

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING(SMM): MEASURING ITS EFFECTS TO RESORTS IN BATANGAS PROVINCE, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media has become ubiquitous and most important for social networking, content sharing and online accessing. Marketing which occurs via social media is known as Social Media Marketing (SMM). The study aimed to assess the use of social media marketing to measure its effect on resorts business in the Province of Batangas, Philippines. Specifically, it determined the profile of the selected resorts in terms of classification, years of operation, location, and the years media marketing was introduced in the business; identified the forms of social media utilized by the selected resorts; cited the positive and negative effect of social media marketing in the resorts business; specified the problems encountered by customers in using social media; ascended the differences of the responses of the selected resorts on the effects of SMM; and proposed a development plan for the proper utilization of SMM. The descriptive method was used with a self-made questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. Different statistical tools were used to answer the objectives of the study. Frequency distribution, ranking, weighted mean, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to interpret and analyze the gathered data. It was concluded that the majority of the resort businesses in the Province of Batangas are classified as American Automobile Association (AAA) which is the highest quality rating for resorts and operates ten years and above. Most of the resorts are found in the 1st District of the Province of Batangas and have started introducing SMM from 2006 – 2010. All of the Resorts owner and customers were using the Facebook account. Both owners and customers of the resorts strongly agreed that there was a positive and negative effect of SMM. Among the problems encountered in the use of SMM, frequent posting as well as account not maintained or updated. A proposed action plan was made for the proper utilization of SMM.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Marketing Tool, Social Networking Sites, Descriptive Method, Higher Education, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential for any corporation and business. It has different categories such as verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication includes face-to-face, telephone, radio or television while non-verbal communication consists of the letter, e-mail, books, magazines or the internet.

Communication is vital in marketing. Marketing is a process of creating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that provide value for customers, clients, partners, and society. It is also considered a business process of creating relationships and satisfy customers. One of the best ways of promoting products and services is the use of social media. These days, people are so much engaged in the use of social media like Twitter,

Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Blogs, and Websites. These social networking sites are also frequently used by the individual in the hospitality industry to reach a number of people in promoting products and services. It is imperative for marketing managers to continuously find a solution to appeal and to keep new and current consumers. A growing number of resort and spa destinations are spreading their wings and reaching a wider customer base via social media. Batangas Province, for instance, being well-known for its magnificent beaches and diving spots is increasing its popularity thru social media marketing. According to the 1987 Philippine Constitution Article II S. 24, the state shall recognize the vital role of communication and information in nation-building. Responsible use of social media marketing is important to relay to the people, customers, and clients true and fair flow of information of the products and services of a business. As a faculty member of the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management handling Marketing and Revenue Management courses at the same time being an avid user of social networking sites, the researcher was motivated to conduct the study to have an in-depth understanding of social media as a marketing tool for resort business. Having worked as a manager in a popular fast food chain, the researcher knows the power of marketing tools in the popularity and profitability of a business. This study may be an eye-opener to the readers that social networking sites are not just something that gives everyone a moment of delight and enjoyment but also useful to every business particularly, in the hospitality industry. If executed effectively, online efforts in marketing more often than not lead to offline success.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study on the Social Media Marketing (SMM) is anchored on John Dewey’s (1925) instrumentalism and William James’ (1907) pragmatic theory. They served as the framework of the present study in the idea that social media can be an instrument or tool which can be used in marketing resorts businesses. According to

Dewey, instrumentalism’s operating premise is that ideas empower people to direct natural events, including social processes and institutions, toward human benefit. Based on James’ pragmatic theory, it characterized truth in terms of usefulness and acceptance. Social media can be used as an instrument or tool by resorts businesses to promote the truth about their products and services. The conceptual framework of the study presents the operational variables of the study through the system approach comprising input, process, and output. The conceptual framework consists of three parts: Input, Process, and Output. The first box is the input which relates to the Resorts’ Profile, the Utilized Forms of Social Media, the Positive and Negative Effects of SMM, the Problems Encountered in SMM, and the Difference on the Effects of SMM. The second box includes the process which consists of the use of a questionnaire as the data gathering instrument and unstructured interview. The third box consists of the output which is the proposed action plan.

