

# The united nation world tourist organization unwto tourism essay

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The United Nation World Tourist Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as 'travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes'. The tourism and travel industry is intangible, as it is more than a product and depends on images reflected by the various communication channels. Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world.

(UNWTO, 2011) Tourism plays an important role in the economies of a number of ASEAN as well as other Asian countries. (Nasreen & Toan Than, 2011) International tourist arrivals for Asia and the Pacific area have increased significantly over the years, taking the second largest market share of the tourism industry in the world. This saw a historic high of 204 million, 24 million more than in 2009 and 20 million above the 2008 pre-crisis peak. (UNWTO, 2011) Growth was also seen in terms of the international tourism receipts whereby 17, 819 million (US\$) was obtained having a 7. 2% share in the Asia and the Pacific region. (UNWTO, 2011) Due to emergence of new destinations, rapid and affordable modes of transport, new marketing strategies and tools, changing trends etc., tourism business at all levels is becoming increasingly competitive. (Boz, n. d)

## **Tourism in Malaysia**

Serious efforts in developing and promoting tourism begun only with the establishment of the Tourist Development Corporation Malaysia (TDCM) in 1972 and took another 15 years before a specific ministry, the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism (MOCAT) was set up in 1987. In 2004, MOCAT was split to facilitate solely matters related to tourism i. e. the Ministry of Tourism

(MOT). The development reflects the government's seriousness in promoting tourism as the second major income generator after manufacturing.

## **COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE**

### **JAN-DEC**

#### **2011**

#### **2010**

#### **Growth %**

Singapore 13, 372, 64713, 042, 0042. 5Thailand 1, 442, 0481, 458, 678-1.  
 1Indonesia 2, 134, 3812, 506, 509-14. 8Brunei 1, 239, 4041, 124, 406-10.  
 2Philippines 362, 101486, 790-25. 6Vietnam 173, 783159, 271-9.  
 1Cambodia 49, 47248, 6181. 8Laos 29, 52038, 111-22. 5Myanmar 81, 94672,  
 79212. 6China 1, 250, 5361, 130, 26110. 6Japan 386, 974415, 881-7.  
 0Taiwan 233, 783211, 14310. 7South Korea 263, 428264, 052-0. 2India 693,  
 056690, 8490. 3Saudi Arabia 87, 69386, 7711. 1UAE 24, 21225, 645-5.  
 6Iran 139, 617116, 25220. 1Canada 86, 01591, 701-6. 2U. S. A 216, 755232,  
 965-7. 0Australia 558, 411580, 695-3. 8New Zealand 81, 38766, 15223.  
 0United Kingdom 403, 940429, 965-6. 1Denmark 22, 26924, 869-10.  
 5Finland 19, 96921, 355-6. 5Norway 19, 89122, 773-12. 7Sweden 44, 13848,  
 971-9. 9Netherlands 90, 590114, 887-21. 1France 127, 980111, 17515.  
 1Germany 124, 670130, 896-4. 8Switzerland 25, 80227, 894-7. 5Russia 38,  
 91832, 07521. 3Austria 13, 082n. an. cItaly 43, 86447, 068-6. 8Turkey 8, 5779,  
 149-6. 3South Africa 31, 44126, 39519. 1Others 792, 024680, 17816. 4

## **GRAND TOTAL**

**24, 714, 234**

**24, 577, 196**

**0. 6**

Figure 1. 1. 1 (a) Tourist Arrivals to Malaysia, 2011 (Source: Tourism Malaysia, 2011) In 2010, Malaysia was ranked 9th in the world's top tourism destinations at 24. 6 million in international tourist arrivals seeing a gain of 3. 9% in change from the previous year. " We have set sight on the target of 2020: 36: 168. That is in the year 2020; Malaysia will receive 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion tourist receipts. This would mean the industries will grow by 3 times and tourism will contribute RM3 billion receipts per week to the country in 2020." (Economic Transformation Programme, 2010) The tourism industry is also an important contributor to our economy, generating RM36. 9 billion in gross national income (GNI) in 2009. (Economic Transformation Programme, 2010) In 2011, the bulk of tourist arrivals to Malaysia were from the Southeast Asia region in which tourist from Singapore formed the largest group (53%), followed by Thailand (5. 9%). Between 2010 to 2011, tourists from Singapore grew by 2. 5% whilst tourist arrivals from Thailand dropped by 1. 1% but the biggest increase was recorded by arrivals from the emerging tourist markets of New Zealand and Russia, which grew by 23% and 21. 3% respectively (Figure 1. 1. 1 (a)). Another significant tourist market is from Iran which grew by 20. 1%.

## Rise of Technology

For the last decade, the usage of the Internet in all of the five continents has increased dramatically. According to the Internet World Stats (2011) the total growth of the Internet usage since the year 2000 is equal to 480.4%. (Figure 1.1.2 (a)) The continent with the highest internet users is Asia at 922,329,554 however, according to the given statistics of percentage in internet penetration North America seems to have the highest rate at 78.3%. Figure 1.1.2 (a) World Internet Usage and Population Statistics, 2011 (Internet World Stats 2011) We are living in the age of real-time information and communication spreading all over the world. By June 31, 2010, 29% of world population is using the internet. (Internet Usage Statistics, 2011). With the huge amount of information available on the Internet and the increasing importance of online search, understanding the tourism domain is essential for effective online marketing. (Xiang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2009) Rather than being passive recipients of 'brand messages', the new Web is characterised by information 'pull' rather than 'push', user generated content, openness, sharing, collaboration, interaction, communities, and social networking (Tapscott and Williams, 2006). Social media occupies almost every part and aspect of our daily lives and decision making processes. There are hundreds of platforms where internet users can interact and share information with other users, starting from blogs, forums, wikis, video and photo sharing to social networks, virtual communities, chat rooms and podcast. World Travel Market 2010 Industry Report carried out a survey of 1000 UK holidaymakers; on whether social media were used when planning their summer holiday; 36% answered yes which a majority 64%

