



Éva Treer
Master Thesis
Tourism Programme
Aalborg University
July 2010

Social media: an interesting option for tourism destination promotion?

Social media: an interesting option for tourism destination promotion?

Master Thesis

Tourism Programme

Aalborg University

July 2010

Supervisor: Szilvia Gyimóthy

Éva Treer

Pages: 97

Standard Pages: 79,9

Characters: 191.772

Preface

In this preface I would like to take the opportunity to thank several people whose contribution made this thesis possible.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Szilvia Gyimóthy for her constructive advices and the inspiring discussions during her guidance of this project. I would also want to thank all survey respondents and especially the five interviewees for their participation in this project.

Last but not least, thanks also goes out to Zsanett Sikabonyi-Angyal, the representative of HNTO in Copenhagen for her inspiring inputs.

Abstract

Travel research constantly shows the high influential role of word-of-mouth (WOM) information in travelers' decision-making process. In recent studies its electronic version, the eWOM presented in social media sites became the focus of these discussions. This study took one step further, by examining travelers' social media usage from another angle, with the aim to suggest potential ways for destination marketers to exploit the beneficial features of social media in their promotional activities. The study examined the usage of social media in a specific context, regarding Danes' social media usage in general and concerning their recent trip to Hungary, therefore, to identify viable possibilities for the Hungarian National Tourist Office. Both a quantitative ($n=84$) survey and qualitative ($n=5$) interviews were conducted in order to obtain a thorough picture of the social media usage. Danes' social media usage was identified through a five steps travel planning framework, while analyzing possible variables that influence its usage. Moreover, it was assumed that younger Danes would use social media differently, thus requiring a different approach from the DMOs when applying social media in their promotion. The results indicated, in consistence with previous studies, that social media is considered as a really important information source during travel planning due to its particular qualities such as informativity and credibility, however, it is mainly used in the information search phase. Though it was pre-assumed, the results showed no correlation between age, and the act or the extent of social media usage in travel planning. The main influencing factor was found to be the purpose of the trip. However, age plays a role in the way of social media considered to be important and used, where the personal recommendations and the audio-visual features were favored.

The findings were converted into suggestions for the HNTTO; however, further research is required to clearly identify the exact marketing and promotional tools. Nonetheless, the study represents a new perspective on comprehensive studies of social media usage in tourism context and hopefully contributes to a greater understanding of the possibilities of using social media in tourism destination promotion.

Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	6
2. Methodological considerations.....	11
2.1. Pragmatism.....	11
2.2. Methodological foundations and use of theory.....	12
2.3. Research design.....	14
2.3. Empirical data.....	17
2.3.1. Quantitative data.....	17
2.3.2. Qualitative data.....	20
2.3.3. Processing the collected empirical data.....	22
2.4. Validity, reliability and generalization.....	24
2.5. Limitations.....	25
3. Tourism behavior.....	26
3.1. Demographic characteristics in travel behavior.....	28
3.2. Tourists' travel planning behavior.....	31
3.3. Tourist information search.....	35
3.3.1. Modeling information search.....	36
3.3.2. Information search strategies.....	36
3.3.3. Factors that influence the information search.....	37
3.3.4. Contemporary understanding of tourists' information search process.....	40
4. From WOM to eWOM.....	42
4.1. WOM as one of the most influential information source.....	42
4.2. Electronic word-of-mouth.....	44
5. Social media in tourism.....	47
5.1. Social media features.....	47
5.2. Social media usage.....	48
5.2.1. What influences the use of social media?.....	48
5.2.2. Why people use social media?.....	50
5.3. Use of social media and its possible impacts on travel related decisions.....	51
5.3.1. When it is used?.....	51
5.3.2. How it is used?.....	51
5.3.3. How does it influence travelers?.....	52

5.4.	Challenges of social media	53
5.5.	Possibilities of social media	53
6.	Respondent profile	55
7.	Role of social media in the travel planning process	58
7.1.	Information source usage during travel planning in general	58
7.1.1.	WOM	59
7.1.2.	Social media.....	61
7.1.3.	Printed media	62
7.1.4.	Travel agencies	62
7.1.5.	Official information tourism organization.....	63
7.1.6.	Other sources	63
7.2.	Information source usage regarding the trip to Hungary	64
7.3.	Influential factors on the usage of different information sources.....	67
7.3.1.	Age.....	67
7.3.2.	Gender.....	70
7.3.3.	Purpose of the trip.....	71
7.4.	Social media usage in the travel planning process.....	74
7.4.1.	Pre-trip phase of travel planning: Need recognition.....	74
7.4.2.	Pre-trip phase of travel planning: Information search-evaluation of alternatives	78
7.4.3.	During the trip phase of travel planning	83
7.4.4.	Post-trip phase of travel planning	85
7.5.	Summing up the role of social media in the travel planning process	88
8.	Perception of the information presented in social media	91
8.1.	Perceived content of social media	91
8.2.	Perception of tourism destination promotion presented in social media.....	97
9.	Discussion and conclusion.....	100
	Bibliography of the project.....	103
	Appendix.....	106

1. Introduction

Promoting a destination is not an easy task. Its challenge and difficulties derive from the multi-attributed nature of the destination on the one hand and from a non-homogeneous demand of travelers on the other hand. DMOs and other destination marketers have to face with the challenge to create concise messages that capture the essence of the place, differentiate the destination from the several alike ones and that are meaningful for a heterogeneous market (Pike, 2004). It has been argued among marketers that a different approach is required while promoting a destination for the different segments of a heterogeneous market not only regarding the content of the message but also the communication channels as well. Thus, it is quite apparent that e.g. different generational cohorts or certain interest groups can be best approached by using specific communication tools.

DMOs use a diverse media/communication mix to ensure the communication with all segments of a heterogeneous market, such as the various forms of printed media or Web pages. Furthermore, in recent years new communication methods, known as Web 2.0 applications or new social media started to gather ground and achieve great success in communicating with the consumer. Several factors facilitated that the social media applications became enormously popular among many consumers, such as the evolution of the Internet and the change of consumer behavior as its consequence. For nowadays' consumers the internet became a very important source for information search (Arsal et al, 2008) and an essential tool to keep contact with others, through e-mails or using messengers than it was decades ago. Moreover, the increase of internet penetration in many countries and the technological evolution of the internet and its applications had also fueled the process of how the social media gathered ground.

Social media's success can be attributable to enabling interactive communication compared to traditional communication methods which provide a uni-directional communication form, where the information is generated by the marketer. The appearance of peer review applications, such as TripAdvisor, VirtualTourist or social networking sites as MySpace, or Facebook change the way how the consumers can engage with the information presented via the Internet, as it enables them to submit, review and to respond to an online content.

The appearance and the increasing popularity of the social media will have consequences for tourism professionals as well in several aspects.

From the destination marketers' point of view the Web 2.0 applications or the new social media have the potential to positively enhance the destination marketing activities of a certain region¹, as these sites can raise attention towards the region, provoke desire to visit and even induce action to plan the trip to the destination (Lin & Huang, 2005). Moreover, as the majority of these sites are not economically biased in their reviews, due to the content generated by the consumers themselves and not by a business oriented company or organization, therefore, the sites would be perceived as more credible and reliable. Due to these advantages, more and more DMOs start to realize that they should exploit the benefits of social media in their promotional activities. However, people use social media in different way which can challenge the tourism destination marketers but also gives an interesting potential for them when designing their promotional activities.

A recent successful example of the social media usage in tourism destination marketing is the promotional campaign of Tourism Queensland, in Australia launched as "The best job in the World" in 2009 (Taylor Herring, 2009; Sweney 2009). They have posted a luring job offer, where during a 6 months' period the best candidate, the Island Caretaker would discover, explore and report on his travel; therefore, would help to promote the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef to the world through social media. The promotional tasks were blogging of his adventures, uploading pictures and posting video diaries on the website of www.islandreefjob.com. The blog also enables to follow the experiences of the Island Caretaker on other social media applications such as YouTube, Flickr, Twitter or Facebook. Tourism Queensland (2010) maintains that the campaign was a great success, as more than 34.000 people applied for the job and more than 8,6 million people visited the website since the campaign was launched. Moreover, Tourism Queensland CEO pointed out that until the end of 2009 an increase in visitor numbers from the key UK and European markets, predominantly among the youth was seen which can clearly be linked to the campaign effect (Tourism Queensland, 2009).

¹ Though, they may also have a negative influence, as the user generated content may challenge the brand coherence (Munar, 2009).

However, despite of the social media's actuality and clear importance, except some notable studies (Litvin et al, 2008; Carrera et al, 2008), there is not much academic research conducted on the strategic usage of social media yet. We know little about how young people use the different types of social media or how the social media can influence them in their travel planning or destination choice process. Moreover, discussions concerning the potentials or possibilities of the social media usage for destination marketers, how its advantages could be used in their destination marketing promotion are sparse.

Questions concerning the young travelers' acceptance of social media or its usefulness and reliability in tourism context can be raised, and therefore, its suitability for possible official destination promotion campaigns can be discussed. Furthermore, it can be analyzed which role social media plays for the young travelers in their travel planning process; whether social media is merely raising the attention in regards to a certain destination or inducing desire to visit the destination, or due to the reviewed information even provoke an action to start planning the visit. By knowing the role of the social media in their destination choice process DMOs could adjust their promotional activities either e.g. integrating functions that allows peer to peer communication on their official homepages, or considering the social media as a communication channel in itself to reach the young segment of travelers.

Academic research regarding the subject concerns so far the young traveler's behavior in tourism context (Beckendorff et al., 2010) or the social media usage among consumers (Cox et al., 2009; O'Conner, 2008; Park et al., 2007); however, the correlation between these two areas of concern, therefore, how young travelers use social media remains under-researched. Moreover, the topics of social media usage and destination promotion (Pike, 2004) individually are in the focus of several discussions but the connection between these areas, therefore, how social media could be used in official tourism promotion is poorly researched.

This project will focus on one specific segment of the heterogeneous market, the young travelers' segment and takes as point of departure their preferences and behavior in terms of choice of communication channels, media and content of message when they are about to plan a holiday. It will be explored whether the usage of the popular social media can play an important role in destination marketing communication when conveying meaningful messages towards young travelers.

The focus of this project was chosen to be the segment of young travelers as the usage of social media is more widely known and used among the young people than among other segments and therefore, can be used as a new way of communication towards them. According to Danish statistical records people aged between 16 and 39 are significantly more active in chatting or blogging than the older generation (Danmarks Statistik, 2009). In 2009 47,2 % of 16-19 years old and 43,8 % of the 20-39 years old were reading blogs, while 26,9 % of the 40-59 years old and only 16,2 % of the 60 -74 years old engaged themselves in the same activity (Danmarks Statistik, 2009). However, the segmentation of the focus group will not be strictly considering demographic variables, but more the behavior patterns towards the usage of social media.

The empirical case study investigates Hungary as a destination in the Danish market. More specifically, the project will analyze the usage of social media among young Danes in their travel planning process. In the concluding remarks this thesis reflects upon the possibilities for implementing this new type of communication method in the marketing communication strategies of the Hungarian National Tourist Office (HNTO) for this specific segment of travelers.

The significance of the above mentioned research and suggesting innovative options for the marketing communication of HNTO towards the Danish market is twofold. On one hand understanding the usage of the new social media in tourism context and analyzing its potentials for tourism destination promotion can contribute as new knowledge. On the other hand the conducted research might also be useful for a successful brand communication and destination promotion of Hungary towards the young segment of Danes.

Based on the above mentioned the following research questions can be formulated:

The social media has gained remarkable popularity in recent years; however, the question arises whether the diverse social media pages are influencing the consumers in a tourism context as well, more precisely in their travel planning process. Thus, the **first research question** will explore:

- What is the role of social media in the travelers' travel planning process?

It will also be investigated how the social media is perceived in tourism context; hence, the **second research question** concerns the following:

- How do young travelers perceive the content presented in social media sites?

Moreover, it will be explored how the travelers might react on official destination promotion initiatives placed in the social media, therefore the **third research** question will investigate:

- How do young travelers react on the official destination promotion campaigns presented in the social media?

By illuminating these research questions the potentials and possibilities of social media usage in tourism destination promotion, in this case for the HNTD, will be pointed out.

2. Methodological considerations

In this chapter the methodological approach to the topic of this research will be presented, including the underlying philosophy that dictated the way of how the research process was designed and carried out. Moreover, the choice and the use of the different methods used in the entire thesis will be discussed here.

During the last century much debate has been going on concerning the different understandings of the nature of reality (ontology), the knowledge in theoretical perspective (epistemology), values and the methods, techniques to achieve knowledge (methodology) (Creswell, 2003) in research terms. This encompassed two alternative philosophical paradigms: positivism/post-positivism and constructivism (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Those have resulted in two different methodological preferences respectively; either in the use of quantitative methodology relying on a hypothetico-deductive framework or in qualitative methodology mainly based on an inductive view (Johns & Lee-Ross, 1998). The mixed methodology has recently evolved from these debates and controversies between these two paradigms by focusing on solving specific practical research problems while exploiting the two methods' respective strengths within the same research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). On the philosophical level pragmatism emerged as the underpinning rationale for aligning different methods (Creswell, 2003), as this concept argues for the compatibility of quantitative and qualitative methods and focuses on the research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) which therefore, has been chosen as the basis for this project's combined research method.

2.1. Pragmatism

Pragmatism is not committed to any one philosophy and reality (Creswell, 2003), and also it avoids the use of metaphysical concepts such as questioning the nature of the reality or the truth (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Thus, instead of placing the importance on the paradigm that underlies the method or on the method itself pragmatism considers the research problem as the most important (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Creswell (2003) also conveys that pragmatism focuses on the importance on the research problem and then uses pluralistic approaches to obtain knowledge about the certain problem area. He points out that *"knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations and consequences rather than*

antecedent conditions” as claimed in post-positivism (Creswell, 2003, pg.11). By other words, the pragmatic research focuses on the impact of the research actions, where the choice of the different methods of the empirical data collection is designed according to the research problem with the main concern of providing solutions to the problem, therefore, it can be understood as a practice-oriented approach. This according to Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003) is often treated as a naive orientation by its critiques, claiming that it simplifies complex philosophical understandings into a practical approach, simply choosing methods that work. However, using a pluralistic approach, thus, applying both quantitative and qualitative methods approaches the problem from different angles and the results from one method can elaborate on or provide a deeper insight into the findings of the other method (Creswell, 2003) and therefore, can be argued that contributes with different knowledge to the research problem and fosters a deeper understanding of the research area.

Due to the complex, multi-faceted problem statement of this project, as the social media usage will be researched in several aspects, in relation with the Danes’ travel planning process and furthermore, concerning its possibilities in official tourism promotion, it is believed to be accurate choosing a pragmatically oriented research approach. Thus, placing the problem in the center and aiming to approach it in a pluralistic way in order to obtain a thorough knowledge. Moreover, as the project would apply both quantitative and qualitative methods, one has to be aware of the incompatibility of the two world-views, positivism/post-positivism or constructivism that the two approaches ascribe themselves to (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Therefore, pragmatism was seen as an adequate underpinning philosophy for this study as it argues for the compatibility of quantitative and qualitative methods.

2.2. Methodological foundations and use of theory

This project applies an *explorative approach*, which is incorporated in the theoretical considerations presented in the following chapter as well. Understanding the role of social media during the travel planning process clearly requires an explorative approach. Moreover, the relationship between travelers’ social media usage and its possibilities for official tourism promotion will be identified through an exploratory approach as well. However, as it will be presented later the empirical data gathering process followed an

explanatory aspect as well, by introducing semi-structured interviews, which aimed to deeper understand Danes' social media usage by reflecting on and explaining the conducted quantitative surveys (see Fig.2.1). Therefore, in this project an exploratory survey was used to understand how and which type of the social media is used in travel planning, following with an explanatory interview that revealed knowledge more in depth about the perception of social media, the use of it in the different planning phases and about its impact on the purchase decision.

By choosing the *sequential model of travel planning process* (see Chapter3) as *the project's main theoretical framework*, the researcher has adapted the ontological stand-point which is the base of behaviorism (cognitive psychology) regarding people's travel planning as a rational act which follows five consecutive steps. However, it has to be criticized that travel planning can happen randomly and also the purchase itself can be an impulsive process. As Decrop & Snelders (2004) argue, reflecting on their research among Belgian travelers that travel planning phases do not particularly follow a certain order and travelers often make spontaneous purchase decisions which are not preceded by the suggested three pre-trip phases. They discuss that travel planning is more like a random order process, which involves a lot of adaptability and opportunism due to the situational and social variables. Therefore, this project's chosen rational framework should not be understood as a rigid framework, but more as an adaptable process which not necessarily goes through on each proposed steps and can be adapted to the given situation, however, it gives a frame, a starting point for the discussion. This starting point is that the media-induced images are dominant in travel planning process, and thus, the project is based on the hypothesis that social media plays an important role during the travel planning phases.

Regarding the above discussion this project applied the proposed rigid framework of travel planning by Cox et al. (2009) during the Phase1 of the methodological approach (see Fig.2.1), by designing the quantitative questionnaires about social media usage according to the sequential phases of the travel planning process. While the adaptable understanding of travel planning conveyed by Decrop & Snelders (2004) was used in Phase2 during the semi-structured interviews, where the respondents could freely describe their planning process and within that the use of social media, therefore, allowing them to reflect on their situational and social circumstances.

2.3. Research design

In accordance with the pragmatist paradigm this research uses a mixed methods design, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for gathering empirical data, which can be defined as follows:

“A mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research.” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, pg. 212)

As Creswell (2003) argues, mixed methods design is a very useful approach to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods, thus strengthen each other. A mixed methods design was selected for this project's research due to the multiple research questions and due to those different natures. Moreover, it was chosen because by applying a mixed methods design the researcher is able to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of meaning of a phenomenon for individuals (Creswell, 2003). The aim of this project is to understand fully the phenomenon of how people use social media in their travel planning, and how the official tourism promotion could apply social media in their promotional activities, in accordance with travelers' travel information search process. Thus, a cross-sectional quantitative method was chosen and a survey was conducted to research Danes' information search regarding travel planning and the role of social media in this process. However, to reflect deeper on the role of social media for the individual travelers, semi-structured interviews were conducted among a few respondents who have been participating in the survey.

Before any further explanation how this project was carried out, the following figure is proposed for better understanding the project's overall methodological structure:

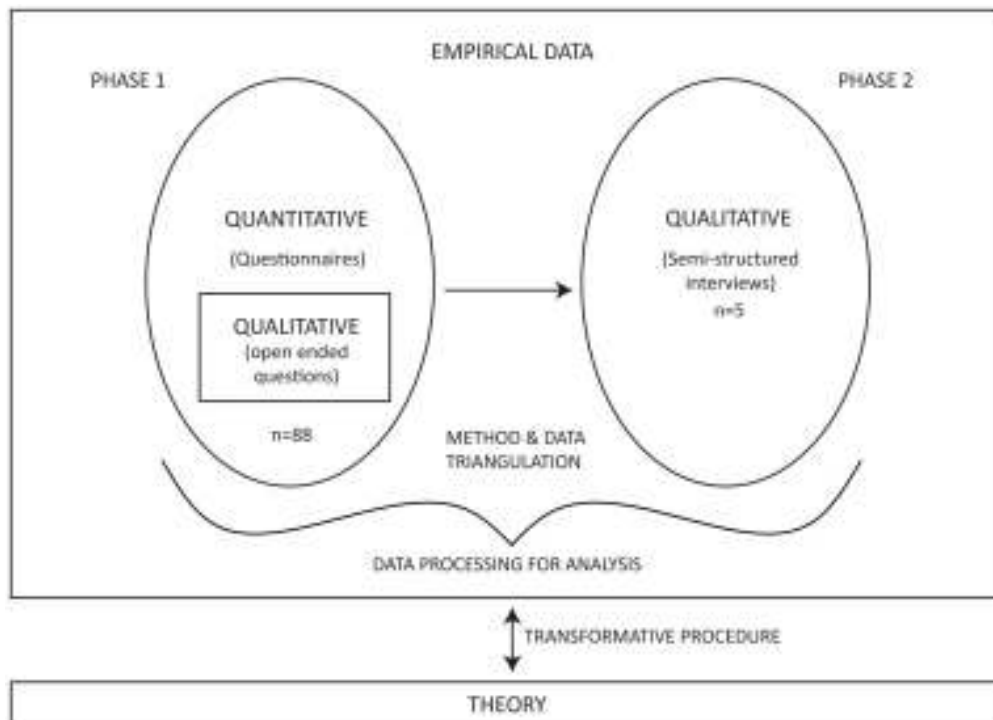


Fig. 2.1 Project's methodological structure

As the above figure shows (Fig.2.1) a *sequential procedure* was applied (Phase1-Phase2) during the empirical data collection, to elaborate with the qualitative method on the data collected through the quantitative surveys. By starting with the quantitative method the aim was to test on relevant theories of information search and social media perception and usage (see Chapter 3). Following up by qualitative method, the intention was to explore and explain in detail with a few individuals their social media usage during travel planning, therefore, to reflect upon the first and the second research question (RQ1-RQ2). However, the qualitative interviews were also conducted to understand how Danish people feel about official destination promotions presented in social media (RQ3), and together with the survey results to able to identify the potentials of social media in tourism promotion. The below figure shows how the quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to answer the different research questions (Fig.2.2).