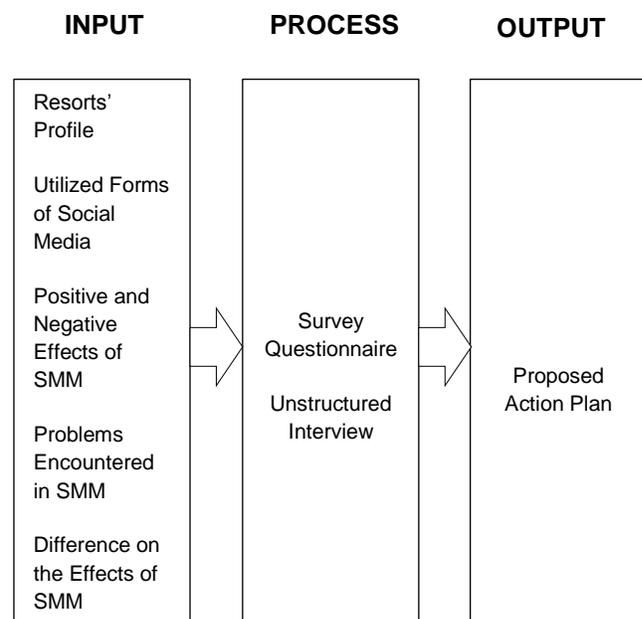


Figure 1 Research Paradigm of SMM

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY



The study aimed to assess the use of Social Media Marketing (SMM) to measure its effect on resorts business in the Province of Batangas, Philippines. Specific aims included the following: (1) to determine the profile of the selected resorts in Batangas Province in terms of classification, years of operation, location, and the years the social media marketing was introduced in the business. (2) to identify the forms of social media utilized by the selected resorts. (3) to cite the positive and negative effect of social media marketing in the resorts business. (4) to specify the problems encountered by customers in using social media. (5) to ascend the significant difference of the responses of the selected resorts on the effects of social media marketing. (6) to propose an action plan for the proper utilization of social media marketing.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher utilized the descriptive method of research. The researcher used a self-made questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument to obtain the necessary information that pertains to the use of social media in the resort industry of Batangas province. The unstructured interview was used to support and validate the data. The validated questionnaire was accomplished by the owners, managers, supervisors, customers or guests of the identified resorts. The data were tallied, tabulated, interpreted and analyzed. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first part is the demographic profile which includes the classifications of resorts, years in operation, number of employees, and year when social media marketing was introduced in the business. The second part is the forms of social media marketing, the third part is the positive effects of SMM, and the last part is the negative effects of SMM. The researcher used random sampling in the study. The respondents of the study were 20 resort owners/managers/supervisors and 200 customers/guests of selected Resort Businesses in the Province of Batangas. The researcher chose the top 20 resorts in Batangas Province in terms of the number of tourist arrivals. Different

statistical tools were used to answer the objectives of the study. Frequency distribution, ranking, weighted mean, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to interpret and analyze the data gathered. To test the hypothesis of the study, 0.05 alpha levels were used and treated using a statistical software PASW version 18 to analyze the result of the study further.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Resorts' Profile

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Resorts Profile

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Classification of Resorts (DOT Standards)		
American Automobile Association (AAA)	14	70%
American Automobile (AA)	6	30%
Years in Operation		
4 – 6 years	4	20%
7 – 9 years	7	35%
10 years and above	9	45%
Location		
1 st District	8	40%
2 nd District	4	20%
3 rd District	4	20%
4 th District	4	20%
Year when Social Media Marketing introduced in the business		
1996-2000	4	20%
2001-2005	5	25%
2006-2010	9	45%
2011-2015	2	10%