answered no. On weather social media was planned to be used to help research in the following year's holiday, only 24% answered yes which 48% answered no and 28% possibly. " In the USA, about 52% of the 152 million adult leisure travellers - or some 79 million people - already use social media," (ITB Travel Trends Report, 2010-2011)The majority of national Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO's) are already at an advanced stage in their use of the Internet for global marketing, sales and customer relationship management. (Anzmac, 2009)The growth in use of social media marketing in destination marketing has been significant. Examples of board of tourisms that have kick-started their focus on social media marketing includes: Philippines Tourism Department has set aside 100 million pesos or RM7million in their 2011 budget, for their Facebook venture (source: newmedia. com. ph). The Australia Tourism Board has allocated AUD150million over the next three years for their social media initiative (source: socialmedianews. com. au). Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is boosting its online promotional activities in its efforts to maintain Thailand's position as a leading tourist destination. The agency is to increase its budget for promotions via online channels to 40% (from 30% in 2010) of its total marketing budget. (source: socialmedianews. com. au). The HKTB also partnered with popular search engines, such as Google, as well as social networking platforms, including YouTube and Facebook, to publicise Hong Kong's latest offerings. (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2010)

## **1. 2. Statement of the Problem**

Though there are numerous studies that look across the online customers' behaviour such as their browsing attitudes, continuance intention to use a

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website, willingness to purchase, or their shopping interests there is few studies which look particularly at the use of social media. The researcher is interested in this topic due to the rise of the use of the internet as a source of selling point to the marketing of a destination which can bring a great extent of benefits for future marketing strategies. The internet in general was normally studied by usability experts but now increasingly, new media experts are adding a more sociological dimension to engage and look into the human connection within. Though studies on relating topics have been conducted with other countries as a focus there has been a lack of research of this kind in Malaysia thus, the decision was made to choose " The Influence of Social Media Factors on Travel Motivations" as the research topic.

### **1. 3. Aims and Objectives**

In a world of technological evolution, tourists are on a constant lookout for tourist-friendly source of information. The aim of this research is to investigate how social media means are bringing an impact to the travel and tourism industry from the tourist point of view and how these platforms have affected their decision-making process. The objectives of this research would be to examine if UCC or eWOM founded in social media platforms serve as a determinant or just as a source of information on travel decisions and in which phase of the DMP do tourist use social media platforms. It also seeks to example the factors in which tourists would relay their feedback through social media means and their intention and determine this UCC credibility and the level of influence it may bring through administering questionnaires to tourists.

## **1. 4. Value of Study**

Social media does not only revolve around social networking sites but about having an opportunity to build bridges to a new genre of customers and the people who influence their decisions. The decision-making process leading to the final choice of a travel destination is a very complex process, and understanding what influences a traveller to choose a destination is important in developing appropriate marketing strategies (Hsu et al., 2008). With the importance of social media, it would be essential to study how computer users would use social media towards their travel decisions made and to which stage in decision making would social media make the greatest impact. As such, feasible recommendations and suggestions could be made in order for future marketers to easily target this growing group of travelers.

## **1. 5. Research Questions**

Based on the above mentioned the following research questions were formulated: What is the role of social media in the travelers' travel planning process? How do tourists use social media as a feedback mechanism and how much trust do they put in believing the information? How do travelers' react to official destination promotion initiatives placed in social media? How do travelers' perceive the content presented in social media applications? Should Malaysia Tourism Board develop further in its tourism social media optimizations?

## **1. 6. Outline of Chapters**

Chapter One: Introduction To The Research Study  
In the first chapter the research study is presented. Background information to the subject of study



is provided as well as the aim and objectives to be achieved. In addition, why the subject was chosen would also be highlighted.

### Chapter Two: Literature Review

In the second chapter the relevant theories relating to the topic are presented. Theories on consumer behaviour, destination marketing and social media will be used as the basis of this research. In terms of consumer behaviour, the decision making process and factors that influence the process will be looked into. Through destination marketing theories and examples it will be clearly understood the current strategies taken by Tourism Board of Malaysia and in comparison with other ASEAN countries. With social media, the main platforms available will be looked into as well as how eWOM and UCC are of importance to the current technological savvy consumers and the growth of SMM with its impact to the hospitality and tourism industry.

### Chapter Three: Methodology

In the third chapter the research method and the different approaches used to achieve the aims and objectives will be properly justified. Furthermore additional information related to the sample - where, how and why the respondents were selected will be provided. The limitations will also be shown in order to gain a wider understanding on the direction of the research.

### Chapter Four: Main Findings

In the fourth chapter the results of the primary research will be shown and linked to the theories presented in the literature review section. The structure of the main findings have devised from the literature review, thus, results will be structured according to the different stages of the decision-making process.

### Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

In the fifth chapter the conclusions extracted from the main findings will be discussed and complemented with the theory. Lastly recommendations will

be proposed for the hospitality and tourism industry in Malaysia and for future research.