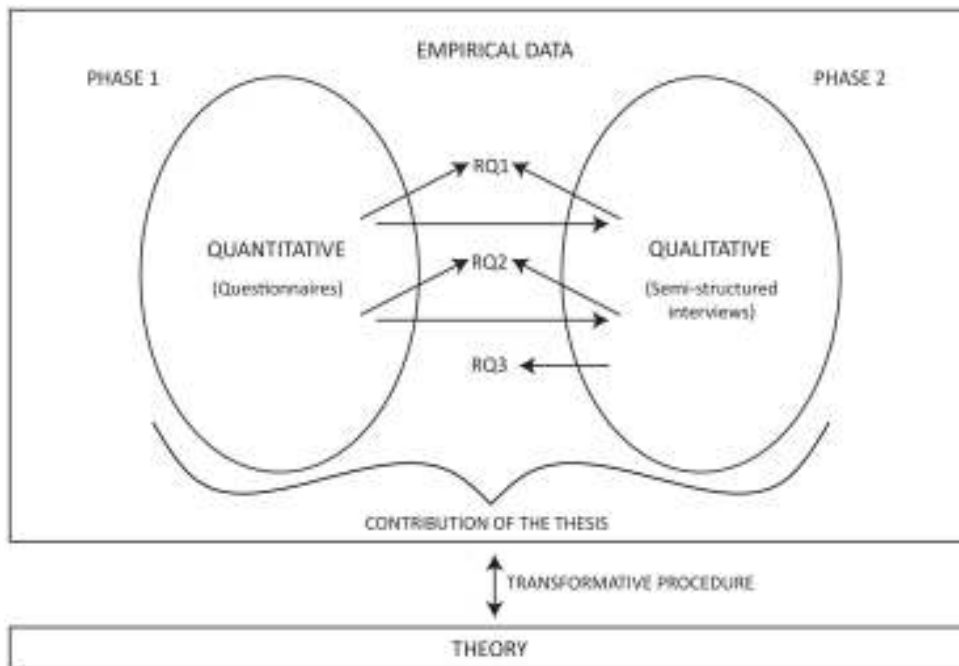


Fig.2.2 Application of the different methods in answering the project's research questions

The terms *triangulation* refers to the combinations and comparisons of several data sources, data collection and analysis procedures and research methods in the same study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The triangulation in this project is seen as a mean to produce more complete and fuller picture (through the sequential approach) of travelers' social media usage. Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003) argue that if the quantitative and qualitative methods are combined to answer a certain research question the results may converge, thus leading to the same conclusion, those may be complementary to each other or the qualitative and quantitative results may be contradictory. For this project it would be crucial for the purpose of complementary results to gain additional empirical data by using the qualitative semi-structured interview, thus, providing a full empirical basis for the analysis.

The project applies a *transformative procedure*, where the theory is used as an overarching perspective within the methodological design. The relationship between the presented theoretical concepts and the empirical data in this project cannot be described as purely deductive or inductive. On the one hand the project's problem statement is deducted from the reviewed theory, which then drives the process of gathering the quantitative data, resulting in empirical hypotheses, while on the other hand adding qualitative method to the process aims to understand certain areas of the problem statement, where the qualitative

induction will play an important role. However, due to the usage of a combined research method, in this project the theory should be seen as an overall guidance for the empirical data collection and process. As Creswell (2003) argues the theoretical lens provides a framework for the topics of interest, the applied methods for data collection and the outcomes awaited by the research. As it was previously discussed, in this project the theory of travel planning process is the theoretical lens that frames the methodological design and also the discussion. Moreover, theories on information search and social media usage also designed the way how the questionnaires were built up. By including demographic questions or a question regarding the trip purpose meant to seek whether the different tourist or product characteristics influence the tourists' information search strategy and the use of social media. Proposing questions where the respondents were asked to rank the various information sources according to the frequency of usage and usefulness aimed to research whether social media is seen as decisive or contributory source (Chapter3, Fig.3.5). Besides, the reviewed theories on social media, such as the four fundamental benefits that drive consumers in using social media or how social media influences travelers (Chapter5) designed the questions during the qualitative interviews (see App.4).

2.3. Empirical data

2.3.1. Quantitative data

The project's quantitative data collection took place at the Copenhagen Airport during the months of April- May 2010 by distributing surveys among the travelers to Budapest. The aim to select travelers flying from Copenhagen to Budapest as the base for the quantitative data collection was that they have recently conducted a travel planning process and also in regards to Hungary as a destination. Moreover, from a practical perspective by conducting the questionnaires among the flying travelers one can have access to a large amount of data. The principal aim was to survey among the travelers of both the Malév (Hungarian Airlines) and Norwegian Airlines (low cost carrier) flights, however, after experiencing the clientele of the different flight companies, the researcher has chosen to work further with the travelers of Norwegian Airlines, as the percentage of choosing Hungary as a final travel destination, and also the percentage of Danish travelers was significantly higher than among the travelers of Malév. Due to the airport's security restrictions, the survey could only be

conducted among the checked-in travelers, who were still on ground, which resulted in a short timeframe for conducting the survey.

Sampling

Numerous probability indicators can have influence on how the survey questionnaires are sampled (Bryman, 2008). The questionnaires of this project were sampled based on some predetermined types of probabilities that gave way to approach the aimed group of audience, which in this case were mainly the younger age groups of Danes (20-59 years) who travel to Hungary. Though, as it was argued the age of the respondents should not be seen as a strict requirement when selecting the sample, as the behavior patterns using social media will give the base for the analysis.

The targeted respondents were selected in no particular numerical order, but mainly randomly pointed out among the travelers to Budapest. In order to stick to the project's research focus mainly younger travelers were approached in a random selection, and pre-test questions concerning their nationality and final travel destination were proposed in order to minimize the sampling error.

The sample size of the survey was not predetermined. Several circumstances, such as the volcanic ash which blocked the aviation during the data collection period, the demographic features of the respondents (age, nationality) or their willingness to participate in the survey were all obstacles during the data collection. However, during the six data collection occasions 88 questionnaires were collected among the travelers of which four were discarded as three travelers were in transit, and one traveler was Hungarian. Among the respondents a couple of Swedish residents can be found as well, mainly from Malmö area, which data was decided to be kept for the analysis. This decision was made because for a DMO, in this case for the HNTÖ it is better to have an understanding of social media usage among a wider population, thus, among the Øresund residents, and also due to the structural setup of HNTÖ, as the HNTÖ head office of Northern-Europe in Stockholm closely cooperates with the tourist information office in Copenhagen (Ungarns Turistkontor) when designing their marketing activities towards the Nordic markets. Thus, it will be suggested that the sampling framework of the project has turned to follow to sample among the Øresund residents, and not just clearly among the Danes. Hence all together 84

questionnaires were selected for the analysis, where the empirical data obtained through the questionnaires was examined based on statistical calculations using the SPSS program.

Questionnaire instrumentation

The questionnaire was designed in a way to *shed light on the project's first and second research questions*, thus on the role of social media in the travel planning process, and the perception of the content presented in social media sites (Fig.2.2). The empirical data gathered from the questionnaire together with the data collected during the interviews will also help to identify potentials of social media in tourism destination promotion.

Due to the first research question, questions regarding the frequency of usage of the various information sources (q1) or social media sites (q2) and concerning the usage of social media in the different travel planning phases (q3) were integrated in the questionnaire. Regarding the second research question, the perceived content of social media, a close-ended question was proposed (q4). Moreover, due to the study's focus, to identify the potentials of social media in destination promotion, study specific questions, regarding the usefulness of different information sources during travel planning to Hungary (q5), the different social media sites' usage during the travel planning phases (q6) and an open question requiring evaluation of the content posted on social media sites about Hungary (q7) were proposed (see App.1).

To approach the project's research questions the *hypothesis* of media-induced images, also social media, play an important role in travel planning process was developed and questions according to this hypothesis were integrated in the questionnaire. Creswell (2003) argues that the hypotheses are predictions that the researcher holds about the relationship among variables. In the project questions regarding demographics, the purpose of the trip (section "About you") or a question concerning the perception of social media (q4) were included, assuming that those are the independent variables (Creswell, 2003) that probably affect the information search process or the usage of social media during travel planning. Designing hypotheses means also that predetermined questions were used in the survey according to the researcher's knowledge acquired through and deducted from the reviewed theories. Therefore, preset questions were integrated in the survey supposing which information

sources (q1) or social media sites (q2) would the travelers use during travel planning, how would they use the social media sites (q3) and why would they use those (q4).

These hypotheses were formulated *in closed and open questions*. In the case of the closed questions the respondents were presented with fixed alternatives from which they had to choose their answer. Using closed questions in the survey aimed to enhance comparability of the answers (Bryman, 2008) and also to maintain a fixed, structured approach. Different closed question structures were applied during the survey, ranging from questions designed in categorical scales format (yes/no format) (q4) to comparative rating scales (q1, q5) or Likert scale (q3) (Creswell, 2003), aiming to obtain a thorough knowledge of the role of social media in travel planning. At each questions (except q4) an open question was proposed in order to allow unusual responses or responses that the researcher may not have considered beforehand (Bryman, 2008). Moreover, the last question (q7) was clearly designed in an opened way to urge subjective opinions about the information posted on social media about Hungary.

The survey questions were formulated in an easy way with clear instructions; but the researcher was present during the survey conduction to clarify any possible doubts. Moreover, the survey was designed to be limited time-consuming (approx 5 min) bearing in mind the circumstances of the respondents, as they were approached just before their flight departure to Hungary.

2.3.2. Qualitative data

After conducting the surveys, the researcher still questioned the exact use of social media, how it is used, whether it is used alone or in combination with others or whether travelers do search on social media on purpose or while browsing the internet they come across with certain social media sites (RQ1). From the conducted survey it was clear why travelers would use social media, but the question remained whether their perception of the different social media sites would be different if those were connected with an official tourism organization (RQ2-RQ3). Therefore, due to the above mentioned it was necessary to elaborate on the data gathered from the surveys (Fig.2.2).

Conducting the qualitative interviews

The interviews were conducted shortly after the survey among those respondents who agreed to be contacted for an interview as well. The interviews were semi-structured qualitative interviews, where subject-based questions were proposed. The semi-structured but subject based structure, gave the interviewee the possibility to express himself quite freely and also gave the interviewer the possibility to pose questions arising during the interviews. The worksheet used for the interviews can be viewed in the App.4.

In the following the process of interviewing will be described inspired by Kvale's (1996) Seven Stages of an Interview Investigation. During the *Thematizing stage*, those research questions were determined where further data collection was needed after the survey conduction, or where the interview was seen as the only mean to answer the question (Fig. 2.2).

At the *Designing stage* the interviewees were selected among the survey respondents. Five interviewees were chosen as it was pre-assumed that their opinions could be of great value for this project due to their different demographic circumstances, such as age (ranging from 24-42 years), occupation or purpose of visit to Hungary. The interview questions related to the area of investigation were decided, where the questions were identical in all five cases to get a comparable data.

As the interview is an interpersonal situation (Kvale & Birkmann, 2009), during the *Interviewing* the interviewer has to create a setting where the interviewees feel safe enough to reflect on the subject freely. Thus, the interviewees were met in their natural or self-chosen surroundings which enabled the researcher to be greatly involved in the actual experiences of the interviewees (Creswell, 2003). The researcher introduced the project in more detail and made it clear what the interview was about and why it was necessary to conduct after the survey. The permission was asked to record the interview, thus, no data would get lost and in order work with the data later. The questions were short, opened questions, giving the interviewee the possibility to express his/her own perception and was only occasionally interrupted by the interviewer, if further explanation was needed. The "*qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured*" (Creswell, 2003, pg.181), in this project, therefore, as interviews were going along, the preset research questions got

refined, as the researcher learned how to ask those in order to get valuable data for the analysis. The opportunity of spontaneous questions was given, which made room for unexpected replies from the interviewee (Kvale & Birkmann, 2009).

In the *Transcribing* stage the empirical data gathered through the interviews was prepared for the analysis. Transcribed data tend to be concerned as solid empirical data (Kvale, 1996); thus, to convert the conducted interviews into valid data for the analysis, transcription were made. The researcher is well aware, that during transcription, a loss of the body language can happen and the intonations can be lost as well (Kvale & Birkmann, 2009). However, when a part of interview was considered as valuable for the analysis the researcher tended to give back the intentional meaning of the quote by taking into consideration the different intonations, pauses or utterances. The interviews can be found in the attached CD to the project. The last three stages of *Analyzing, Verifying and Reporting* (Kvale, 1996) regarding to this project's qualitative interviews will be discussed together with the quantitative data in the following.

2.3.3. Processing the collected empirical data

Creswell (2003) argues data analysis in mixed methods research relates to the strategy chosen for the procedures, which in this case is a sequential transformative procedure, thus, a theoretical perspective is guiding the data analysis (see Fig.2.1). Moreover, the data analysis occurs both within the quantitative and the qualitative approach and often happens between the two approaches as well. A priority was given to the analysis of quantitative data regarding the first two research questions; however, it was supported with the qualitative data. These questions were approached with a descriptive and inferential numeric analysis (Creswell, 2003) of the quantitative data using the statistical program of SPSS, which was further proceeded with a descriptive and thematic text analysis of the qualitative data. Regarding the third research question the qualitative information was emphasized, using description and thematic text analysis. However, to move towards the contribution of the project the weight was given equally to both approaches.

Quantitative data analysis

As already mentioned 84 questionnaires were decided to be kept for the analysis. The SPSS program was chosen for the data analysis due to the research questions' nature; in order to analyze the correlation between social media usage and its influencing variables and also due to the easier data processing.

To facilitate the quantitative data analysis all responses were coded according to the nature of the questions. The coding process in case of q1 and q5 had to be altered due to non responses or non rankings. At q1 seven possibilities were given to the respondents (App.1), of which six were decided to be coded as the majority of the respondents hardly pointed out "other" information sources they use. Moreover, despite of the clear instructions, a couple of respondents marked their replies with an X (App.2-3), which was decided to be ranked for an easier data coding, where the ranking was made by taking into consideration the experienced frequencies of the replies. In case of q5, however a ranking was required; the majority of the respondents placed an X and even only indicating three sources out of seven, therefore, these replies were coded as useful-not useful to facilitate the data analysis and interpretation.

The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics, such as frequencies or cross tabulations. While concerning the different influential factors of social media usage, e.g. age, gender or purpose of trip, inferential numeric analysis were used by applying Pearson correlation tests and Chi-Square tests. The data drawn from SPSS was merged together in other programs e.g. Excel or InDesign for its better presentation.

Qualitative data analysis

While transcribing the interviews, the qualitative data was coded by organizing it into several categories: according to the different travel planning phases, the different usage of social media or its different perceptions. These categories along the analysis got refined and the main themes of informativity, credibility or adequacy of the sources emerged. These themes were going along in the analysis as well. Only extracts of the interviews will be used in the analysis which content have been considered as supportive for this research.

Moreover, as the study uses a theoretical lens, in the analysis both quantitative and qualitative data was correlated with the presented theories, drawing conclusions about either those consistence or contrast between each other.

2.4. Validity, reliability and generalization

Validity raises the question if the individual steps of the research process provide what was intended to be researched. In order to produce a valid research, the theory was checked if it was relevant for answering the research questions, while the methodological approach, using mixed methods was thoroughly dealt with in order to approach the multifaceted problem area. The choice of respondents and interviewees were thought through and even pre-check questions were proposed referring to nationality or travel destination to obtain appropriate data. Concerning the quantitative data, to retain construct validity (Creswell, 2003) adequate measure of variables were chosen. Using adequate statistical analyzing methods for analyzing the data, in this project mainly the Chi-Square test, aimed to accomplish statistical conclusion validity (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, the applied method triangulation supported a more valid interpretation of the qualitative data. Decrop (1999) pointed out that triangulation limits personal and methodological biases, since each method has its own limits causing personal biases, therefore, applying method triangulation enhances a potentially more credible and valid interpretation. However, the method triangulation was not used at each research question. As Birkmann & Kvale (2009) argue there is a possibility for multiple interpretation of one meaning, which was tried to be minimized by preparing for the interview and working with the obtained data. However, the research subjects were not surveyed and interviewed in their mother tongue,² thus, linguistic misunderstandings may have occurred.

Reliability refers to the consistency of findings, whether the data collection and analysis is done correctly e.g. respondents could understand the questions, the data is encoded correctly and whether the results are reproducible (Birkmann & Kvale, 2009). The consistency of the findings was pointed out above, and moreover, by providing a quite

² which is also a foreign language for the researcher

transparent method description of this research one should obtain similar results thus, an assessment of reliability.

Bryman (2008) argues that by using probability sampling the findings will be representative of the population from which it was selected from, but might not be generalizable beyond that population. It can be argued that since the sample was randomly generated (only similarity among respondents was their travel to Hungary) the results can be **generalizable** to the population being studied (Øresund), but not beyond this population. As the sample consisted of residents from the Øresund region including Danes and also Swedes, encompassing ages ranging from 20-59 years, to clearly generalize among the young Danes, conducting further studies would be necessary.

2.5. Limitations

As above pointed out, the project is set in a specific context, concerning the Danes (Øresund residents) social media usage in travel planning, thus, is only valid within this context. The sample size of 88 respondents (84 processed) can be claimed as a limitation towards the study as well. Conducting the survey in April/May (mainly elder travelers were travelling), the time limit to fill out the survey, not the most relaxed surroundings and the willingness of respondents can be linked to the obtained sample size causing limitations for the project. Moreover, the survey design can be pointed out as another possible limitation, as e.g. it did not allow treating two sources equally or due to phrasing problems (even clearer instructions should have been given) where a few respondents' answers caused coding issues. In addition, the study presents Danes' social media usage and indicates possible directions of how the HNTD can benefit from the social media; however, to define clear promotional tools that involve social media a different survey design would be necessary.

3. Tourism behavior

This chapter will go into depth with the field of tourism behavior to give a theoretical foundation for this project's discussion and to enlighten the research questions. The chapter will start up with presenting the main concepts of consumer behavior in tourism and the characteristics of the different generational cohorts, with a focus on the Generation Y. Moreover, theories on tourism behavior regarding travel planning and concerning information search will be outlined.