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of resorts' profile in terms of classification of resorts, years in operation, municipality, and year when social media marketing was introduced. The study revealed that there was 14 or 70



percent of the resorts in the Province of Batangas classified as AAA while 6 or 30 percent are AA. Majority of the resorts are 3 A's which means they were able to meet and pass the standards set by the DOT. Three A's obtained higher points as compared to 2 A's. Therefore, in terms of service and facility quality, condition and management practices 3 A's resorts have better accommodation standards compared to 2A's. This implies that the top 20 resorts Batangas Province have high resort classification, thus making the top in terms of tourist arrivals. As explained in the introduction of National Accommodation Standards for Resorts which was approved by Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Jimenez (2012), there are five levels of accommodation standards ranging from one to five stars applicable to hotels, resorts and apartment hotels. In terms of years in operation, ten years and above topped on the rank with 9 or 45 percent, among others are 7– 9 years obtained 7 or 35 percent and the least 4 - 6 years with 4 or 20 percent. Resorts established ten years and above have already built a good reputation and image in the industry. In terms of location, the majority of the selected resorts were from 1st District with 8 or 40 percent while the rest, are equally found in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Districts with 4 or 20 percent. These resorts are usually located in Nasugbu, Lian, and Calatagan. There are more resorts in this district due to its geographical location. Also, most of the newly established and popular resorts in the province are located in District 1. While other resorts establishment in district 2, 3, and 4 seem to be common to tourists. Even though they are already established, most of their services and features are not modernized making them less appealing to customers. In terms of years when SMM was introduced in the business, mostly started from 2006–2010 with 9 or 45 percent; the 2001– 2005 with 5 or 35 percent, the least is 2011–2015 with 2 or 10 percent. The owners of the resorts adopted the advancement of social media when it reached its popularity by the year 2006 and was adopted by most businesses in this computer and technology-driven world.

2. The Utilized Forms of Social Media

Table 2 has shown the different forms of social media commonly used by the owners as their marketing tools. It can be gleaned from the result that all the owner respondents and customer respondents used Facebook account equivalent to 100 percent.

Table 2. Forms of Social Media Commonly used by the Respondents

Forms of Social Media	Owners		Customers	
	F	%	f	%
Facebook	20	100	200	100
Instagram	14	70	186	93
Twitter	16	80	137	68.5
LinkedIn	6	30	36	18
Myspace	0	0	72	36
Agoda	14	70	93	46.5
Website	14	70	99	49.5
Travel Blogs	13	65	144	72
E-Newsletter	1	5	118	59
TripAdvisor	18	90	117	58.5

Table 2 has shown the different forms of social media commonly used by the owners as their marketing tools. It can be gleaned from the result that all the owner respondents and customer respondents used Facebook account equivalent to 100 percent. From the perceptions of owners which topped after Facebook was, TripAdvisor with 18 or 90 percent while, Twitter with 16 or 80 percent whereas, top social media used by the customer next to Facebook where the Instagram with 186 or 93 percent and Travel blogs with 144 or 72 percent. According to the researcher's interview, the use of Facebook helps them to easily connect with their customers or guest and build a good relationship towards them. This is relevant to the customers who usually resorted in checking the Facebook account of the resorts. The least among the social media being used by owners are LinkedIn having 6 or 30 percent, E-newsletter with 1 or 5 percent and



nobody uses Myspace or 0 percent. On the other hand, Agoda gained 93 or 46.50 percent; Myspace had 72 or 36 percent, and the least

LinkedIn which gained 36 or 18 percent. These forms of SMM are not user-friendly and have lesser number of users in general.

3. Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media Marketing

3.1 Positive Effects of Social Media Marketing

Table 3. Positive Effects of Social Media Marketing

Forms of Social Media	Owners		Customers		Overall	
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI
1. Easy access to the community	3.80	SA	3.87	SA	3.84	SA
2. Brand recognition	3.80	SA	3.85	SA	3.83	SA
3. Attracts new customers and brings repeat business	3.80	SA	3.76	SA	3.78	SA
4. Caters to a big audience that is unlimited to the scope and reach	3.90	SA	3.55	SA	3.72	SA
5. Less marketing expense	3.70	SA	3.39	A	3.54	SA
6. Influenced purchased decision	3.75	SA	3.20	A	3.48	A
7. Builds competitive advantage than competitors	3.75	SA	3.12	A	3.44	A
8. Generates interaction that can maintain a good and long –term relationship with customers	3.55	SA	2.78	A	3.17	A
9. Repeat Exposure of business	3.30	A	3.00	A	3.15	A
10. Nurtures brand loyalty and builds loyal customers	3.50	SA	2.60	A	3.05	A
Composite Mean	3.69	SA	3.31	A	3.50	SA

