survey conducted in September 2014, Facebook remains by far the most popular social media site for gathering information.

The study also indicates a negative relationship between gender and the influence of social media, with women showing a higher likelihood of using Facebook compared to men. This suggests that gender may impact how people use social media and make decisions. According to data from the PEW Research Center, women are also particularly likely to use Facebook compared with men. According to the literature, gender may affect the way that people share information on social media and the way they use it to make decisions (Aparicio-Martínez et. al, 2020, Lin & Lu, 2011, & Lin & Wang, 2020). The study by Idemudia et. al, (2017) indicated that women had a stronger perception of ease of use, compatibility, relative advantage, and risk when using social media when compared to men.

Furthermore, civil status shows a negative relationship with the type of social media users and the information they use. Single individuals are more frequent users of social media compared to married individuals. The study also highlights the link between the highest educational attainment and social media usage, showing that those with higher education levels are more likely to use social media. As explained by the PEW Research Center, using social media is popular among college-educated people. As gleaned in Table 1, most of the respondents are college-level. Bumgarner (2007) explains that a large proportion of social media users are between 18 and 25 years old, and those are mostly university students. This explains that those with lower levels of education are less likely to use social media.

Lastly, the respondents' occupation also has a negative relationship with the influence and information obtained from social media. The study indicates that employed individuals are the majority of users, and it discusses how social media can impact the workforce positively and negatively. Social media influences and permeates many

aspects of daily life in all people, and the workforce is no exception. These digital platforms offer the potential to enhance worker productivity by fostering connections with colleagues and resources around the globe. At the same time, employers might worry that employees are using these tools for non-work purposes while on the job or engaging in a speech in public venues that might reflect poorly on their organization.

3.7 Relationship Between Socio-Demographic Profile and Social Media as a Tourism Marketing Tool

Table 7. Analysis for the relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and social media as a tourism marketing tool

Profile	Digital Technology Used	Purpose of Using Social Media Platform	Time Spent on social media
	.203**	.245**	-.312**
Age	.000	.000	.000
	392	392	392
	.141**	.033	-.095
Nationality	.005	.512	.061
	392	392	392
	-.064	-.014	.048
Gender	.207	.789	.344
	392	392	392
	.049	.221**	-.155**
Civil Status	.336	.000	.002
	392	392	392
	.015	.099*	-.023
Highest Educational Attainment	.768	.050	.655
	392	392	392
	.052	.110*	-.288**
Occupation	.302	.029	.000
	392	392	392

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels (2-tailed), indicating a relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and the use of social media as a tourism marketing tool displayed in Table 7. The table specifically shows a significant relationship between age, nationality, civil status, highest educational attainment, and occupation, and the respondents' use of digital technology and social media platforms. The findings are supported by the recent research by the PEW Research Center on social media use in 2021, that global consumers aged 20 to 29 are the biggest users of social media as they are more familiar with technology and social media use. The data also explains that as age increases, social media use decreases. For nationality, Digital Marketing Institute shows that as of 2021, the Philippines has the highest social media usage rate in the world and their internet use is 60% higher than the average. Filipinos spend an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes every day making them first worldwide, followed by Colombia.

The findings suggest that age, nationality, civil status, educational attainment, and occupation influence the respondents' use of social media and digital technology. As revealed in the age range, they are mostly aged from 18-30 years which could better explain why they are still single. According to the PEW Research Center, young adults were among the earliest social media adopters and continue to use these sites at high levels while married individuals use fewer social media. Regarding the highest educational attainment, the study shows that most of the respondents are college-level. Bumgarner (2007) explains that a large proportion of social media users are between 18 and 25 years old, and those are mostly university students. Lastly for occupation, the results show that most of the respondents are employed. Workers turn to social media for a range of reasons while at work, with taking a mental break being among the most common.

Moreover, there is evidence that age, civil status, and occupation are negatively correlated with the time spent on social media by the respondents, indicating that these factors affect the decrease in time spent on social media.

This suggests that certain demographic factors play a role in influencing social media usage patterns. The study of Ayeh, Au, & Law (2013) proved that among individuals with Internet access who take often vacation trips, mostly young people use social media to plan their trips. For civil status, the study shows that the majority of the respondents are single. Young adults were among the earliest social media adopters and continue to use these sites at high levels, while married individuals use fewer social media. In terms of occupation, the study shows that most of the respondents are employed. Today's workers incorporate social media into a wide range of activities while on the job. Some of these activities are explicitly professional or job-related, while others are more personal.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that Facebook is the most common social media platform used by the respondents when gathering information about visiting tourist destinations in Negros Oriental. The results showed that the respondents agree that they are influenced by social media marketing, especially when reading some positive comments about tourist destinations. Respondents also agree that they use social media during holiday planning, especially when finding information about specific attractions and leisure activities. They also agree that social media influences their decision-making and the trustworthiness of social media as information sources about tourist destinations.

This study offers evidence of the relationship between the respondents' social media usage and social media as tourism marketing tools influencing travel decisions. This means that if respondents are highly influenced by the decision-making when choosing their destination through social media, they consider fewer types of social media reliable in making travel decisions. The same can be said about the relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and social media usage. The result shows that there is a relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and the usage of social media. The respondents' nationality affects the type of social media users and the use of information from social media. Likewise, gender decreases the influence of social media. It also explains that single people often use social media as they are more familiar with technology and social media use. It also shows that most of the respondents are college-level, which means that level of education affects the use of social media. Employed respondents also decrease the influence and the information they get from social media.

The study also shows the relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile and social media as a tourism marketing tool. The results show that socio-demographic profiles such as age, civil status, highest educational attainment, occupation, and nationality have a significant relationship with the digital technology used, the purpose of using social media platforms, and the time spent on social media by the respondents. The increasing time spent on social media and the interactions with web friends and followers has dramatically changed how the respondents perceive social relationships when using social media. It explains that social media can be an effective tourism marketing tool because it can influence tourists' decisions when visiting tourist destinations.

Based on the findings, it is recommended to employ Facebook for tourism marketing campaigns aimed at young, single, and college-educated Filipinos. Emphasize Negros Oriental's recreational and relaxing aspects, highlighting its scenic beauty, food, and diving spots, and engage influencers to share positive reviews. Create visually appealing content tailored to different demographic groups, ensuring information is reliable and consistent across platforms. Integrate social media marketing with traditional efforts to reach a broader audience and enhance tourism promotion effectiveness.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Ryan O. Tayco: Conceptualization, Writing the original draft, Writing review and editing, Writing the analysis, Writing the revision of the manuscript.

Millard Vaughn Tubog: Conceptualization, Writing the original draft, Writing the review and editing.

Glenn Y. Zamora: Conceptualization, Writing the original draft, Writing the review and editing.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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