Consumer behavior is a difficult area to research, even more in the tourism field where the purchase decisions are of emotional significance (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Purchasing a holiday generally involves a larger spend, but also provides the consumer with the possibility to escape from the everyday life, or in many cases with the major event of the year. The intangible nature of service products coupled with the high spend aspect of tourism will have significant affect on the consumer behavior causing high level of insecurity during the purchase process (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Thus the consumer will be highly interested and involved in the decision-making process, which will result in a high level of information search from several sources. The complexity of tourism behavior is shown in the below figure (Fig.3.1):



Fig.3.1 The complexity of consumer behavior in tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999; pg. 72)

During the complex tourist decision-making process several motivators and personal and external determinants influence the consumer behavior (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). By the *motivators* they understand those factors that motivate the consumer to wish to purchase a certain tourism product, such as personal, cultural, status, personal

development, emotional and physical motivators. However, these motivators might vary according to several factors, such as the traveler's personality, lifestyle, past experiences, travelling partner, demographic characteristics or the timing of the purchase decision.

Moreover, it can be argued that several motivators can influence the tourist behavior in the same time, as e.g. visiting friends and relatives (personal motivator) can have a relaxation angle (physical motivator) as well.

The *determinants* are those personal and external factors that determine the extent of their ability to purchase the desired product (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). The personal determinants can be certain circumstances (e.g. leisure time, health), attitudes and perceptions, knowledge of (e.g. destinations, products) or experience of (e.g. types of holidays), while the external determinants are factors such as views of friends, marketing activity of the tourism industry, the media or political, economic, social and technological factors.

It can be argued that as these motivators and determinants influence the tourist behavior as such, therefore, those can have a great impact on tourists' information search during travel planning, thus, on the usage of social media as well. Great importance will be given to the demographic background and personality trait in this project, as those factors possibly influence the tourists' motivation, and as Lou et al. (2004) argue those are also influential during information search. Moreover, among the determinants, the views of friends will play a significant role in this project as word of mouth is claimed to be clearly influential during travel purchase and also because social media is seen as a new form of WOM (Murphy et al. 2007).

3.1. Demographic characteristics in travel behavior

In the following the demographic attributes of the different generational cohorts regarding their travel behavior will be discussed, as it is pre-assumed that the demographic characteristics clearly influence the tourist behavior. Moreover, the tourism behavioral traits of Generation Y will be presented more in detail.

It is necessary to look into the generational characteristics as the project is aiming to understand the young Danes information search behavior and identify whether social media plays a different role in their travel planning than among the older generations. However, the project is not strictly considering the age as a variable regarding the use of social media during travel planning, but also the travelers' behavior patterns which gives a possibility to research beyond the specific segment of Generation Yers.

Generational cohorts share a common and distinguishing social character due the shared experiences and conditions through the time, where their unique values, attitudes and behaviors have an significant impact of how a generation will react to different public and social circumstances (Benckendorff et al., 2010). However, there is no absolute harmony of how to classify the different generational cohorts regarding the birth dates; but many generational theorists define the generation born between 1943-1960 as Baby Boomers, between 1961-1981 as Gen Xers and the generation born between 1982-2002 as Gen Yers. Moreover, Generation Y is often understood in a broader range with the birthdates between 1977-2003 (Benckendorff et al., 2010). Thus, according to these generation segments the project's respondents can be mainly grouped into the Gen Xers and Gen Yers (see Respondent profile, Chapter6.).

The Generation Xers are often characterized as pessimistic and depressed, while the Generation Yers frequently portrayed as conventional, confident, expert novices and interactive (Benckendorff et al., 2010). The below Fig.3.2 illustrate the differences of the generations incorporating the diverse attributes of generational types.

Factors	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Generation Y
Beliefs and values	Work ethic, security	Variety, freedom	Lifestyle, fun
Motivations	Advancement, responsibility	Individuality	Self-discovery, relational
Decision making	Authority, brand loyalty	Experts, information, brand switchers	Friends, little brand loyalty
Earning and spending	Conservative, pay upfront	Credit savvy, confident, investors	Uncertain spenders, short-term wants, credit-dependent
Learning styles	Auditory, content-driven, monologue	Auditory or visual dialogue	Visual, kinaesthetic, multi-sensory
Marketing and communication	Mass	Descriptive, direct	Participative, viral, through friends
Training environment	Classroom style, formal, quiet atmosphere	Round-table style, planned, relaxed ambience	Unstructured, interactive
Management and leadership	Control, authority, analysers	Cooperation, competency, doers	Consensus, creativity, feelers

Fig.3.2 Differences between selected generations (Pendegast, 2009 in Benckendorff et al., 2010, pg. 4)

The above figure shows clear differences between Generation X and Generation Y, of which several factors can play an important role in their tourism behavior as well. The different motivations, either individuality (Gen X) or relational (Gen Y) can also be related to the type of the trip they would take; as in case of the Gen Yers it can be argued that socializing e.g. making new friends could be of their motivator, then in the case of Gen Xers who tend to be more individually focused. Knowing the different generational cohort's decision-making is of great importance. Whether friends and relatives (Gen Y) are considered as the most influential during decision making, or the individual prefers to rely on experts (Gen X) such as travel agents or guide books, arguably will have significant impact on the social media (as a new type of WOM) usage as well. Furthermore, the different generational approaches towards marketing and communication, whether they prefer direct marketing such as catalogues, promotional letters (Gen X) or are fond of participative, communication and marketing styles such as travel forums or blogs (Gen Y) would clearly influence whether social media can play a role as a marketing or a communication channel towards them.

Benckendorff et al. (2010) describes Gen Yers as the hero generation with focus on friends, fun and digital culture and where the members of the generation are relaxed, conservative, educated, impatient, multi-taskers and team-members. They claim that this generation is the first generation born in the Information Age which results in a native comfort level with information and communication technologies; hence, Generation Yers are often called digital natives. Howe (2006, in Benckendorff et al., 2010) formulates seven core traits that

represent the unique character of this generation: special, sheltered, confident, team oriented, conventional, pressured and achieving. By special he refers to their digital capabilities, they are sheltered by their parents and community and confident in that sense that they accept uncertainty and so far they have experienced a good economic base. Furthermore, they are conventional in certain areas of life, such as regarding work-life balance or carrier. They are pressured in time-wise as they are always busy and achievement is of great importance for them, which also shows that they are the most education minded among all generations (Howe, 2006, in Benckendorff et al., 2010). It has to be argued that all these generational traits have an important impact in shaping their behavior, thus their travel behavior as well, which is detailed in the below figure (Fig.3.3).

Features	Explanation of feature	Mapping against generational trait
Travelling more often	Average number of trips taken has increased in the last 5 years	Confident
Exploring more destinations	Take more trips outside the local region and explore new areas of the world	Pressured
Spending more on travel	As a proportion of their income, spend more than any other group on international travel	Achieving
Booking more over the Internet	Early adopters of new travel technology	Confident
Experience hungry	Want a range of different experiences often involving everyday life and culture of places visited, including contact with local people	Special
Information hungry	Consult a greater number of information sources to plan trips	Team-oriented
Intrepid travellers	Are not deterred by problems such as terrorism, natural disasters and epidemics – mitigate these risks through information	Achieving
Getting a lot out of their travel	Travel makes them want to travel more, serving as a stimulus to learn and develop, including developing greater cultural understanding	Pressured
		Achieving
		Conventional
		Team-oriented

Fig. 3.3 Y- Generation travelers mapped against generational traits. (Beckendorff et al., 2010, pg. 11)

As the above figure shows several features characterize the travel behavior of Gen Yers, such as they travel more often, spend more money during travelling, they often use the internet for booking their travel, keen on new experiences, are brave travelers and they consult a wide range of travel information sources, which features can also be linked to the claimed generational traits. However, the question can be raised whether these generational traits and features might only just describe this demographic segment of Generation Yers, or

whether these “stereotypes” can also portray certain behavioral types, where the individuals do not necessarily belong to or are not defined by any age groups.

Thus, the younger Danes’ social media usage in travel planning will be analyzed on the one hand by assuming that certain above claimed generational features can play an influential role such as being digital experts, consulting a wide range of information sources or relying more on friends and relatives, and on the other hand also keeping in mind that these features may also shape the behavior of those travelers who actually do not belong to the Generation Y.

3.2. Tourists’ travel planning behavior

This section will concern the tourist behavior regarding travel planning. Moreover, the role of information during the travel planning process will be briefly discussed giving a base for the following chapter.

As it was already mentioned tourism decisions involve the consumer in a high-risk decision making process due to the tourism product’s intangible nature and social implications of its purchase, therefore, the consumer will be highly interested and involved in the entire decision making process. Travel decision-making has been presented as a long planning process involving extended problem-solving (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). Many attempts were made to model the tourist behavior during the purchase process, where those models can be rooted back to the general consumer behavior models (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). However, they argue that many consumer behavior models adapted to tourism appear to be linear and rather simplistic, compared to the general consumer behavior models as they tend to view tourists as a homogenous group, they presume a high level of rationality and fail recognize the impact of motivators and determinants on the purchase decision. However, despite of the claimed weaknesses existing studies on the process of travel planning and destination choice tended to rely on the general consumer decision-making model, which suggests five key stages (Cox et al., 2009). These five stages when adapted to a tourism context would follow three trip phases, the pre-trip, during the trip and the post-trip phase in a linear way (Fig.3.4).



Fig.3.4 The travel planning process (Cox et al., 2009, pg. 745)

According to the proposed model, travelers during the pre-trip phase would go through on three phases by recognizing the need or the desire for vacation, then starting to search for information and followed by evaluating the different alternatives. During trip phase, the purchase decision would take place, therefore, choosing between the alternatives, which would be followed with the travel experience. At the Post-trip phase the travel satisfaction outcome and evaluation would take place (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Swarbrooke & Horner's (1999) criticism towards consumer behavior models, supposing rational decision making, can be raised in the case of this model as well. They argue that rational decision making is limited in tourism mainly due to the incomplete information available to the majority of the tourists and because tourists are influenced by their own opinions and perceptions which might be irrational. Decrop & Snelders (2004) also argue that travelers during their travel planning might not follow all steps of the travel planning process in the predicted order. They claim that due to the individual differences, the contingency of decision-making and the adaptability of the traveler one should assume different decision making processes in tourism. They point out that due to the strong influence of situational and social variables decision making should be seen as an adaptable and an opportunistic process, which departs from the rational, problem-solving understanding of the travel planning. It can be argued that vacation decision-making is often fostered incidentally, such as in the case of last minute trips, where the decision making is made spontaneously following the contextual contingencies and without going along the three pre-trip phases, therefore, without following a rational behavior scheme. Decrop & Snelders (2004) even add

that adaptability and opportunism can be related to emotional triggering factors, where the spontaneous, sudden decisions may result from a sudden impulse, a sudden pleasure or a sudden feeling (falling in love).

Although, travel planning might not particularly follow the proposed sequential order, according to Decrop & Snelders (2004) a certain evolution can be seen in the travel decision-making. They have observed that a planning evolution takes place during travel planning, meaning that dreams are moving towards reality with an increasing commitment to make a choice. They pointed out that this shift from ideas to real plans is felt more strongly concerning certain decisions, such as destination, travel period or duration and travel party. Thus, it has to be argued that regarding certain travel decisions some kind of structural behavior can be seen, but might not strictly in the proposed rational framework of the travel planning process due to situational and social variables. As it was already mentioned this above presented model of travel planning process, also by acknowledging its weaknesses, has been chosen as the overall theoretical framework for this study, where the framework should not only be understood in its rigid nature, but more as a framework that also gives space for adaptability according to the circumstances.

Regarding the complex decisions and extended problem solving during the travel planning process Pan & Fesenmaier (2006) discuss that that travelers tend to cover 10 key sub decisions related to the trip, and search information according to that. Those sub decisions are: travel partners, destinations, required expenses, activities, attractions, transportation, travel date, length of the trip, accommodation and meals. They even categorize these sub decisions into core, secondary and en-route decisions, where destination choice, travel partner, budget, date/length of the trip are claimed to be the core decisions, while secondary decisions are flexible decisions mainly concerning selection of activities or attractions to visits. By en route decisions they mean those decisions which are made during the trip and can be considered as secondary decisions. However, it has to be argued that all these decisions can be shaped by the travelers' motivators and determinants, therefore, giving higher importance to certain decisions.

Tourism information sources have been identified as a key factor influencing destination choice (Chung & Buhalis, 2008) thus; it is understandable why travel information is given a central role in the tourism decision-making models. Murphy et al. (2007) argue that the

information searches happen in various stages of the decision-making process where the reviewed information contributes to take specific decisions and to develop destination images.

In order to reduce the risk of making a poor destination decision, travelers usually search and review several forms of information early in the travel decision making process (Cox et al., 2009). Seabra et al. (2006) add that information search in the pre-purchase phase strongly influences the overall decision, as it has a great impact on consumers' images and expectations. Moreover, travelers would use different types of information sources depending on which phase of the travel planning process they are in (Cox et al, 2009; Murphy et al., 2007). As planning a trip includes a *"temporal, dynamic, successive and multistage contingent decision process"* (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002 in Gretzel & Yoo, 2008 pg. 37) it can be assumed that information needs and strategies would vary according to the different phases, which can be also related to the different activities the different phases encompass, such as preparing, experiencing or evaluating the trip. Furthermore, Pan & Fesenmaier (2006) argue that the information search in the different phases follows a hierarchical structure, due to the complex trip-planning problem. They point out in their study that travelers' mental model is constantly changing during the trip planning, therefore; they deal with different chapters, where in each chapter one facet of the trip plan is solved, and where the decision made in an earlier stage limit the scope of following points. Or by other words, once the destination is decided, another facet of the trip would emerge such as accommodation, which would become central for the information search. The process would keep on going until all aspects of the trip planning are satisfied or the traveler comes across with obstacles as e.g. exhaustion or lack of relevant information (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006).

As the above discussion shows, due to the complexity of the decisions involved in travel planning, which can be related to the nature of tourism product and the social implications involved to its purchase; information search during travel planning is an important, determinative part of the travel planning process. Therefore, and due to the project's aim to understand the Danes' information search and the possible role social media can play in that, it is necessary to further discuss the information search process during travel planning.

3.3. Tourist information search

In this section the second key stage of the travel-planning process, travelers' information search and its characteristics will be further discussed.

Understanding how tourists seek and acquire information in today's dynamic consumption environment is really important for marketers to design effective communication strategies and service delivery (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). They argue that it is during the information search process when marketers can influence travelers' purchase decisions.

Moreover, from the travelers' perspective information search is a really important part of their travel planning process as well. Due to the service nature of the tourism product, as it cannot be tested or tried beforehand the importance of searching information about the product in order to be able to make purchase decisions is even greater than in other industry sectors.

Relevant research on information search has been focusing on macro-level analysis, such as different needs, determinants, antecedents and outcomes (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Fodness & Murray, 1999; Beldona et al. 2009, Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Fall, 2000). It is commonly acknowledged in the academia that the decision-making and the information search start with need recognition, such as recognizing various functional and hedonic needs, however, several models were proposed with different stages (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006) of which this project will make use of the proposed five-stage travel planning process. It has to be noted here that the information search process obviously is an active, incorporated part of the travel planning process.

Given the vast amount of information available by multiple sources to aid trip planning, consumers can often be overloaded and feel overwhelmed before finding the information they have searched for. As Choi et al. (2007) argue consumers will filter out using their cognitive system the irrelevant or untargeted information and those will have only little impact on them. Therefore, it has to be argued that for marketers or other information providers it is extremely important to provide relevant information in order to reach the travelers and satisfy their information need. However, the question of what information can be considered as relevant for the traveler can be raised here.

3.3.1. Modeling information search

Several researches were made on the factors that potentially influence tourists' information search behavior. Many researchers concluded that information search can be conceptualized as several interrelated activities, however, only a few attempts were made to model the relationship of these factors, such as Fodness & Murray's (1999) notable and tested model (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004), which is one of the most quoted models in the academia of tourist information search behavior. The model differentiates three different tourist information search strategies, namely spatial, temporal and operational, and moreover, it reveals three forces that drive individuals to develop their unique information search strategies, such as search contingences, individual (tourist) characteristics and behavioral search outcomes (see Fig.3.5).

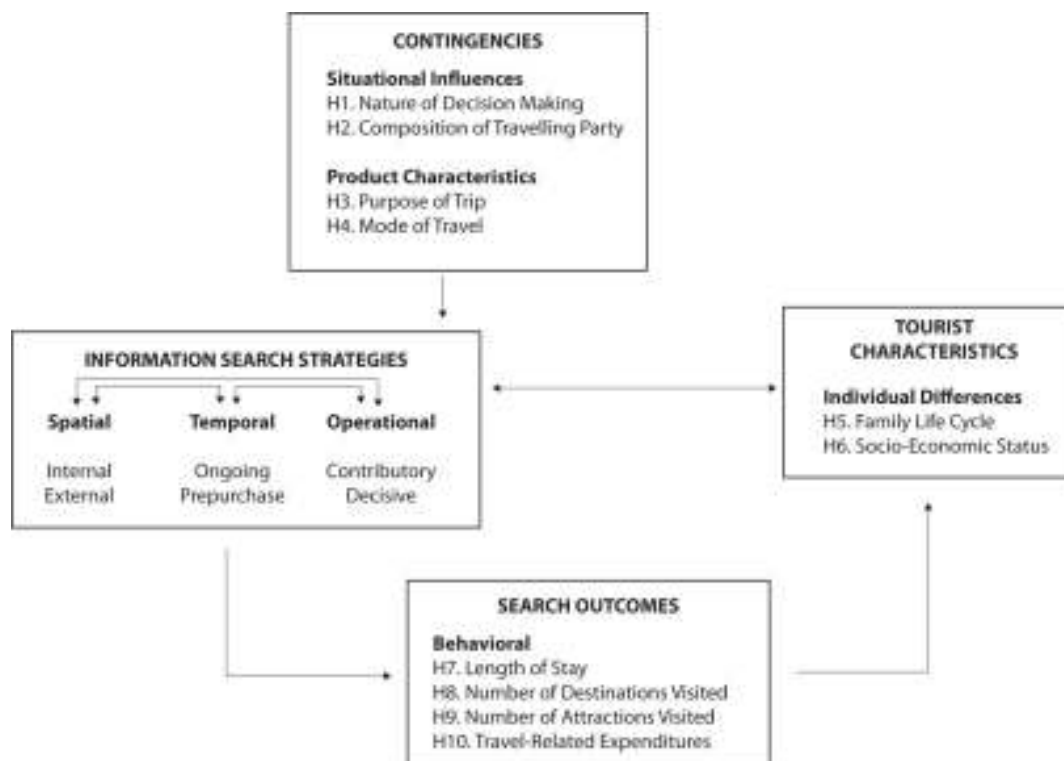


Fig.3.5 Model of the tourist information search strategy process. (Fodness & Murray, 1999)

3.3.2. Information search strategies

The three distinct strategies of information search refer to the dimension of the information search. As Fodness & Murray (1999) argue, the *spatial dimension* is related to the locus of the search activity, where the internal information is originating from one's memory or experience, while the external refers to information acquire from external sources, from one's environment. However, it has to be discussed here, that as the internal information

search can also refer to the individual's accumulated knowledge that was previously acquired from external sources, the line between external and internal information sources might become quite fine. Fall (2004) discusses that the external information search is a motivated and conscious decision, when consumers seek for new knowledge. While Gursoy & McCleary (2004) see a priority in using internal and external sources, as they argue that if the internal search provides sufficient information for making a trip decision, consumer will likely not engage themselves searching in external information sources. The question can be raised whether WOM, claimed as probably the most influential information source (See Chapter 4), belong to the internal sources, therefore, whether it is already part of the individual's accumulated knowledge or to the external sources, so the friends are consulted only if the consumer cannot recall any relevant information from his experiences.

The *temporal dimension* can be understood in two ways, as ongoing, where the individual is building up knowledge for an undetermined future purchase decision, or as pre-purchase, when the information search is taking place as a response to an actual purchase decision (Fodness & Murray, 1999). It has to be argued here, that there might be an overlap between the two categories, as might be that the ongoing information search, such as browsing of information can turn into a pre-purchase type of information search, when the individual came across accidentally with certain information that raises his interest highly and proceeds forward to purchasing.