Table 3 presents the positive effects of social media marketing on both owners and customers with the composite mean of 3.50 and with the over-all verbal interpretation of strongly agree. The owners of the resort businesses believed that they gained so much by using social networks wisely such as free advertisement and word of mouth, repeat business that eventually resulted in having loyal customers and increased in their revenue. On the other hand, for the view of the customers, social media plays a vital role not only in their everyday life but also in choosing the best resort based on their preferences in just a simple click. Engaged customers spend more money and return to business more often. Topped among the positive effects were easy to access to the community with a weighted mean of 3.84 and seconded by the brand recognition with a weighted mean 3.83, both were verbally interpreted as strongly agree. Meanwhile, attracting new customers and bringing repeat

business obtained 3.78 and was strongly agreed by the respondents. According to the owners and customers, it was easy for them to browse any social media with the use of their mobile devices, laptops, and other gadgets anywhere they go, anytime they want, and wherever they are as long as there is an internet connection. It is easier to reach and attract the market with the use of social media since nowadays everyone has gadgets and social media accounts. However, the least in rank were generating interaction that can maintain a good and long-term relationship with customers with a weighted mean of 3.17; repeat exposure of business with a weighted mean of 3.15 and; nurturing brand loyalty and building loyal customers have gained a weighted mean of 3.05. All the three items mentioned had the verbal interpretation of agree. The owners believed that constant interaction through social media could build proper brand awareness and loyalty to and from their customers. It could also develop ongoing



relationships with followers/customers when posting, sharing or by responding to a status update or video on social media sites. However, with the free online advertising, the number of

competitors increases; thus; making it difficult to maintain long term relationship with the clients and build customers loyalty.

3.2 Negative Effects of Social Media Marketing

Table 4. Negative Effects of Social Media Marketing

Forms of Social Media	Owners		Customers		Overall	
	WM	VI	WM	VI	WM	VI
1. Complaints are publicly revealed	2.50	A	3.67	SA	3.08	A
2. Attracts negative users including spammers, scammers that can harm the company's reputation.	2.05	D	3.83	SA	2.94	A
3. Social media account not maintained or updated	2.10	D	3.73	SA	2.92	A
4. Customers may track negative or misleading statements	2.15	D	3.61	SA	2.88	A
5. Possibility of destroying the company's image and reputation	2.55	A	3.21	A	2.88	A
6. Creating a platform for cyberbullying	2.05	D	3.54	SA	2.79	A
7. Accidental release of confidential information	2.40	D	2.98	A	2.69	A
8. Increased customers power	2.05	D	3.19	A	2.62	A
9. Spread of Bad Publicity	2.25	D	2.96	A	2.61	A
10. Newsjacking (stealing mindshare from trending news or event)	2.15	D	2.97	A	2.56	A
Composite Mean	2.23	D	3.37	A	2.80	A

Table 4 presents the negative effects of social media marketing as separately perceived by the owners and customers having a composite mean of 2.80 and was verbally interpreted agree by the respondents. On the viewpoint of the owners, social media is an open book to anyone, and no one can control over what other people say or post. This confirms the idea of Frazier (2014) that social media has changed the way people interact. In many ways, social media has led to positive changes in the way people communicate and share information. However, it has a dark side, as well also on the part of the business. The item complaints are publicly revealed with a weighted mean of 3.08 ranked first; attracting negative users including spammers, scammers that can harm the company's reputation obtained a weighted mean of 2.94; and social media account not maintained with a weighted mean of 2.92 and was verbally interpreted as agreed by the respondents. All the items mentioned above were verbally interpreted as agreed. Based on the researcher interview