According to Fodness & Murray (1999) the third, *operational dimension* reveals the way of search and focuses on the particular sources used and their usefulness for problem solving and decision making. The contributory sources are used in combination with other information sources contributing to the trip planning, while the decisive sources can be used as sole sources on certain decisions. The aim of this paper would be also to research whether social media sources are used among Danes as contributory sources or maybe in certain decisions travelers even use them as decisive sources.

3.3.3. Factors that influence the information search

Fodness & Murray (1999) differentiate three groups of forces that drive individuals for searching information, such as contingences, tourist characteristics and search outcomes (see Fig.3.5). By contingences they distinguish two factors, the situational influences and product characteristics. The *situational influences* are arising from factors that are relatively

independent of consumer and product characteristics, such as physical surroundings, social settings or time. Fodness & Murray (1999) argue that while only few evidence affirm the influence of these situational variables; the nature of decision making and the traveling party is clearly influencing the information search strategy. The nature of decision making, whether it is a routine, a limited or an extended problem solving will affect the information search strategy (Fodness & Murray, 1999). It is quite apparent that if one visits friends and relatives for the second or the third occasion, the information search process will not be that deep and detailed, and the necessary decisions will be taken quickly. An extended problem solving, therefore, is needed when e.g. one is planning to take a first –time vacation to certain destinations of which he is unfamiliar with.

Furthermore, the traveling party, whether it is e.g. a family holiday or couples travelling without children obviously influences the information search strategy, as in the former case due to the children requires different planning than the latter.

Product characteristics can be understood as the purpose of the trip (such as leisure, business or visiting friends and relatives) or the mode of the travel (Fig.3.5). Fodness & Murray (1999) argue that the purpose of the trip is perhaps the most influential on the tourists' behavior as clear differences can be seen regarding to information search and purchase behavior. Here it has to be argued that the product characteristics are going hand-in-hand with the situational influences, and vice-versa, as they cannot be separated from each other. The purpose of the trip also defines the nature of the decision-making, the mean of travel and even the traveling party.

The second group of forces that influence the information search strategy according to the model of Fodness & Murray (1999) are the tourist characteristics. They suggest that *family lifecycle* and the *socioeconomic status* has an influence on the choice of information strategy. Within the same tourist characteristics categorization Lou et al. (2004) claim demographic background, personality trait and family decision role as factors that possibly influence tourists' information search behavior. Choi et al. (2007) even add family decision role to the factors that potentially influence tourists' information search behavior.

Age as a demographic factor can play a significant role in travel planning and information processing as well, where the information source preferences of the different generational cohorts, particularly of the Gen X and Y were already discussed. Regarding tourist characteristics, Fall (2000) discusses strong relationship between individuals' personal values

and the information sources used. She also argues that values do not usually follow demographics, are context-specific, are slow-changing not as attitudes or opinions that tend to shift and do not predict all purchase behaviors. However, values have closer relationship with services and products that have meanings attached to them, which can be certain lifestyle including activities such as travel or media choice (Fall, 2000). In her study she reveals the relationship between three personal values factors, the hedonic, interpersonal and achievement and the choice of travelers' information source choice. The hedonic values factor showed considerable positive correlation between new media, interpersonal and organizational sources, the interpersonal values factor indicated significant positive relationship between interpersonal, new media and journalism sources, while the achievement values factor strongly correlated with journalism and advertising sources. One can argue here that the values do not just influence the information source choice, but the information search strategy itself, as the values influence the personality, the behavior of the individual, therefore, the behavior towards travel planning and information processing as well.

The third influential forces on information search strategy according to the model of Fodness & Murray (1999) are the search outcomes, more precisely behavioral factors regarding the *length of the stay*, the *number of destinations or attractions visited* and the *travel related expenditures* (Fig3.5). They argue that a higher level of information search is positively associated with longer stays, with the increasing number of destinations or attractions (more complex travel), and moreover, if the travel costs are higher, travelers tend to engage themselves in a higher level of information search.

Gursoy & McCleary (2004) in their integrative, however, not tested model of tourists' information search behavior suggest that the information search likely to be influenced directly by the perceived cost of internal and external search, either the time spent, financial cost and effort required and the level of involvement. It has to mentioned, that using social media can be considered as a low barrier information search, where the individual do not have to put that much effort and financial cost into finding relevant information. Gursoy & McCleary (2004) also discuss that the information search is influenced indirectly by familiarity, expertise, learning and previous visits. They argue that highly involved individuals with the destination tend to go through an extended problem solving process, using more

criteria, more external sources and engaging them in evaluating alternatives. Park et al. (2007) discuss that consumer's involvement with the product has a moderating effect on information processing and that the same information can be processed in different ways depending on consumer involvement. Thus, it is important to realize that involvement, as a tourist characteristic, clearly plays a key role in moderating the information processing.

3.3.4. Contemporary understanding of tourists' information search process

Even though the complexity and the multifaceted nature of the information search process were understood, researchers mainly focused on the information search behavior regarding the pre-purchasing decision (Choi et al., 2004). Fodness & Murray (1999) argue as well that tourist information search strategies are the result of a dynamic, complex process in which tourists use various types and amounts of information sources to respond to internal and external contingencies in travel planning; however, their model does not give suggestions for possible information search taken place after the purchase decision.

Lately, due to the complexity of travel products and travel-decision making, researchers started to adopt a process approach to understand the tourists' information search behavior. Choi et al., (2007) argue that travel decision making became understood as a dynamic ongoing process, and not as unchanging stages that end once the decision is made. Therefore, information behavior can be described as a continuous integration of new information into the existing decision. However, Jeng & Fesenmaier (2002) in Choi et al. (2007) explain that the information ongoing-search is a hierarchical process as well, where the decisions made in an earlier stage limit the extent of consecutive ones.

Hence, it has to be argued that the information acquired after the purchase decision plays an important role both for the travelers and therefore, the marketers as well as it might further enhance the expectations of the certain chosen destination and affirm the choice, or even after the trip as it might help to recall the obtained experiences or even stimulate for re-visiting the destination.

This chapter has revealed different approaches for understanding tourists' information search process and pointed out several factors which possibly influence the information search. The proposed framework of the travel planning process had a great impact in the survey design and will have in the analysis as well, as the social media usage will be

presented according to these travel planning phases. The model of Fodness & Murray (1999) will also play an important role when analyzing whether the various factors such as product or tourist characteristics play a role in the social media usage. Moreover, the possible influence of the perceived cost of information search will be analyzed concerning social media.

Though, many factors that influence the information search process was pointed out; the influential role of word-of-mouth was not emphasized in the presented model of Fodness & Murray (1999). As it will be pointed out, WOM can be interlinked with social media, thus it is necessary to present its concept to understand its possible influential role and to make a correlation with the social media usage during the information search process.

4. From WOM to eWOM

This chapter will present WOM (word-of-mouth) briefly as a source for travel information due to two important discussions. WOM is claimed to be one of the most influential and useful source in tourists' travel planning process and purchase decision (Cox et al, 2009; Fall, 2004; Compete, 2006; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Murphy et al. 2007; Litvin et al., 2008), and moreover, social media is seen as the new form of WOM, or the electric WOM, abbreviated such as eWOM (Gretzel, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008, Murphy et al. 2007). Therefore, discussing theories about WOM is clearly useful in order to understand the role of social media as a travel information source.

4.1. WOM as one of the most influential information source

The importance and the high influence of interpersonal communications have long been recognized in the tourism industry (Litvin et al, 2008). Many researchers concluded that WOM, which can be defined as informal communications between private parties regarding evaluation of goods and services (Arsal et al., 2008) is one of the most influential sources of information during tourists' travel planning process. Moreover they argue that the influence of WOM is different in each step of the consumer decision making process.

Cox et al. (2009) claim that travelers often rely on advice from friends and family, especially when the product is an intangible travel experience to a destination; as it is difficult to evaluate prior to its consumption. Gretzel & Yoo (2008) discuss that due to the intangible and experiential nature of service products, such as tourism products, WOM, as an information source tend to be used to lower perceived risk and uncertainty due to its perceived higher credibility.

Litvin et al. (2008) point out that because WOM recommendations lack commercial interests, as the information provider is not interested in getting financial gain by sharing information or experience, consumers tend to trust more on and influenced by this type of information than by more commercial sources. O'Connor (2008) also claims that WOM plays a pivotal role in overcoming the challenges of nowadays' overwhelming information which can lead to confusion, sub-optimum decisions or dissatisfaction of choices. He argues that WOM can help skeptic consumers to find credible, trustworthy information among the

increased quantity of information available, of which much is generated by marketers, who obviously stress the benefits of their products.

Litvin et al. (2008) describe the process of WOM by suggesting a conceptual model, which includes the actual academic debates about the course of action of word-of-mouth (Fig.4.1).

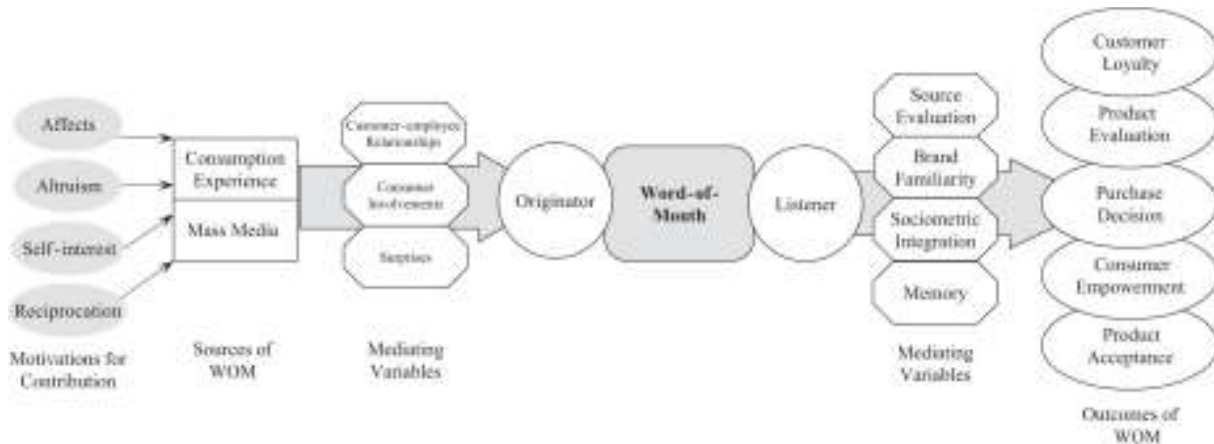


Fig.4.1 A conceptual model of word-of-mouth (Litvin et al., 2008, pg.460)

The model suggests that the process of WOM starts with the key WOM player as the opinion player, who is motivated to contribute, by interpreting the meaning of mass media or passing on his consumption experience to the listener or by other words, to the information seeker. However, there are several mediating variables in the process that influence the message originator and the listener as well, therefore, interpreting the information accordingly. Murphy et al. (2007) argue that many studies that research on WOM tended to focus on the WOM originated from friends and relatives, while ignoring the influence of other travelers. In their study conducted in North Queensland, Australia, they concluded that WOM is not homogenous and there are clear differences between the suggested four groups of travelers (those who used friends and relatives WOM, other travelers WOM, both WOM or no WOM) with respect to demographic characteristics, other information sources used, accommodation and transportation used, and the travel activities at the destination. Those respondents who used friends and relatives WOM generally seemed to be representing travelers visiting friends and relatives with higher income, and with repeating visits; thus, other travelers' WOM was not identified as information source. Those travelers who relied on WOM from other travelers appeared to show similarities to backpackers (though, not all of them were backpackers), younger travelers with lower income preferring

backpacker accommodation and taking longer trips. Therefore, they argue that the different WOM used in the pre-travel stage and during the travel is linked with the travel choices and the tourist behavior at the destination. Aarsal et al. (2008) take one step further, and they distinguish between WOM originated from residents of the destination and WOM gathered from other travelers. They argue that residents' recommendations were more influential regarding food, safety concerns and activities at the destination, while other experienced travelers were more influential concerning accommodation, transportation, exchange and travel itinerary.

Turning back to the suggested conceptual model of WOM, Litvin et al. (2008) argue that favorable WOM can result in increasing e.g. the probability of purchase, product acceptance or loyalty towards the certain product, while negative WOM has the contrary effect.

To summing up, it is really important for marketers to understand the role of WOM and acknowledge its importance and high influential value as tourist information source. It is essential to realize that the WOM originator, gains the WOM information from various sources, such as through the former experience with the destination or with the certain product or even through the media, therefore, during this WOM acquisition stage can the marketers or other tourism product or service providers influence his interpretation and understanding of the experience or the information or with by other words, influence the influencer, in order to nourish positive WOM.

4.2. Electronic word-of-mouth

With the improvement of internet technologies, more and more of travelers use the internet to search for travel related information and to actually plan their trip online. Several researchers pointed out the importance of web pages in all stages of the travel planning process, particularly during the information research phase (Cox et al., 2009). According to the study of a travel industry market research company, Plog Research approximately 95 % of internet browsers use the internet to seek information online during their travel planning process (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). According to the official Danish Statistics, 71 % of the population aged 20-39, and 65 % of the ones between 40-59 years used the Internet for services related to travel and accommodation in 2010 until now (App. 5), where this activity is among the most used activities conducted on the internet (Danmarks Statistik, 2010).

Furthermore, the advancing internet features have enabled new forms of communication platforms to further empower both providers and consumers to share information and opinion among each other. Thus, due to these internet-based features the word-of-mouth as an informational source could be facilitated in an electronic digitalized version, known as electronic WOM or eWOM.

Many researchers refer to social media as a new type of WOM or the eWOM. Gretzel et al. (2008) argue that consumer generated media can be understood as a new form of WOM that happens beyond the traditional social circles of consumers. Generally the social media information is produced by other travelers and not especially by the friends and relatives of the travelers. The question here remains whether, the other travelers' personality plays a role in the WOM influence, as while the consumer knows his friends and their preferences, therefore, he can judge whether their WOM applies to him or not, which in the case of other travelers WOM is more complicated. The discussion of Murphy et al. (2007) can be taken up here again, where they claim that the importance of WOM gathered from other travelers, influences the travelers' behavior in a different way than the friends and relatives WOM.

Litvin et al. (2008, pg. 461) define eWOM as:

"all information communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers."

They argue that eWOM includes communication both between producer and consumer and between the consumers themselves. However, as it was pointed out previously, consumers tend to rely more on those WOM recommendations where there is no commercial aim involved.

The appearance of eWOM created both challenges and opportunities as well. Dellarocas (2003, in Arsal et al., 2008) suggests that eWOM differs in three ways from the traditional WOM: (1) The scale of the eWOM is larger, due to the low-cost profile and the communication capabilities of the internet; (2) eWOM can be monitored and controlled by the organizations and (3) due to the lack of contextual cues and the unknown information

provider it makes more difficult to interpret a subjective information in an online environment.

In addition, eWOM has several different forms ranging from virtual opinion platforms to consumer portals, which might influence the consumer in his purchase decision in different ways. Litvin et al. (2008) suggest a typology of eWOM regarding the communication scope among the users and the level of interactivity (Fig.4.2).

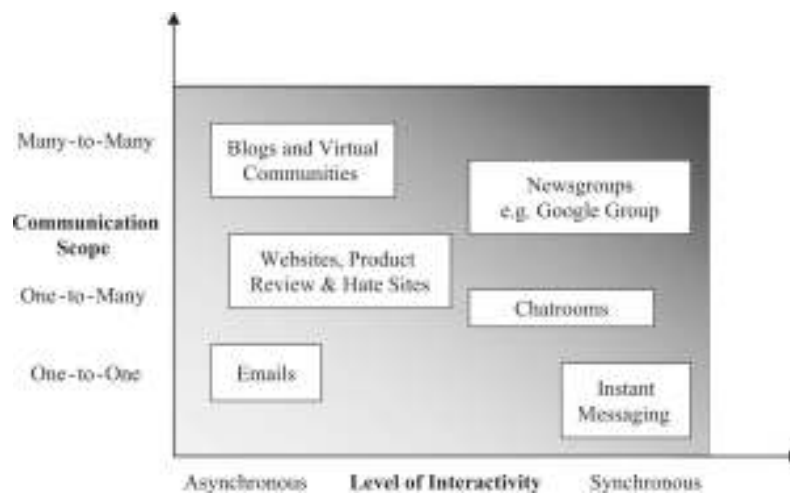


Fig.4.2 A typology of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) channels (Litvin et al., 2008, pg. 462)

It has to be argued here that despite of many academics see social media as the new form of eWOM (Gretzel, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008; Murphy et al; 2007), the two concepts cannot be clearly equated to each other, as the eWOM should be understood more as the content presented in social media pages. Furthermore, the different social media pages might not only be used for reviewing eWOM information but also e.g. to maintain contact with others. The use and the influence of the different social media forms on the travel planning process will be taken up in the next section.

The aim of this chapter was to introduce social media as a digitalized version of the influential WOM, therefore, giving a base for the following discussions about the role, the use, the influence of the social media in travel related decisions.

5. Social media in tourism

In the previous chapter WOM as one of the most influential tourist information source and its digitalized version the eWOM, of which the social media can be related to, were presented. This chapter will engage further with the topic of the social media, its features and its possible influential nature in the travel planning process.

Due to the development of internet technology and to cater the changing needs of today's consumer the online information search process is facilitated by several search engines. The consumers instead of entering through a site's homepage and browsing it, use particular search sites to have them transported directly to the required information. Furthermore, several technological improvements, known as Web 2.0 applications further develop this changing process of information search, by altering the origin of the information (O'Connor, 2008). The terms of Web 2.0 applications, UGC (user-generated content), CGM (consumer-generated media) or social media refer to the same new media, where the individual consumers are given the possibility to submit, review and to respond an online content (Cox et al., 2009). However, marketers face challenges to effectively measure the impact of social media on their marketing programs; evaluating its impact on individual buying decision can be a first step towards understanding its influence on the consumers (Compete, 2006). The research conducted by Compete (2006), a web analytics company, pointed out that 50% of online travel purchasers visit a forum, a message board or an online community in the process of buying a travel related product and moreover, one of three of these buyers stated that social media helped in their decision.

Indifferent from the statistics, it has to be acknowledged that the popularity of social media sites are increasing, therefore, the way of searching for travel related information and evaluating those is likely to be changing.

5.1. Social media features

O'Connor (2008) describes Web 2.0 sites as applications that share common features such as being participatory, inclusive, collaborative, user centric and information intensive, and furthermore, these sites influence how users create, share and use information. Moreover, Gretzel et al. (2008) argue that due to the search-engine friendliness, increased credibility, experiential properties and having no commercial interest in promoting the product,

consumer generated media is believed to have great influence in tourism. It has to be mentioned that social media adds on the positive features on the traditional WOM, by adding search engine friendliness and experiential feature.

The main difference between social media and other traditional forms of media lies in the direction of communication, as the content is generated by the consumer rather than by the marketer (Fernando, 2007). Furthermore, not just the direction of communication changes but it becomes a two-way communication as well as it allows interactivity, a peer-to-peer communication, rather than only providing a uni-directional communication.

Social media can take on several forms, such as wikis, blogs, photo sharing sites, reviews and rating, blogs or broadcasts (Gretzel et al. 2008). Carrera et al. (2008) categorizes the different social media sites according to its nature: blogs which can be understood as online journals or personal websites; users' comments and reviews, which resembles WOM such as TripAdvisor, Wikipedia, Flickr, YouTube and online social networks as MySpace, Facebook, Bebo. Another possible typology of eWOM according to the level of interactivity and the communication scope was presented in the previous chapter, which can be applied here as well (see Fig.4.2).

5.2. Social media usage

5.2.1. What influences the use of social media?

Several researchers (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Fall, 2004; Gretzel et al., 2008) argued that tourist characteristics influence the use of social media, of which a couple would be discussed here in more details, such as age, gender, nationality. Regarding the *age* a survey conducted by Compete (2006) among social media users suggests that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the consumers were between the ages of 25-54, which is quite a big proportion of the population; therefore, they claimed that social media is not just used by young consumers.

It was argued previously that the Generation Y due to its unique characteristics behaves differently in a tourism context. As they were born in The Information Age, they are technology confidants and information hungry; moreover, they are strongly influenced by friends, adapt really quickly to the new travel technologies, such as booking online, and they consult a wide range of information sources during their travel planning process (Beckendorff et al., 2010). Therefore, one can argue here that due to these characteristics

their behavior towards the social media would be different and they would consult Web 2.0 applications more often and in a different way during their travel planning process than other generations. According to the official Danish statistics (2010), a clear difference can be seen between the different age groups and the use of different social media sites (Fig.5.1).

	Age: 16-19 years	Age: 20-39 years	Age: 40-59 years	Age: 60-74 years
2009				
Chat sites, news groups, social network sites	86.6	69.2	35.0	14.7
Instant messaging	81.6	58.7	29.3	19.0
Reading blogs	47.2	43.8	26.9	16.2
Creating or maintaining blogs	38.4	25.6	11.2	6.5
Unit: Percent				

Fig.5.1 Danish people's use of internet for communication activities by time, communication activity and type according to different age groups (Danmarks Statistik, 2010)

This project's aim is to research among the younger generation of Danes, as it was suggested that probably among the Gen Yers and even Xers there can be seen a more intense use towards social media. The figure shows that the younger end of the Danish Gen Yers and Xers use more frequently social media features. However, it is unclear to which extent they have used social media for information search and even for travel planning.

Gretzel & Yoo (2008) parallel to the generational divergences, found *gender* differences for the perceived impact of reviews, with females reporting greater benefits from using online travel reviews, especially regarding inspiration and idea generation. The surveyed women reported that seeing other's reviews helped them to reach easier a decision, to save time, to reduce risk/uncertainty, to perceive hedonic value (they became more excited about the trip as they could imagine the destination) and the reviews add fun to the travel planning process. According to the official Danish Statistics (2010) differences can be seen among genders in their use of different social media types, but again without specifying whether these sites were used for information search or not. As the below figure (Fig.5.2) shows, women are slightly more engaged in using chat sites and social networking sites while men engage themselves more in reading, creating or maintaining blogs.

	Sex: Female	Sex: Male
2009		
Chat sites, news groups, social network sites	49.3	47.9
Instant messaging	40.7	44.7
Reading blogs	28.2	37.8
Creating or maintaining blogs	15.8	20.1

Unit: Percent

Fig.5.2 Danish people's use of internet for communication activities by time, communication activity and type according to different genders (Danmarks Statistik, 2010)

Furthermore, Gretzel et al. (2008) reported clear differences in CGM adoption and use among the surveyed respondents from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and China. They suggest that marketers have to understand the national differences of CGM use, originated from factors such as cultural dimensions, media landscapes, infrastructure developments and information needs during the travel planning, in order to be able to respond the CGM developments. This project aims to understand the information search behavior of Danes, especially regarding social media usage; therefore, the findings might not be applicable for other markets.

Moreover, as already discussed Fall (2000) pointed out significant relationship between personal values and the used information source. The new media usage can be mainly connected with the hedonic and the interpersonal value, which is quite understandable as information search on social media can be fun (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008) and clearly requires peer-to-peer communication.

5.2.2. Why people use social media?

The study conducted by Wang & Fesenmaier (2004) points out four fundamental benefits that drive the extent to which consumers engage themselves in online travel communities: functional benefits, social, psychological and hedonic benefits. Despite the fact that they suggest these benefits for online travel communities, one can argue that these motivations partly or even all can drive the travelers to use social media in general as well. Functional benefits are e.g. support for information search, ease of decision-making process or exchange information from alike travelers (Wang & Fesenmaier 2004), which can be argued also for reasons for using social media. The social aspect and the hedonic aspect of social

media was already discussed, however, one can argue that while using the social media in certain phases of travel planning e.g. information search the hedonic and the social benefits might can be secondary, complementary drives after the functional benefits. The psychological benefits, described as a sense of belonging, identity expression (Wang & Fesenmaier 2004), would clearly have major role in online communities than in other type of social media.

5.3. Use of social media and its possible impacts on travel related decisions

Several researchers approached the topic of how consumers use social media when planning a travel, where the majority of them concluded that the different types of social media are playing a very important role in the travel planning process, but not as a sole source and not in every phase of the travel planning process (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Cox et al., 2009; O'Connor, 2008).

5.3.1. When it is used?

Gretzel & Yoo (2008) researched the use and impact of online travel reviews (TripAdvisor) where their findings remarkably show differences in the use of these reviews in the different travel planning phases and travel aspects. They argue that the reviews are already used in the idea generation phase, and not just at the decisive stages to narrow down the choices. However, the reviews are not yet used for en route travel planning, where facilitating the access to other travelers' reviews via mobile applications while undertaking the vacation could be a solution. Despite to that, Cox et al. (2009) pointed out in their research conducted among more than 12.000 Australian internet users, that these sites were mainly used when the destination has already been chosen, therefore, later then Gretzel & Yoo (2008) argue, at the information search stage of travel-planning. Interestingly neither of these two researches pointed out the importance of social media in the post purchase evaluation stage of the travel planning process.

5.3.2. How it is used?

Gretzel & Yoo (2008) argue that the reviews are mainly used for accommodation decisions. One can argue here, that it could be due to the nature of TripAdvisor, as it provides vast

amount of information on hotels, and might be that in other social media sites different types of information would be searched. Carrera et al. (2008) pointed out that social networking sites are not considered for information gathering but more to keep contact with friends; therefore, the role of the networking sites for information search in travel planning process is arguable. In addition, Cox et al. (2009) concluded that social media sites merely act as an additional source of information, then the only source of information during the travel planning process, where the sites are mainly used for information search related to travel destinations and accommodation.

5.3.3. How does it influence travelers?

Lin & Huang (2006) approached the use of social media from another angle; as they were researching on the influence of a specific photo site of a Taiwanese traveler about Greece among the visitors of this site. They have used the AIDA model as method (whether the message gains Attention, holds Interest, provokes Desire or brings out Action) and have concluded that over 45 % of the researched people claimed that the site aroused desire and elicited action. However, it has to be argued that these influences might be the outcomes of this certain site, but might not be the general use of social media sites, or with other words the sites might not primarily be used for evaluation of alternatives or for purchase decision. Cox et al. (2009) found in their research that the different social media sites were considered useful differently, e.g. photos and places posted by real travelers were argued as most useful, following closely by travel reviews and lastly the social networking sites, as only 25 % of the respondents considered them useful. The question here remains, to which extent the different sites actually influencing the traveler. About the exact use of social media in the travel planning process, Compete (2006) claims that 51 % of their survey's online shopper participants claimed that social media helped them to narrow down their choices, 23% argued that it played a role in confirming their choice, while 15% used it to select the final choice. Furthermore, CGM caused ¼ of travel purchasers to change their mind during the travel purchase. They claim that social media does not influence every single travel buyer but does have a measurable impact on purchase decisions, and even post-purchase as well, as majority of the people tell about the travel purchase to their friend. Even ¼ of the buyers posted a review after purchase (Compete, 2006). However, it might be that the influence of social media post-purchase is that significant among those who have used social media during the travel planning process.

5.4. Challenges of social media

Despite of the clear importance of social media it has its challenges as well. Credibility and reliability is among the most argued challenges of social media (O'Connor, 2008; Cox et al, 2009). O'Connor (2008) argues that as the contextual clues that help the interpretation of the information such as facial expressions are missing from the social media, therefore, its interpretation is more difficult which might lead to credibility issues. According to Compete (2006) more than half of their surveyed respondents find the information generated by consumers credible, which is arguably not that high percentage. In contrary with many researches, which claims the credibility of these sources Cox et al. (2009) found out, that social media sites are not viewed as credible and trustworthy as more traditional information sources, such as official tourism websites or airline sites. Moreover, there are different trust levels between different types of social media. Cox et al. (2009) pointed out that the least trusted were the social networking sites e.g. Facebook with 36% of respondents, while the comments or reviews submitted by other travelers were trusted among almost half of the respondents. Furthermore, the clearly user generated content sites such as TripAdvisor is perceived more credible than reviews posted on online travel agencies sites such as Expedia, due to the perceived commercial interest of the latter sites, therefore, being perceived less objective (O'Connor, 2008). Additionally, the possible "fake" content generated by travel operators as independent travelers, (Cox et al., 2009), might be a driving factor why consumers trust certain sites more than others. Cox et al. (2009) also point out that the possible commercial interest relates to the credibility issue, as the majority of their respondents claimed that it is better to use user-generated content during accommodation search than the hotel's description.

5.5. Possibilities of social media

The user-generated content can raise possibilities for marketers as well in both an informational and revenue generating perspective (Litvin et al., 2008), where these possibilities can be linked to the post-trip and the pre-trip phase of the travel planning. By the informational perspective they mean that hospitality and destination marketers can use

up the content created online (post-trip) to improve visitor satisfaction through product development, increase the competitiveness of the product/destination or to monitor the reputation or image. While Choi et al. (2007) point out that DMOs by engaging travelers post-trip in posting their experiences or photos on the official website, can reconfirm tourists' destination choice and can also build traveler loyalty.

Litvin et al. (2008) argue that revenue generation strategies can be designed to spread positive WOM about the destination, thus, helping potential visitors' information search (pre-trip) by providing supportive opinions. However, it can be argued here that the stimulated eWOM, enhancing positive WOM might raise credibility concerns from the travelers' side.

To sum up, according to the reviewed researches social media can play an important role in several phases of the travel planning but is mainly used during the information search phase of the travel planning process. Social media is one type of information source (encompassing a whole group of different sites), but an important one (Compete, 2006), a supplement to the existing types of travel info, rather than a substitute of other forms of content (Cox et al., 2009) and a source which supports the consumer decision making process (O'Connor, 2008). The Danes' social media usage will be analyzed according to these above claims, by studying the informativity of social media in Danes' travel planning process. The theories about its credibility will also be tested. Moreover, the various influencing factors on its usage e.g tourist characteristics or the four fundamental benefits will be of great importance in the analysis. In addition, these theories will play an important role in identifying the potential of social media in destination promotion.

6. Respondent profile

The profile of the 84 survey respondents will be presented here with more detail, following with describing the five respondents who participated both in the survey and in the interview as well.

While grouping the respondents regarding their age the four age-groups used by the Danish Statistics (2009) were applied thus, the age groups of 16-19 years, 20-39 years, 40-59 years and 60-74 years. However, the age of the 84 respondents was ranging from 20 years till 59 years, therefore, only the age groups of 20-39 years and 40-59 years were further in use. The largest age group was comprised of those who are between 20 and 39 years old with 65,5%, while the age group of 40-59 years were representing the remaining 34,5% (Fig.6.1). The average age of the respondents was 37,38 years.

		Age group			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	20-39 years	55	65,5	65,5	65,5
	40-59 years	29	34,5	34,5	100,0
	Total	84	100,0	100,0	

Fig.6.1 Respondents' age distribution

If the age distribution would be described according to the different generations, taking into consideration the Generation Yers (born between 1977-2003) in the broader perspective (Beckendorff et al., 2010), 26,2 % of the respondents (20-32 years) would belong to the Generation Y, 65,4 % to the Generation X (32-49 years) and 8,4 % would fit in the Baby Boomers generation (49-59 years). However, in the following the age groups inspired by the segmentation of the Danish Statistics would be used for an easier comparison of data, acknowledging that there might be a generational overlap between the suggested two age groups.

Regarding the respondents' gender, more females than males completed the survey (Fig.6.2).

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	34	40,5	40,5	40,5
	Female	50	59,5	59,5	100,0
	Total	84	100,0	100,0	

Fig.6.2 Respondents' gender distribution

Most respondents (89,3 %) reported being married or being in a relationship, and the majority (65,4 %) reported having one or more children.

In relation to the educational level of the respondents, 89,5 % claimed to have a completed higher education, where 60,7 % of the respondents reported to have tertiary education. Furthermore, 8,3 % of all respondents stated to be a student.

Concerning the respondents' geographical distribution, the majority (66,7 %) stated their city of residence belonging to the Øresund Region³, while the rest came from other cities in Sealand (16,7%) and other from other Danish regions (16,7%).

Most respondents (70,2 %) reported leisure as the purpose of their visit to Hungary (Fig.6.3.) while 16,7 % claimed to travel to Hungary because of visiting friends and relatives. Moreover, 13% were on business trip.

		Purpose of visit to Hungary			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Leisure	59	70,2	70,2	70,2
	Business	11	13,1	13,1	83,3
	Visit friends and relatives	14	16,7	16,7	100,0
	Total	84	100,0	100,0	

Fig.6.3 Respondents' purpose of visit

³ Øresund Region includes those cities of residence that belongs geographically to the Greater Copenhagen Area and to Southern Sweden (Skåne)

The interviewees

Moreover, five of the above described 84 respondents participated in the semi-structured interviews as well. Their ages ranged from 24 till 42 years with the mean of 32,8 years. The majority of the five respondents were females, all reported to be married or in a relationship and only one of the five had children (the oldest respondent). Only one respondent was a student (25 years old) and all of them claimed to have completed tertiary education. All respondents were residents of the Greater Copenhagen Area, therefore, their residence were coded into Øresund Region group. In addition, three respondents travelled to Hungary with the purpose of visiting friends and relatives and the rest visited Hungary with leisure aims and also for the first time.

7. Role of social media in the travel planning process

7.1. Information source usage during travel planning in general

This section will start with investigating the Danes' use of different information sources during travel planning. The most used information sources will be presented, where the claimed importance of WOM will be analyzed in the Danes' information source usage.

The first survey question aimed to investigate Danes' information source preferences during travel planning, where the respondents were asked to rank the listed information sources according to their usage, from the most used till the least used⁴. The respondents' ranking of the different information sources is presented in the below Figure 7.1.

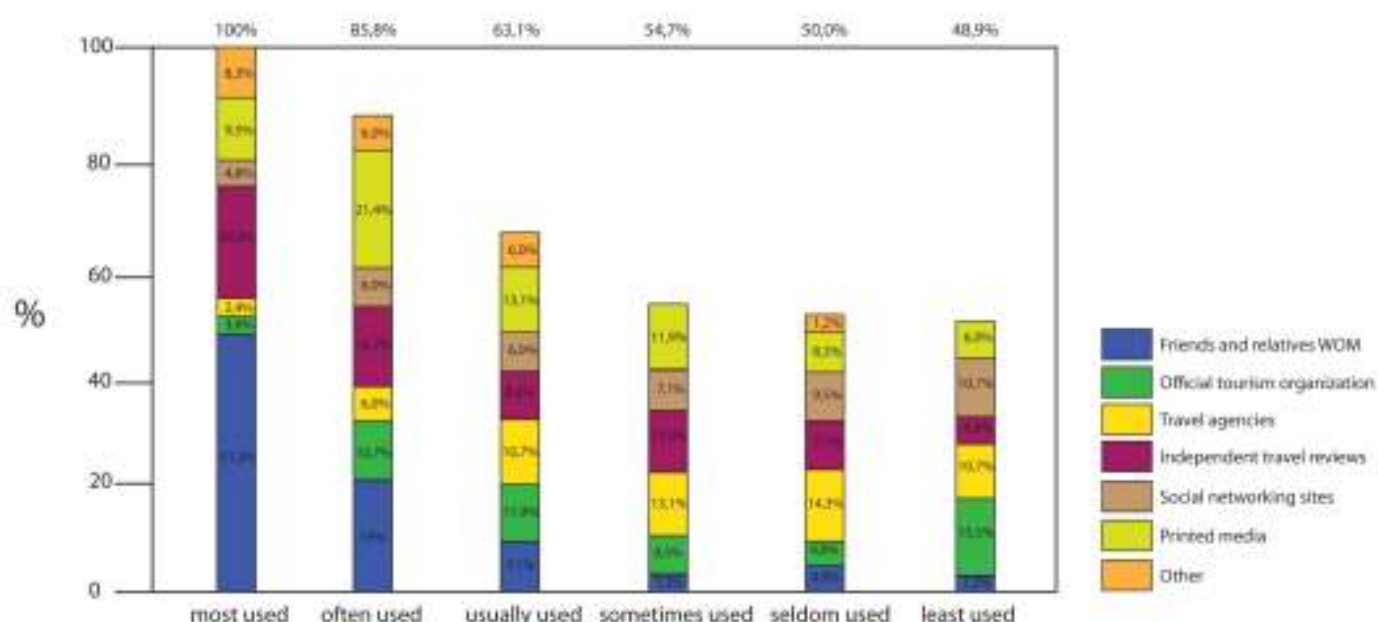


Fig.7.1 Respondents' usage of the different information sources

The decreasing total of the scaling categories in the above figure (Fig.7.1) shows that only the category of the most used source was filled out by all respondents, meaning that the fewest respondents ranked all the six categories. That indicates that not everyone consults a great variety of information sources during travel planning, as claimed by Swarbrooke & Horner (1999) but at least one source, or in the majority of the cases (85,8%) two sources are being consulted. In the following the above figure's important results; the reported most

⁴ See Chapter 2.3.3 for the explanation of this question's coding process

used information sources of WOM, travel reviews and printed media and the noted least used sources such as the official tourism organization, social networking sites and travel agencies will be pointed out.

7.1.1. WOM

With the highest percentage, 51,2% of the respondents stated that the WOM generated from friends and relatives is the most used source of information during their travel planning, which is consistent with several academic discussions (Cox et al, 2009; Murphy et al, 2007; Litvin et al, 2008). If taking into consideration the three first ranking categories, for 77,3 % of the Danish travelers WOM plays an important role among all information sources, which can be connected to the general tourism behavior; to be strongly influenced by others (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Moreover, interestingly 15,5 % of the respondents did not include WOM in their scaling of information sources during travel planning at all.⁵

Credibility

For Traveler2 the personal recommendations are considered to be first priority among all sources during travel planning.

"[...]Because then I know the friend or the person, so I know what is actually those people like [...]I can say, okay they don't like it then I really know that I would like it. [...] but then you have a very good standard for knowing what is actually good and what is not good."
(Traveler2, 19:38- 19:15)

According to his citation the important influential nature of WOM can be linked to credibility of the source (O'Connor, 2008), in which the WOM originator plays an important role (Litvin et al., 2008).

⁵ The survey question asked the information source usage during travel planning in general without making any differentiation between the different phases therefore, some respondents might understood planning as gathering information after the destination has been decided. Therefore, if WOM was used as e.g. an inspiration it will not be presented in the above figure.

Informativity-combination of sources

By analyzing the survey responses the importance of combining WOM with other information sources was not transparent⁶, though, several interviewees pointed out that they use WOM parallel with other information sources:

“Actually I combine the friends with the internet definitely for sure [...] (Traveler2, 19:06-19:04)

[...] I would never really stick to one thing, I like for example the combination of asking friends or relatives if they know the place where I am travelling to and I definitely like to use the information of the tourist offices, because [...] they can send you the brochures and a map [...] (Traveler4, 10:08-9:50)

As Traveler4 noted above, it can be argued that combining the different sources can be due to the usefulness of information one can get from one source or another, thus, to the informativity of the source for the problem-solving of travel planning (Fodness & Murray, 1999). Therefore, all these additional sources can be seen as contributory sources for some extent due their different usefulness of information in the complex decision making process. Besides, using WOM as the first and most important information source can have its limitations as well. Traveler2 added that if he encountered with the lack of relevant information from WOM than he would move further to another source, thus, placing WOM from being a decisive source to a contributory source.

[...] and if I don't have any friends going there then the internet would be the first resource for sure. (Traveler2, 19:04-18:58)

Or as Traveler3 argued due to the frequency of her travels, and therefore, might be due to the product characteristics (Fodness & Murray, 1999), her friends cannot serve as an inspirational information source any more.

[...] I travel quite a lot so I don't get inspiration from my friends any more. (Traveler3, 29: 19-29:13)

⁶ The survey did not give the possibility to treat two sources equally with the same ranking.