with the owners, handling complaints is a stressful job and the netizens' demands in addressing the issue quickly, because a slow response can damage a resorts' reputation and image. The least are the increased customer power with a weighted mean of 2.62, the spread of bad publicity with the weighted mean of 2.61, and newsjacking or stealing mindshare from trending news or event gained a weighted mean of 2.56. The items were all verbally interpreted as agreed. From the viewpoint of the respondents during the interview, every business should exercise caution and risks when posting and commenting on their accounts as this has a great effect on the business. One reader may perceive it or understand a post different from another. Since the information is publicly displayed, it is very difficult to control those who want to copy the information. This affirms the idea of Klontz (2014) that newsjacking takes the practice to the next level, as it helps blog content and social posts to reach interested followers instantly.



4. Problems Encountered by Customers using Social Media Marketing

The problems encountered by customers using social media marketing had a composite mean of 3.60 and had a verbal interpretation of always. According to the customers through social media is a wonderful place to visit because it provides information that can be used but sometimes social media face consequences that can lead to issues and problems, false assumption, critiques, and opinion that can backfire to the establishment. This supports the idea of Boquiron (2011) that most of the social media are open to the public; they are vulnerable and prone to spammers and scammers. Based on the results, posting too infrequently; account not maintained obtained a weighted mean of 3.83, deleting or ignoring negative comments of customers obtained a weighted mean of 3.81 and over posting of irrelevant information got a weighted of 3.75 topped among the list. The items were all verbally interpreted as always by the respondents. As observed by the researcher, the social networking sites utilized by the resorts in the Province of Batangas are not updated and not user-friendly. Important information or updates on the latest facilities and services offered are not usually posted. Fake or bogus websites or accounts that give misleading information and limited access of customers when browsing that needs updated versions of applications such as adobe flash reader, web browser, and others both obtained the weighted mean of 3.47. While duplications of social networking accounts creating confusions ranked ninth having obtained a weighted mean of 3.42 and inconsistent participation of the owner/administrator of the account or website with the weighted mean of 3.21 rank last. The items were all verbally interpreted as often by the respondents. Leadership and management have different forms of action that can make an establishment prosper, as observed during the interview, some of the business owners are foreigners, and they let their caretakers/managers to continually get involved

in their business, and at times details are being overlooked by the people in charge. In some cases, the administrator or the owner of the account fails to regularly check the account which may result in misinformation on the part of the customer. It is also for the reason that companies do not have assigned personnel to maintain the website or social media account. Moreover, it is costly in the part of the owner to hire a web programmer.

5. The Difference of the Responses of the Selected Resorts on the Effects of Social Media Marketing

Table 5. The Difference of Responses on the Positive Effects of Social Media Marketing when Grouped according to Resorts Profile

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Classification	0.072	0.792	Not Significant
Years in Operation	0.145	0.866	Not Significant
Municipality	1.201	0.341	Not Significant
Year when Social Media Marketing was introduced in the business	2.372	0.109	Not Significant

Based from the result, classification (p-value=0.792), years in operation (p-value=0.866), municipality (p-value=0.341), years when social media marketing was introduced in the business (p-value=0.109), this reveals that there is no significant difference between the responses in the positive effects of social media marketing when they were grouped according to the resort's profile. This was observed since the obtained p-value was greater than 0.05. This revealed that the respondents, when grouped according to the profile variables have similar responses to the positive effects in social media marketing. It also indicated that owners of the resorts assured of a positive effect of Social Media on their marketing tools. This supports the idea of Barefoot and Szabo (2010) that social media marketing is a new trend and a rapidly growing way in which



businesses are reaching out to targeted customers easily.