It has to be argued here that the perceived informativity might change during the different phases of travel planning process, due to the dynamic multistage decision process (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008) thus, resulting in a change of decisive and contributory sources, which will be discussed in the next chapter in reference with the social media sites.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that WOM plays a really important role in Danes' travel planning; therefore, one would question whether social media could also occupy a higher position in their ranking of information sources, due to the argued correlation between WOM and social media (Gretzel et al, 2008).

7.1.2. Social media

In the above figure (Fig.7.1) social media pages were separated into independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. TripAdvisor and to social networking sites e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, by supposing that there might be differences in the usage of the travel reviews and other social media pages, where these latter pages were not created with the clear purpose of providing a platform of sharing travel related information. Interestingly, for the Danes the second most used information source is the independent travel reviews/blogs (20,2%). If taking into consideration the first three ranking categories, it can be seen that almost half of the respondents (45,2%) used independent travel reviews/blogs during travel planning. However, the question remains to what extent, when and how these sites were used, which will be analyzed later on with more details.

The social networking sites are among the least used information sources during travel planning, with a high 56% of no response rate, which may indicate that 56 % of the respondents do not use social media sites at all during travel planning. The question can be raised whether only poorly considering social networking sites as information source during travel planning can be linked to their main function as a site, or to other issues, such as the perception of the page's reliability can play a role in the low ranking and response rate. The perception of the different social media sites will be analyzed in detail in the Chapter8.1.

7.1.3. Printed media

The respondents reported (Fig. 7.1) in three categories (often-sometimes used) a quite high printed media usage (46,4%), hence, it figured a lower percentage (9,5%) among the most used sources.

Adequacy

The interviewees pointed out the usage of the Danish guidebook series “Turen går til” during travel planning and even the trip to Hungary as well. Guidebooks arguably play an important role during the trip, as the book can actually be carried around, thus, can be used easier than other computer or internet based information sources.

As Traveler3 pointed out below:

[...] I get some of the books, what they got obviously, Turen går til, or it could be Lonely Planet or it could be Rough Guides, it could be anything they may have in the library, [...] I do like to have my book with me, you know you don't carry around with your laptop. (Traveler 3, 26:26 -25:52)

One could argue that a temporary gap can be seen of how the online and the offline sources are used during travel planning. Thus, due to the different sources' adequacy in the different phases the usage of online sources is more dominant in the planning phase, while offline sources are used in the travel phase.

7.1.4. Travel agencies

Interestingly using travel agencies as an information source was more ranked towards the less used sources (38,1%), from the sometimes till the least used categories.

Informativity

As the below quote shows, the informativity of the information gathered from travel agencies can play a role of why travel agencies are not among the most used sources:

“Definitely important and definitely inspires me [social media], and I like that you can also check prices, before you called 20 different travel agencies for finding the same information that you can now find in five minutes. (Traveler4, 11:05-10:53)

In addition, the perceived cost, both time and money spent, of the information search influence the usage of certain sources (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004), where the travel agencies might not have the lowest barriers. However, arguably the online information originated from travel agencies could be perceived with lower barriers.

7.1.5. Official information tourism organization

Surprisingly among the least used sources official tourism organization was ranked as the highest (15,5%), however, the interviewees reported opposing opinions:

Credibility

"I always check the officials first, I trust those more [...]" (Traveler5, 00:33 – 00:26)

"[...] obviously the institution of the country which promotes its country won't be objective, would be very subjective [...] for objectivity I would go on TripAdvisor to see the comments of people. (Traveler1, 2:40- 2:18)

Therefore, credibility again plays an important role in the choice of official sources for information. However, another concern could be linked to its low usage, its possible informativity, which will be later pointed out by Traveler5 regarding the HNTD.

7.1.6. Other sources

Furthermore 21,2 % of the respondents indicated other sources as information sources they use during travel planning, such as Internet in general, or others referring to the same online search as Google (14,3 % of all respondents), Google Earth, venere.com, Wikipedia or Flickr.

Informativity -Combination of sources

Thus, 14,3% of the respondents do not use certain information sources or specific homepages for any aspects of travel planning, but mainly browse the internet by using search engines such as Google as those engines can be seen as the facilitators for finding all kind of information from several sources. Browsing the internet during travel planning might be due to several reasons, such as lack of familiarity with the different more specific information sources, as Traveler2 pointed out:

[...] Normally you don't know the address of every tourist agencies [referring to the homepage of official tourism boards], so you use the Google for instance. (Traveler 2, 27:45-27:30)

[...] In the beginning I was coming across [with the social media sites], because I did not know that those things were present actually. Then I get to know them more and more, and also some of my friends have been knowing how to use them [referring to TripAdvisor, Hotels.com]. (Traveler 2, 24:59- 24:43)

Or moreover, browsing internet can be due to lack of relevant information gathered from other specific sources or homepages as Traveler1 argued:

[...] I just basically google, if I cannot find something on governmental page on hotels, or on attractions than I just google e.g sightseeing in Budapest, or the most interesting places to see, or e.g. Budapest guide, usually those keywords always give very good results, to web pages which are dedicated to the city or attractions or what is going on. (Traveler1, 11:31- 11:11)

As it was pointed out in this section WOM is the most used source during travel planning, but it cannot be always seen as a decisive source on its own due to its limited informativity to certain product or tourist characteristics (Fodness & Murray, 1999). Among all social media sites the travel reviews played a clear important role, followed with the printed media, where these sources' usage can be linked to their adequacy of the travel phase. Travel agencies due to their informativity and perceived cost are among the less frequent used sources, while official sources were claimed to be the least used, which could be linked to credibility and informativity issues.

7.2. Information source usage regarding the trip to Hungary

In the following it will be revealed whether during the actual trip to Hungary an application of a different information strategy could be seen among the respondents.

The respondents were asked to rank the same seven sources according to their usefulness concerning the trip to Hungary; however, the great majority of the respondents did not rank, but marked with an X and even only maximum three sources. Therefore, it was decided not

to scale when analyzing that data but treat the responses as useful (marked responses) or not useful sources (not marked responses) during their travel planning to Hungary. It can be argued that using only three sources during the travel planning to Hungary, could be due to the travel product characteristics (Fodness & Murray, 1999), as e.g. the travel took place in Europe, where its planning might not required an extended problem-solving process. However, it could be argued as well that they might have consulted several sources, but generally only three sources turned out to be useful for making a decision, which can either be linked to the nature of the trip or to the informativity of the source as well.

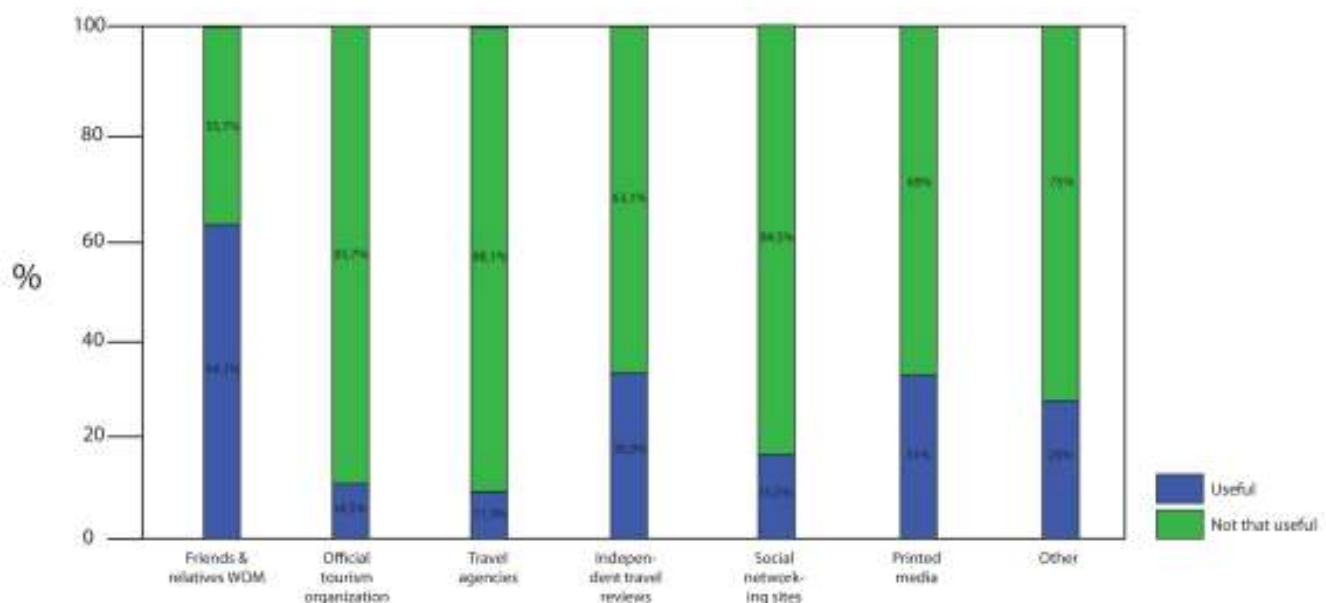


Fig.7.2 Usefulness of the different information sources during the travel planning to Hungary

As the above figure (Fig.7.2) shows, friends and relatives still remained as the most important information source during the actual travel to Hungary, with 64,3 % of the respondents who indicated WOM as useful.

The second most useful source, identical with the general information source usage, was the independent travel reviews with more than 1/3 of the respondents. The actual use of the travel reviews in the different travel phases regarding the trip to Hungary will be analyzed later in the chapter. Moreover, interestingly printed media also turned out to be quite useful with almost the same percentage of respondents (31%) than the independent travel reviews.

Traveler5 pointed out that she bought the Turen går til book for this trip, as she faced with a lack of relevant information by using the official homepage of HNTO, where the latter's informativity can be questioned:

"When I looked at the official Hungarian homepage, it was the old one and that was not good at all, so that is why I bought the Turen går til book; that had some more things in it."

(Traveler5, 8:21-8:07)

In addition, 25% of all respondents indicated to have found other sources than the listed ones as useful during their travel planning to Hungary, such as again the internet in general, Budapestinfo.hu, Turen går til, Google Earth, Wikipedia, hotels.com or expedia.com.

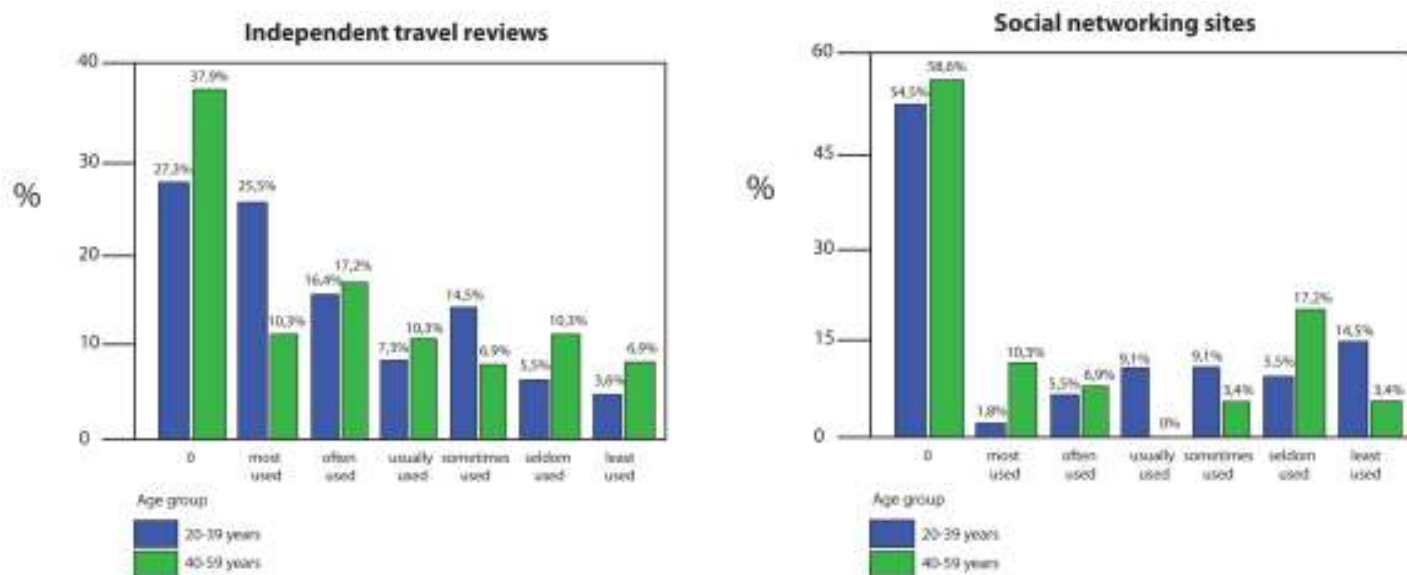
To sum up the above discussed in Chapter 7.1 and 7.2 similarities were found among Danes' general information source usage and the actual information search regarding the travel to Hungary. The travelers used a **combination of different sources** during travel planning, however, only a few information sources were consulted, generally up to three types during the planning, which can be linked to the little complexity of the decision making involved with the trip to Hungary (Fodness & Murray, 1999). Moreover, none of the sources turned out to be decisive on their own. WOM was reported as the most used in both cases, thus, arguably the most influential information source as well, followed with the independent travel reviews. The printed media usage occupied the third position. Choosing an information source arguably was linked to certain criteria, to **the credibility and the informativity of the source**, where lacking to fulfill these criteria led to the usage of combining different sources. In addition, the **adequacy** of the source for the different travel phase influenced its choice, where online sources are more used in planning phase while the offline sources during the trip phase.

7.3. Influential factors on the usage of different information sources

This section will point out whether due to the different tourist characteristics, such as age, gender or due to the trip characteristics, the purpose of the trip any variation can be seen in the Danes' use of the different information sources, where the discussion will focus on the different social media sites.

7.3.1. Age

As the below figure (Fig.7.3) shows, some differences can be seen in the usage of the different social media sites between the age groups.



Unit: Percentage within the age group

Fig.7.3 Respondents' social media usage during travel planning by age groups

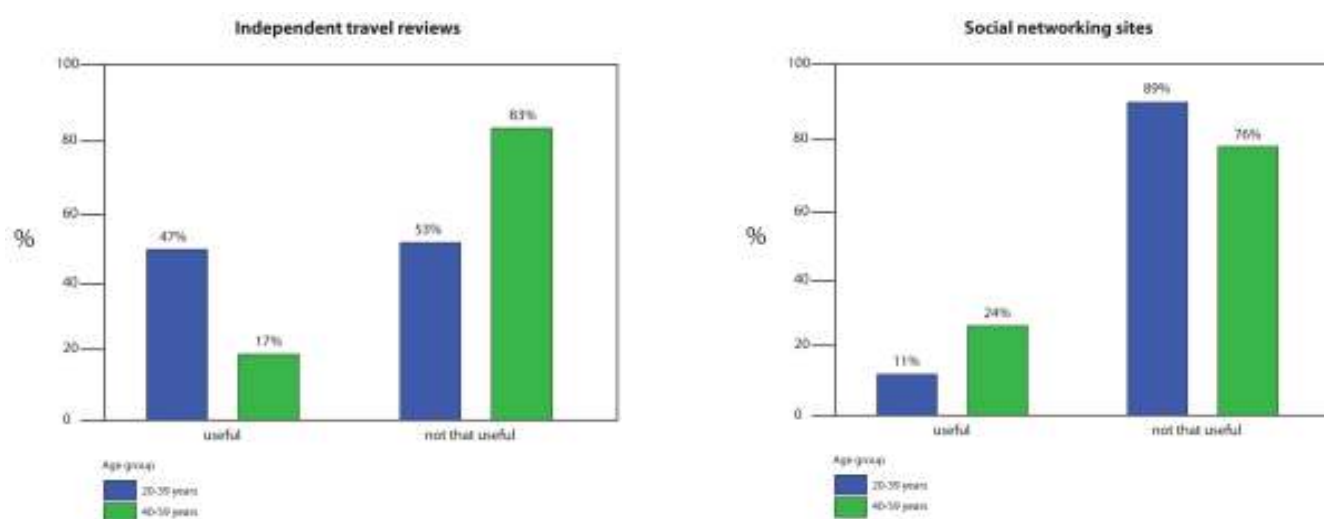
The usage of independent travel reviews was indicated more frequently among the respondents belonging to the age group of 20-39 years than the older age group with great differences in the first ranking category, while the following categories not that clear differences can be seen between the age groups. Regarding the usage of the networking sites a varied distribution can be seen, with a greater usage among the older segment in the first two categories, while in the categories of usually and sometimes the younger age group reported greater usage.

However, in order to clearly point out any relationship between age as an influencing variable and the different social media sites a correlation test should be run. The Pearson

correlation test showed an inverse linear correlation (-0,121) between age and the usage of travel reviews for a different extent (most used-least used) during travel planning, meaning that as the age is getting higher the usage of the reviews is becoming lower. However, as seen from the p-value (0,273) the correlation between age and usage of travel reviews is not significant (see App.6). Furthermore, the correlation between the usage of social networking sites and age showed similar results, with a negative Pearson correlation (-0,143) and with a significance level of 0,194 (see App.7).

Therefore, it has to be argued that the age cannot be claimed to be a significant variable on the Danes' social media usage during travel planning, which is in opposition with the results presented by the Danish statistics, which pointed out that clearly more Danes from the age group 20-39 years use different social media sites for diverse communication purposes than from the age group 40-59 years (Danmarks Statistik, 2009; Chapter5.2.1)⁷.

Regarding the trip to Hungary, the clear difference between the different age groups' usage of social media can be seen in the case of the independent travel reviews (Fig.7.4), where 47 % of the younger age group while only 17 % of the older age group claimed the independent travel reviews to be useful.



Unit: Percentage within the agegroup

Fig.7.4 Respondents' social media usage regarding the trip to Hungary by age groups

⁷ The statistics show the social media usage by communication activities, which does not mean only travel planning.

As the younger generations known to be advanced internet users (Beckendorff et al., 2010) it can be argued that they might know more about the different independent travel reviews' sites, and tend to use them more often during their travel planning process. Although, Traveler 2 (24:59-24:43), who even belongs to the younger age group with the age of 35, argued that he was not familiar with these sites until his friends showed those to him and also to how to use them. Moreover, regarding the social networking sites, significantly less travelers claimed those as useful, with relatively small differences between the two age groups. However, to see whether age plays a significant role as a variable in reporting the different social media sites useful, a correlation test should be run. The below Chi-Square test (Fig.7.5) pointed out a clear significant relationship between the age group and travel review usage ($p=0,007$), therefore, showing consistent results with the Danish statistics.

Chi-Square Tests ^a					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,354 ^a	1	,007		
Continuity Correction ^b	6,121	1	,013		
Likelihood Ratio	7,874	1	,005		
Fisher's Exact Test				,009	,006
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,267	1	,007		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10,70.

Fig.7.5 Correlation between by age groups and travel reviews usage regarding the trip to Hungary

In addition, a much less relationship was observed between age groups and social networking sites' usage for traveling to Hungary ($\chi^2=2,540$; $p=0,111$) where the correlation cannot be considered significant (see App. 8).

It was noted above that the age does not play an influential role in the use of social media sites regarding the Danes' travel planning in general, which results are in opposition with the Danish statistical results (2009). However, clear age differences were seen in the travel reviews' usage regarding the trip to Hungary, which then raises the question of the informativity of the existing reviews, as those tend to be more appealing for the younger segment of travelers.

7.3.2. Gender

As the below chart shows (Fig.7.6), minor differences can be seen between the usage of the different social media sites among male and female respondents, with slightly more differences in the usage of travel reviews in favor of the females.

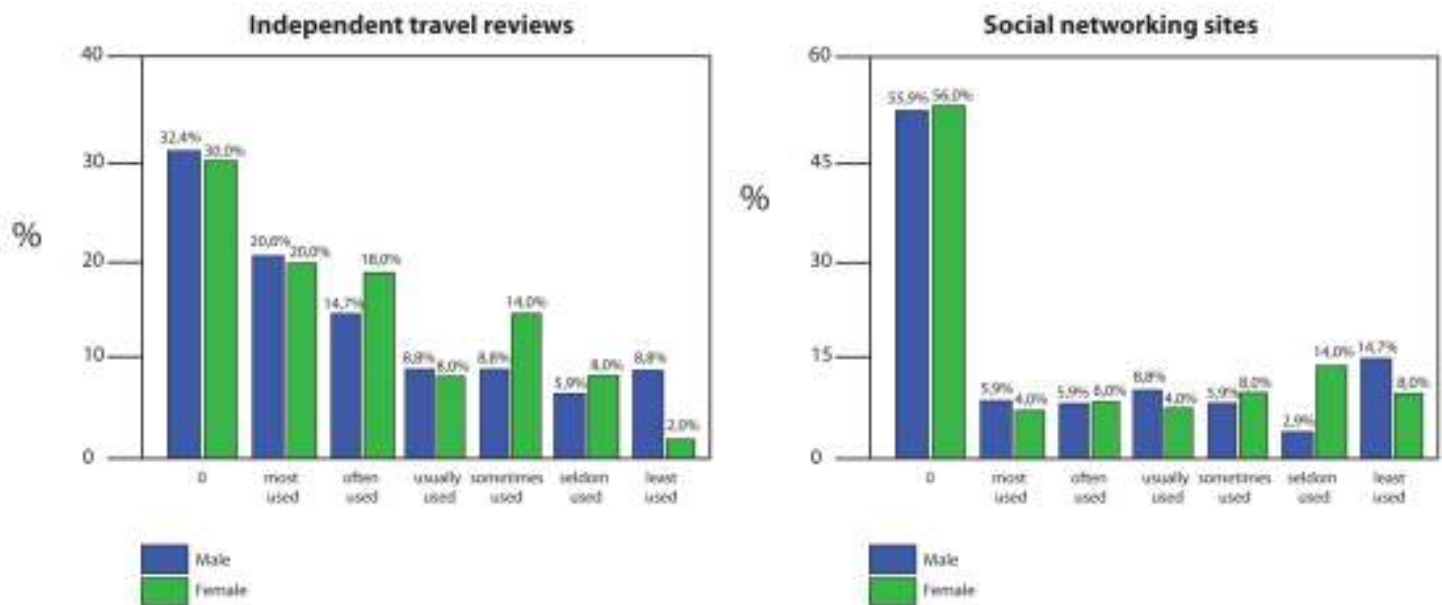
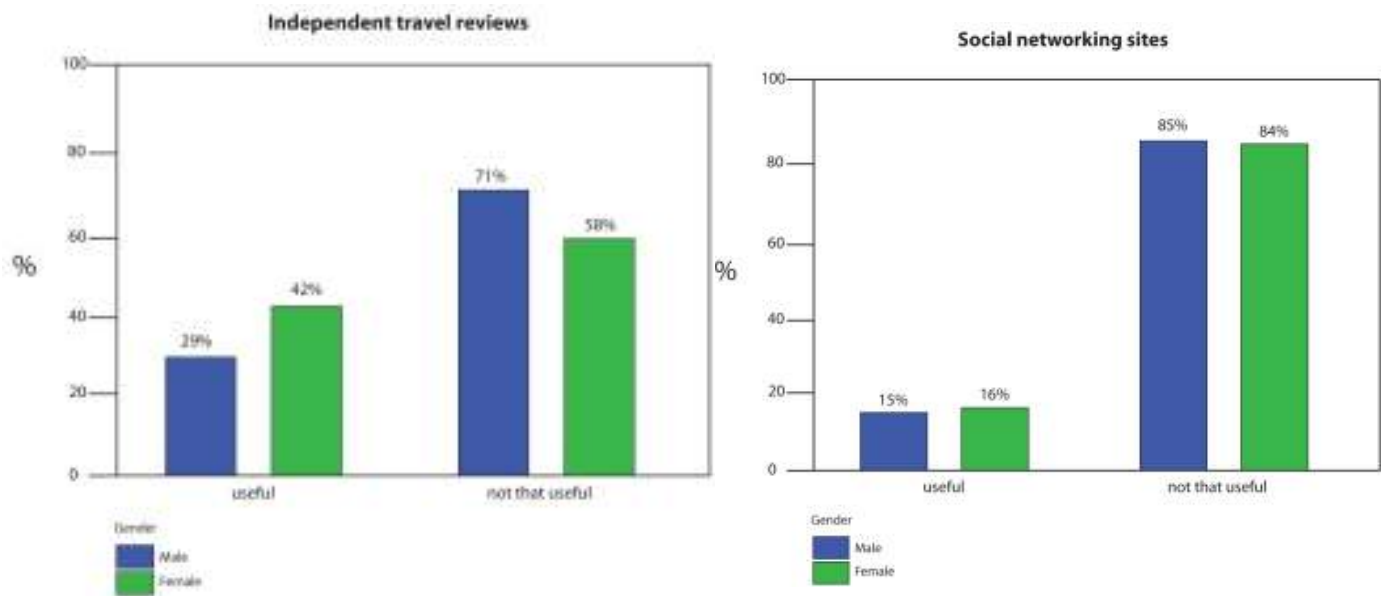


Fig.7.6 Respondents' social media usage during travel planning by gender

By conducting a Chi-Square correlation test for both cases, for the usage of independent travel reviews ($\chi^2=2,749$; $p=0,840$) and for the social networking sites ($\chi^2=4,517$; $p=0,607$), the results confirm that the correlation between gender and the usage of the different social media sites is insignificant (see App. 9-10).

Furthermore, concerning the trip to Hungary small gender differences can be seen in the respondents' usage of the social media, and only in the usage of the travel reviews. As the below chart shows (Fig.7.7) 42% of all females pointed out the independent travel reviews as useful while only 29% of all males, while regarding the use of social networking sites insignificant gender differences are shown.



Unit: Percentage with in gender

Fig.7.7 Respondents' social media usage regarding the trip to Hungary by gender

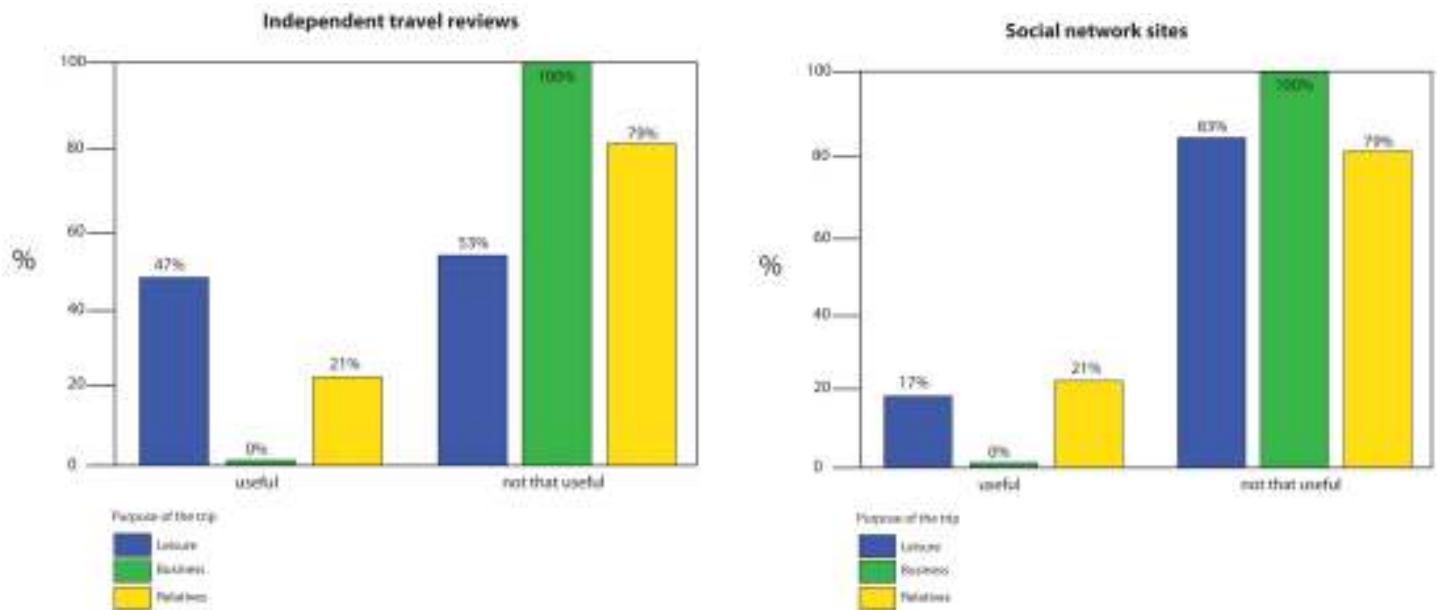
To support the above claimed a correlation test was run, where the Chi-Square test showed a very weak but not significant ($\chi^2=1,377$; $p=0,241$) relationship between gender and the usage of independent travel reviews for the trip to Hungary and an insignificant relationship ($\chi^2=0,26$; $p=0,872$) between gender and social networking sites' usage (see App. 11-12).

Therefore, as above pointed out no significant correlation was found between age and social media sites' usage either in terms of general information sources usage or regarding the recent trip to Hungary. These results are in contrast with the findings of Gretzel & Yoo (2008), where females reported greater benefits by using travel reviews and not consistent either with the Danish statistical results⁸ (2009) where women tend to engage themselves more in social networking sites while men tend to use more the blogs.

7.3.3. Purpose of the trip

The below figure (Fig.7.8) shows of how the different travelers evaluated the usefulness of the different social media sites while planning their trip to Hungary. Among all travelers the leisure tourists claimed with a major percentage (47%) the usefulness of the independent travel reviews during their travel planning to Hungary, which is consistent with the findings of Murphy et al. (2007) who claims that for leisure tourists tend to value more other travelers' experiences than VFR travelers.

⁸ The statistics show the social media usage for any purposes and not just for travel planning.



Unit: Percentage with in each purpose

Fig.7.8 Respondents' social media usage regarding the trip to Hungary by purpose of the trip

As one leisure traveler pointed out the usefulness of other's experiences:

"I do not want to use all my time if I only have 2-3 days, you do not want to go to a place which is outside of the city, and you come there, you take one picture and go back, it would be a loss of time. I used that (travel reviews) also to see if it is worth to go there. (Traveler5, 10:03-9:48)

VFR tourists stated a lower usage (21 %) of social media, which can be related to Murphy et al.'s (2007) study which pointed out that VFR travelers obtain the necessary information already from their friends; therefore, other travelers' WOM are not identified as that relevant information source.

Clear differences can be seen in case of the business travelers, as none of them found any of the social media sites useful, which is consistent with the generally acknowledged that business tourists' behaviors are quite different from leisure/VFR tourists' (Fodness & Murray, 1999), which is seen in their information usage as well. Their rating can be related to the fact that the trip was arranged for them; therefore, they did not engage themselves in any information searches. As Respondent81 clearly stated *"My organization"* on the survey as the most useful source during trip planning to Hungary meaning that the information

search was made for him within his company or Respondent22 who indicated “congress – planned” as the most useful source, due to the fact that he traveled for a congress where everything was planned for him.

To support the above stated a Chi-Square test was conducted, which showed clear significant relationship between the purpose of the trip and the travel reviews’ usage (Fig. 7.9). Therefore, the result is consistent with Murphy et al.’s (2009) findings and Fodness & Murray’s (1999) claim as well.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10,696 ^a	2	,005
Likelihood Ratio	14,432	2	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	6,114	1	,013
N of Valid Cases	84		

a. 1 cells (16,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,06.

Fig.7.9 Correlation between the purpose of the trip to Hungary and travel reviews usage

Regarding the usefulness of the social networking sites almost no difference can be seen (Fig.7.8) between the leisure and VFR travelers’ ratings, but only regarding the business tourists’ ratings. The Chi-Square test showed insignificant ($\chi^2=2,491$; $p=0,288$) correlation between the purpose of the trip and social networking sites’ usage (see App.13), therefore, it can be concluded that social networking sites’ usage does not depend on the purpose of the trip.

Significant correlation was found between the purpose of the trip and travel reviews’ usage consistent with Fodness & Murray’s (1999) study, who argued that perhaps the trip purpose is the most influential factor on traveler behavior. However, no correlation was found between trip purpose and the social networking sites’ usage, which as it will be discussed later, can be connected with the perception of social networking sites as not relevant information sources for travel planning.

To summarize the three above sections, only clear consistence with the literature was found with the purpose of travel, which turned out to be influential in the travel reviews’ usage.

Concerning the other two analyzed variable age correlation was only found regarding the travel reviews' usage for the recent trip to Hungary, while no gender influence on social media usage was pointed out. The found age differences in travel reviews' usage might be linked to the informativity of these sources about Hungary, where the younger age groups found it more useful in this specific case, though, generally no significant age differences were found. Therefore, the findings are in contract with the Danish Statistics (2009). Thus, it can be argued that instead of the age or the gender the behavioral patterns of each individual play an important role in their usage of the different social media sites.

7.4. Social media usage in the travel planning process

This section will identify when and how the different social media sites are used in the travel planning process. The question remains whether social media usage can be linked to the pre-trip phase, supporting the recognition of the need for vacation by giving inspiration or whether the social media is actively used within the information search and even in the evaluation of alternatives phase. Furthermore, it will be investigated whether social media plays a role as an information source during the trip and whether after the trip, an evaluation of the purchase takes place within the different social media sites as well. A correlation between the usage of social media and age will be drawn to investigate whether younger Danes use the social media in a different way.

7.4.1. Pre-trip phase of travel planning: Need recognition

While designing the questionnaire it was pre-assumed due to Gretzel & Yoo's (2008) findings that social media can give inspiration for future travels. Social media's inspirational role will be discussed in the need recognition phase of the proposed framework of travel planning, as a supportive factor for starting the travel decision making process. However, it can be acknowledged that inspiration should be more understood in the adaptable understanding of travel planning process than the rational understanding, where the decision making

process can be fostered spontaneously by different inspirational factors, even by reviewing certain social media content.

As the figure below shows the majority (68,3%) of all the respondents were inspired by social media sites (both independent travel reviews and social networking sites) to some extent, where 31,7 % of the respondents claimed that they always or often use social media sites for inspiration.

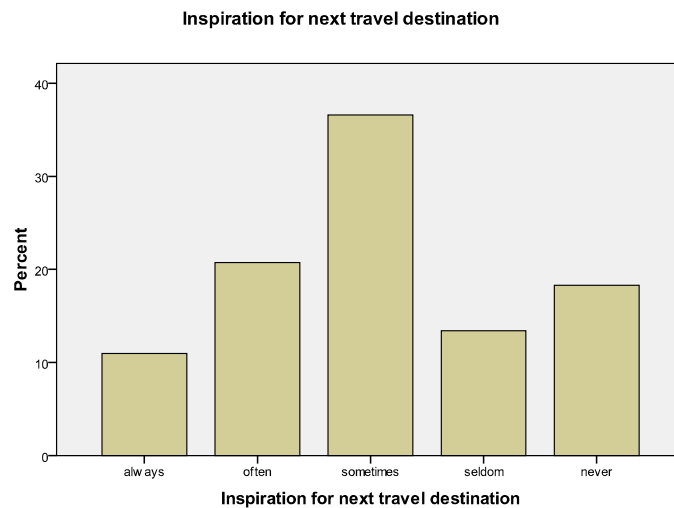


Fig.7.10 Social media as inspiration for next travel destination

Exactly the same percentage (31,7%) of respondents, as above use rarely or never social media as inspirational sources. It can be argued that as the mode value can be placed into the “sometimes” category social media is not primary used with the purpose of obtaining inspiration, however, to which extent it is used for inspiration has to be further analyzed. As Traveler1 argued:

[...] People there (Facebook) are posting their pictures of their travels, you can see them and they just can give you inspiration, but it again it is so individual as some people like to post their pictures, some people are good at taking pictures, it can't really give you much indication. Only think you can think, that wow this guy travels a lot, but not like it would give much information, [...] it just gives inspiration but I would still go and check with the destination and flights[...] (Traveler1,08:01 -7:28)

As the above quote shows, social networking sites can give inspiration, but then the travel planning process would stop at this stage on that site, and further information searches

would be taken place in other sources as well. Traveler 5 also claimed that social media sites can inspire and foster further information search, but for gathering inspiration the social media sites would not be consulted at the first place:

“I did not see any pages about Hungary but I see it a lot of when people, friends put pictures (Facebook) that I have just been in Mexico or I have just been in Turkey [...] Then of course you are searching more because that looks nice, than you search more. [...] I do not go in and search at the beginning, I normally check official pages, and after I have found out where do I want to go, and I have checked official pages, than I look, that is the last part I can say the social medias, that is the last one. [...] It can give you some ideas, especially with the hotels, because you don’t want to end up in a bad place so they can help you a lot. (Traveler 5, 11:42 -9:00)

Furthermore, she pointed out the inspirational role of the social media, but mainly after when the destination is chosen and further aspects of the travel had to be decided such as accommodation, which is consistent with the findings of Cox et al. (2009). The question here remains whether travel reviews and networking sites could inspire the traveler in a different way and in different phases of the travel planning process. As shown below (Fig.7.11), among the social media sites mainly TripAdvisor and Lonely Planet (20,2%) was used for inspiration with almost the same percentage as other sources such as Flickr, venere.com, hotels.com or Wikipedia.



Fig.7.11 Social media sites used for inspiration regarding the trip to Hungary

Traveler3 clearly claimed the important inspirational role of the different travel reviews (Lonely Planet, TripAdvisor and Travelblogs.com) as well:

[...][I use social media] every single day, I use it for research as well for trips I probably never go on, I still go in and read up [...] Sometimes I would [go there], I put it on my to do list, sometimes I just think what would I be doing there. (Traveler3, 32:30-31:56)

However, the question here remains whether Danes in general would use the travel reviews with that high engagement (every day), or it has to be claimed for the behavioral characteristics of Traveler3. In opposition to the above citation Traveler2 claimed that he does not use the Internet, inclusive social media for inspiration, however, once the destination is chosen he would begin the information search, including social media sites as well.

[...] The destination is [...] not something I have been searching on the internet. Maybe I have been dropping by and see that location or got some information about it and then later I was thinking, oh I want to go there. But when I picked the destination I definitely use the internet, both social media but also general information about the place. (Traveler2, 28:46-28:36)

Arguably, as the above quote shows and as pointed out by Decrop & Snelders (2004) choosing a destination is not always a conscious and a rational process, where travelers search for inspiration on purpose by revising different sources among them even social media, but more it could be seen as a sudden impulse, which facilitates the further searches.

After analyzing the responses both from the survey and the interviews, it can be concluded that social media is not consulted on the first place to gather inspiration, but mainly when the destination has been chosen, which is consistent with Cox et al.'s (2009) findings. Though, it might happen that the traveler comes across with inspirational content presented in social media which fosters further information search. Among the different social media sites mainly the independent travel reviews and hotel related sites are used for inspiration.

7.4.2. Pre-trip phase of travel planning: Information search-evaluation of alternatives

The aim of this section is to analyze whether and how social media is used in the information search process and even for evaluating the alternatives.

As the figure below shows (Fig.7.12) more than half, 51,2 % of all respondents reported to use social media sites for searching for different reviews, such as for hotel, restaurant or attraction. However, social media seems to be not that used for searching for specific campaigns or offers, with only 23 % of the respondents who use it either always or often and with 47,6 % who use it seldom or never.