Table 6. The Difference in Responses on the Negative Effects of Social Media Marketing when Grouped according to Resorts Profile

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Classification	0.206	0.656	Significant
Years in Operation	1.132	0.346	Not Significant
Municipality	0.255	0.856	Not Significant
Year when Social Media Marketing was introduced in the business	1.268	0.319	Not Significant

It can be gleaned from the result that all the computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the negative effects in using social media marketing which when grouped according to the profile of the resorts was retained. This revealed that there was no significant difference observed and implied that the resorts from different municipalities experienced the same effects in using social media as a form of marketing. From the given profile variables, years in operation (p-value=0.346), a municipality (p-value=0.856), and years when social media marketing was introduced in the business (p-value=0.319) except the classification (p-value=0.656) have similar responses on the negative effects in Social Media Marketing. However, the classifications of the resorts differed in their responses to the negative effects of social media marketing. The AAA resorts have other affiliations which may help to advertise their services online, customers expected a lot from them comparing to AA resorts. While there was a lesser expectation from AA resort. What they understood from the social media ads and if succeeded in their service, then there was a great impact on them. Based on the results, the public complaints of customers have a greater effect more specifically on the AAA resorts compared to AA resorts because there

was a higher expectation from AAA than AA. The more open and social organizations have become the more vulnerable they are.

Table 7. The Difference of Responses on the Effects of Social Media Marketing When Grouped according to Group of Respondents

	Group	N	Mean	t-value	p-value	VI
Positive effects	owner	20	3.69	9.395	0.000	HS
	customer	200	2.31			
Negative effects	owner	20	2.23	16.383	0.000	HS
	customer	200	3.37			

Based on the result in Table 7, there was a significant difference between the responses of owners and customers on the positive and negative effects of using social media as a form of marketing. This was observed since the obtained p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance. This only indicated that the two groups of respondents have different assessments on the effects of social media in promoting the resorts. The owners and customers have different points of view on both the positive and negative effects of social media marketing. They have various concerns and perspectives. The owners were primarily concerned with the management side and customer concerns while the customers are more concerned with the brand, accessibility, and attractions of the resorts.

6. Proposed Action Plan for the Proper Utilization of Social Media Marketing

The proposed action plan for the proper utilization of social media marketing had the following specific objectives: (1) to frequently post, update and monitor resort's information in Social Media Website; (2) to establish customer satisfaction thru immediate response to customer queries; and (3) to allow potential resort guests to get relevant information about the resort. To achieve the mentioned objectives, the researcher came up with the strategies such as developing and creating an Information System that would update and monitor company website, assigning



personnel who will act as the web administrator to answer the queries of the guests, developing a site with high privacy setting, and posting similar information and photos in various social media accounts or sites to establish reliability. From the cited objectives and strategies, browsing will be made easy for guests thus increasing the number of clients and resorts' revenue.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of the resort businesses in the Province of Batangas are classified as AAA, operates ten years and above, found in the 1st District and have started introducing Social Media Marketing from 2006 – 2010.
2. All of the resort owners and customers are using the Facebook account while none of the owners are using the MySpace account. The least commonly used Social media marketing site of customers is LinkedIn.
3. Both owners and customers of the resorts strongly agree that there is a positive effect of social media marketing; however, owners disagree on the negative effects that can be brought by the social media-marketing contrary to the customer's perspective that there is a negative effect in the business.
4. Among the problems encountered in the use of Social Media-Marketing is the frequent posting as well as account not maintained or updated.
5. An action plan was proposed for the proper utilization of social media marketing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions from this study, the following recommendations were endorsed.

1. Resorts Business owners may improve or update their social media site for effective and better use of it to continually increase their income and have a better share in the market

- place.
2. Resort owners and management may use social media marketing to have interaction over the net to answer the inquiries as immediately as possible.
3. An organization for resort businesses may create policies and legal procedures and to protect their businesses in cyber malpractices brought by E-hackers.
4. Resort owners may conduct service reorientation to avoid complaints that would lead the customer to express their grievances and opinions publicly through Social Media.
5. Proposed action plan on Social Media-Marketing may be utilized to give more customer satisfaction and maximize business potential.
6. Further study may be conducted using other variables to help resorts business sectors to maximize their business potential through Social Media.

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