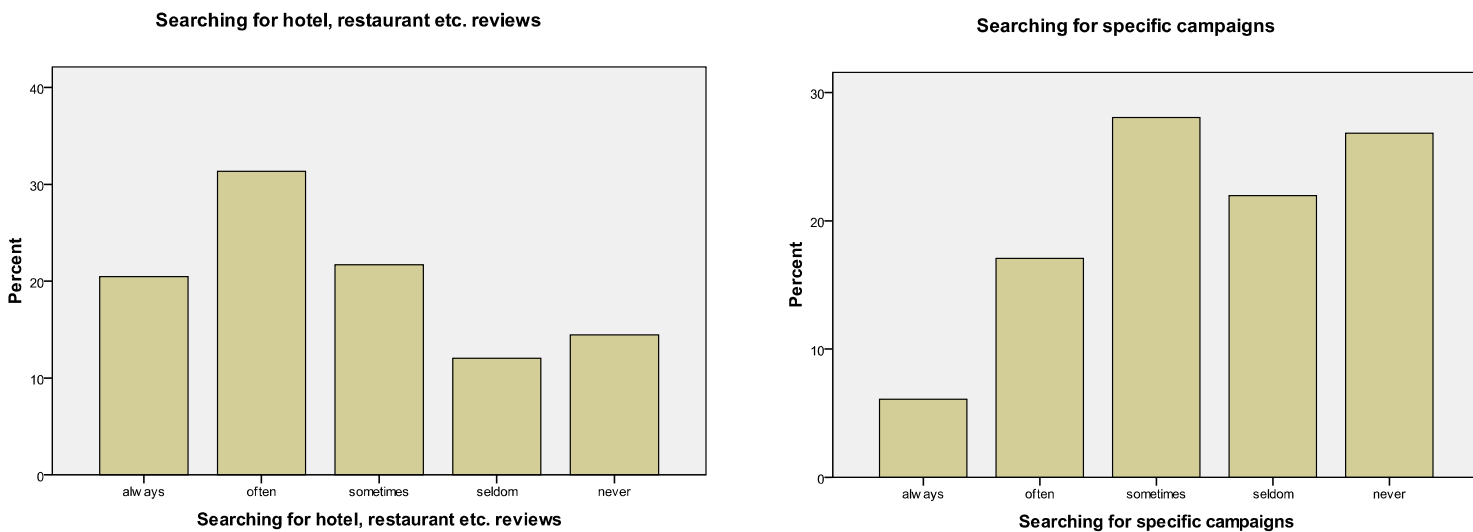


Fig.7.12 Social media usage at the information search-evaluation of alternatives stage

All the interviewees claimed to use social media sites to search for reviews, where mainly the hotel reviews were of great interest which was pointed out in Cox et al.'s (2009) findings as well. Searching for reviews took place on different independent travel review sites or travel blogs while not considering the usage of the different networking sites. In the following the social media's usage will be analyzed only for searching for travel reviews as none of the interviewees claimed to use social media for searching for specific campaigns or offers.

As Traveler4 pointed out, the hotel reviews due to their **informativity** were of great importance during the **information search** phase of the trip planning to Hungary, as those helped them to match the information to their specific requirements for travelling in a group for an incentive trip, such as finding a centrally located and a higher category hotel:

[...] for going to Hungary we used it [social media] right from the beginning. We used it for checking hotels there, [...] on venere and hotels.com [...] and because when we were travelling we were all in a group, we could see one that it is close to the center, and we could see opinions of other people. So in general I use it in different phases, but in this trip we used it a lot for the hotel, to see which one was recommendable, was in the center and was nicer (Traveler4, 18:05 -17:15)

The different reviews were also used for attraction search, restaurant search, or for geographical orientation, than mainly for hotel reviews and evaluation, as the findings of Cox et al. (2009) indicate:

[...] When we were thinking to travel from Budapest to Austria, there was also with this site [TripAdvisor] where I checked people's comments, advice, what is the best way to connect, where do you buy the ticket or what ticket you have to buy. (Traveler1, 15:52-15:38)

The interviewees mainly claimed to use the reviews for their functional benefits, for their informativity, although Traveler3 pointed out that she uses social media for hedonic benefits (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004). However, as the below quote indicates, the underlying motive still remains functional, therefore, by reviewing information on social media sites can facilitate in finding value for money while traveling:

[...] I am addicted to it [social media], it would be crazy not to. I could never go somewhere and not have done just a little bit of reading up. [...] If you actually research a lot than you can find a really value for money things, and that is why, it is more than a hobby it is like a passion, that is why because simply I want value for money. (Traveler3, 15:20 -15:07)

Traveler1 pointed out that the reviews play a significant role in her hierarchical travel planning process (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006), as after deciding on the destination, followed with flight ticket search, the social media sites are of great importance in the next trip planning chapter, to search for hotels, attractions or for transportation within the destination:

[...] I go to TripAdvisor, I sort them [hotels] by the price and by the stars or by the comments or the ratings that have been given to them, because TripAdvisor also gives pictures, and you can actually see. But simultaneously I also search for hotels on the place I found my air ticket, I also search for hotels and I see what the available ones are, then take that hotel and check it on TripAdvisor. Just to crosscheck, because you can usually see the comments of different people, and you can see if it is really bad sometimes people post pictures. [...] In that sense I do crosschecking, I use different sites on the same time (Traveler1, 17:30 – 16:17)

The above quote shows that she does not only rely on one page, but to verify the information compares the same information e.g. about hotels in more than one sources among them social media. TripAdvisor plays an important role in this “crosschecking” procedure, as the content is presented by real travelers that have experienced the place, therefore, their experiences in written forms or in photos, which lacks of commercial interests is of great value. Therefore, **parallel to informativity, credibility** plays an important role in the usage of travel reviews as well. The below quote shows also the higher trust level regarding the personal, subjective viewpoints of other travelers than the information presented on the hotel’s official page:

[...] if I check hotels, I like to see which ones people vote, what people say about the hotels, sometimes you can go to all the web pages and all the hotels say that they are very good, but I like to see some kind of personal point of view. (Traveler4, 16:28-16:14)

Even, as Traveler 1 already pointed out, the photos posted by real travelers can be argued to be valued higher because of their perceived higher credibility:

“Part of the travel is actually to see the photos so you can imagine, [...] and that is why I use TripAdvisor as well because you actually see the photos of normal people like you and me. (Traveler3, 25:12-24:54)

However, the interviewees also pointed out the importance to **check the credibility** of the information. As Litvin et al. (2008) argued due to the unknown information provider the interpretation of the subjective information online can have its challenges. Therefore, the interviewees noted that while reviewing the different traveler reviews, one has to take into

account the different personal characteristics of the posting traveler and reflect that on his/her own characteristics, such as demographic background, personality trait, family lifecycle or socio-economic status, in order to gain valuable information for themselves. As Traveler1 argued:

“But you should also take into consideration that people are different have different expectations, so sometimes you look at the comment and one person may say it was really bad and another would say it was really good. [...] Sometimes you can see who wrote it and you can see the story, if it was a married couple who went on honeymoon of course the expectation was different, but if it was a student and it was backpacking, than if it is my the case that I can apply it to me.” (Traveler1, 10:11- 9:48)

“[...] I take these comments into account but also I create my own opinion about it, because recommendation is one thing, if it is good or negative that is not necessarily the same for you. So you have to in some kind of way give a look to it and say okay what can be used here what cannot be used.” (Traveler2, 14:12-13:36)

As the above quote shows, to obtain relevant information for the individual traveler the subjective opinions have to be screened and interpreted due to the different personal characteristics of the posting and reviewing traveler. Traveler3 argued that a second reference, even from another source can help to ***interpret the subjective opinion*** of the travelers and to build up her own picture:

“You know people that post are very different you can see who post; you can see what the age group is and where they come from and so on. You have got known that the standard for the Americans, that they like large rooms, if they write it was just a tiny room, then you now the standard is, that it is a good size room. [...] but I am getting more to have a second reference as well of some sort.” (Traveler3, 23:52-23:10)

Moreover, Traveler 5 argued that other travelers’ reviews were not just served as information, but even helped to **narrow down her choices**, which is consistent with the findings of Compete (2006) where the social media sites’ important influential role has to be acknowledged:

[...] I went into hotels.com I just wrote Budapest, then several hundreds of hotels came up, and I found some of the ones which were in the city center and which had a good price, than I looked at the blogs, because I had maybe 3-4 hotels to choose between[...] then I looked at the blogs (Traveler5, 13:25-13:05)

However, until now it was discussed that travelers used other traveler's comments to gather information, and to narrow down the choices, however, Traveler4 pointed out that these comments could even **induce action towards purchasing** a certain tourism product:

[...] It definitely influence, that you may actually end up to buy or to book one of the hotels, that are having good reviews. (Traveler4, 15:38-15:27)

By analyzing what type of social media sites were used in the travel planning to Hungary, it can be stated that the survey respondents indicated similar sites (Fig.7.13) than the interviewees, with 27,4% of using travel reviews such as TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet⁹ or individual bloggers.

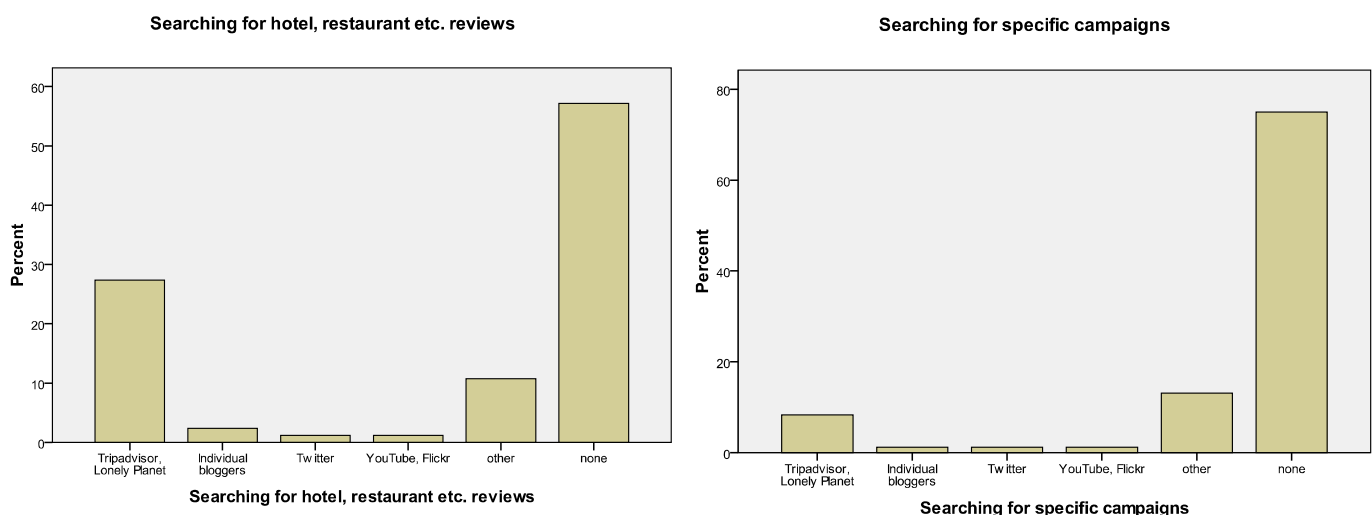


Fig.7.13 Social media sites used for searching reviews and specific campaigns regarding the trip to Hungary

⁹ Lonely Planet is not clearly a social media site, as the main content, even the reviews are generated by the publisher Lonely Planet, but it still allows peer-to-peer communication among travelers in their online community features.

The above travel reviews resulted to be the most useful social media sites when searching for specific campaigns regarding the trip to Hungary as well, but with only 8,3 %, which arguably not that significant. Following the travel reviews the other sources (10,7% - 13,1%) were indicated as the most used, which encompassed also social media sites such as, Wikipedia, hotels.com, flickr.com and venere.com.

To sum up, social media sites, mainly the travel reviews clearly play an important role during the phases of information search and evaluation of alternatives. The consumer-generated content due to its informativity and credibility is of great importance, as it supports the information search e.g. for crosschecking the information, can help to narrow down the choices and can even induce purchase decisions. Therefore, it can be pointed out that social media is used to reduce the risk involved with the tourism product purchase and to obtain value for money.

7.4.3. During the trip phase of travel planning

This section will mainly be supported by the interviewees' responses as the survey did not present any specific questions regarding the usage of social media while taking the trip. However, it can be questioned whether some travelers engage themselves in searching for reviews regarding restaurants or attractions while being onsite and not just in the pre-trip phase as pointed out in the previous section. Traveler3 pointed out that actually she uses social media during the trip.

"Absolutely [I use social media onsite], and restaurants, sites where to do the shopping, what is on [...] If I was somewhere and retained and it turns out that one of my bands were playing, and I want to see them, than it is quite good. I use it all days, where can I have local food [...]"
(Traveler3, 28:40 -28:12)

Furthermore, she pointed out that she searches for above mentioned information on the internet by using a computer and not through mobile devices, which then raises the issue of accessibility and **adequacy** of using social media sites onsite. She even claimed the impracticality of the computer, in relation with the usage of printed sources:

"I do like to have my book with me, you know, you don't carry around with your laptop."
(Traveler3, 25:57-25:52)

The other travelers clearly pointed out that they do use social media sites before the travel, therefore, in the pre-trip phase.

"Normally I am using it before I am going [...]" (Traveler2, 23:33-23:29)

When asking Traveler1 whether she uses social media while onsite, e.g. for searching for concerts, she claimed the importance of official tourism information, due to its perceived higher credibility, where her search would also take place before the trip.

"No, no than I don't use TripAdvisor. When I check the ratings for the hotel , than I also try to find kind of a governmental site of that country, [...]I try to check those, as those have all the events than are happening I think that is the most reliable because that is from the government. (Traveler1, 13:41-13:22)

Furthermore, Traveler5 pointed out the reason of why not using social media onsite:

"It is usually before the trips [using social media] [...] for hotels to see what people voted them and some sightseeing places also. [...] Never on site, I do not have time." (Traveler5, 15:02-14:31)

Due to the interviewees' comments, thus, due to the lack of time onsite, adequacy issues and even credibility concerns regarding the specific information needed onsite, social media is generally not seen as an information source while travelling, but mainly in the pre-trip phase. However, it can be claimed that the information search, including the onsite information gathering could be influenced by the individual tourist characteristics or the different trip characteristics, as e.g. during a 3 weeks' backpacking holiday, which is just roughly planned in advance, the traveler might get really useful information by reviewing other travelers' recommendations. However, to support these claims a more detailed research would be required.

7.4.4. Post-trip phase of travel planning

This section will analyze how social media is used in the post-trip phase of the travel planning for portraying the travel satisfaction and evaluating the purchase decision. While designing the survey it was pre-assumed that the post-trip usage of social media would encompass sharing experiences, photos or comments, therefore, providing WOM in an online environment.

As the figure below (Fig.7.14) shows a great minority of respondents (17,9%) claimed to use always or often the different social media sites during the post-trip for sharing their travel experiences, while the majority of the respondents (62,7%) seldom or never use social media after the trip.

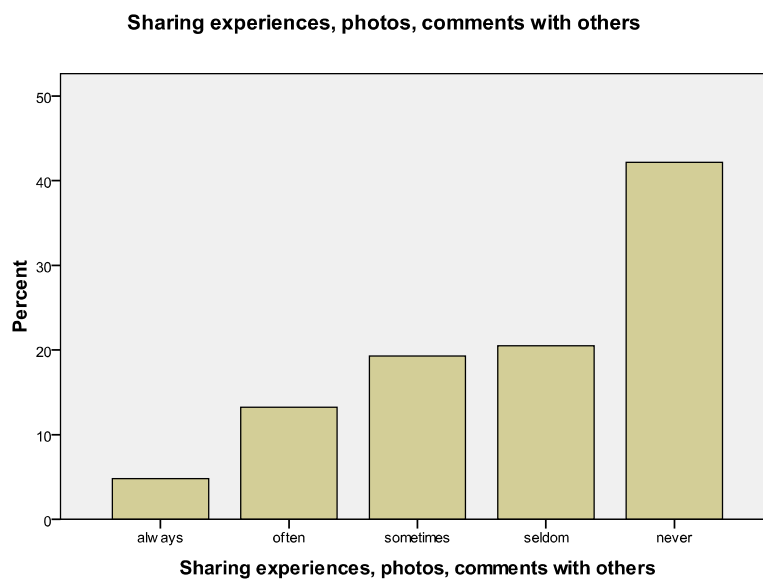


Fig.7.14 Social media usage for sharing experiences, photos and comments with others

Traveler2 pointed out that instead of using social media after the trip he tends to share his experiences via traditional WOM within his social environment:

"I am not contributing so much with reviews. [...] There has not been some kind of occasion that this must just be said. Normally, what I am more doing after I am coming home is that I

actually recommend the place I have been to. [...] I think that I more use my own social network to post also photos and recommendations, and all trip information about how it has been and of course if it was bad or good experience. So I normally not use the social media afterwards to post my comments [...] (Traveler2, 23:16 -22:00)

Furthermore, he pointed out that he does not use social media because so far there was no occasion which urged him to share his opinion beyond his own social circle. For Traveler1 this occasion for using social media in the post-trip phase arrives when the experience was that bad, which urged her to share that with others:

“No, unless it is really bad, then some people have to know about it, than I feel obliged to tell people to make them avoid those places. But if it is really good, than I just don’t have time, and can’t be bothered; I am a bit lazy for that. But if it is bad then I do [...] actually I did it [on TripAdvisor] for one hotel in Greece. (Traveler1, 12:50-12:20)

While Traveler5 claimed to use social media after the trip evaluating both good and bad experiences concerning her hotel stay:

“Sometimes I vote for hotels, I give them stars [on hotels.com, booking.com] [...] I don’t do it normally, but if it is really a nice hotel or really a crappy hotel, than I do it. (Traveler5, 14:21-13:57)

In opposite with the above claimed, where the travelers only share their experiences with other travelers beyond their social circle if the experience was really positive or negative, Traveler3 pointed out her frequent usage of social media in the post-trip phase:

“I post on TripAdvisor [...]I have been very lazy, and I have about 50 reviews to post , because I take a lot photos as well, my hotels rooms or something like that. My husband is not allowed to go in, I go in take a lot of photos before he goes in and messes up the room with our suitcases. I even post on sites, if I have been to a fantastic temple or a restaurant, I post that as well. (Traveler3, 28:05-27:18)

[...] as soon as I for example I walk in a hotel and walk into the lobby my eyes are just healed on everything, and I got it written mentally, and I write it down as well because that is going to go into my review later on. (Traveler3, 18:24-18:09)

The above showed attitude towards social media can be clearly linked with the hedonic benefits of social media (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004), although, she tends to take care of the informativity of her reviews as well, therefore providing functional benefits to others by e.g. not letting her husband to interfere with the site. Although it has to be pointed out that this high involvement towards social media can be connected with the behavioral characteristics of the traveler, which might not be applicable for other travelers, who actually just share their experiences if that was situated in the two extremes.

It was pointed out how the travelers share their experiences and evaluate the trip on social media sites, but, it would be necessary to point out why 62,7% of the survey respondents claimed not to use social media during the post-trip phase. As Respondent8 claimed:

“That is private, only for family and friends. I don't blog and do not share with strangers.”

Or Respondent32:

“Time. Communication of a casual nature with complete strangers is of little interest.”

As the above quotes indicate the majority of the respondents do not connect any benefits with social media usage post trip, not even hedonic, therefore, their experience evaluation if any would remain in their own social circle. The question here remains, whether using social media post-trip can be linked to the behavioral characteristics of the individual or there could be certain motivators, such as claimed above, very positive or very negative experiences, where these travelers would share their experiences with other travelers.

To sum up; social media is used among a minority of travelers during the post-trip phase to share experiences, comments or photos, where mainly the extreme experiences motivate the traveler to spread the WOM on social media sites. Sharing the experiences on social media sites normally encompasses hotel ratings (TripAdvisor, hotels.com) however; certain highly involved travelers motivated by hedonic benefits might engage themselves in a more extended evaluation process, by not just rating but posting reviews, blogs and photos.

7.5. Summing up the role of social media in the travel planning process

In the previous sections it was pointed out that WOM recommendations play the greatest role as an information source during the Danes' travel planning, followed with the independent travel reviews.

The reviews are used in every phase of the travel planning process, due to their credibility and informativity for a certain extent and with different purposes. The social networking sites are not really taken into account during travel planning, as Carrera et al. (2008) concluded as well, where claims regarding its perception will be discussed in the following chapter. As Traveler 3 argued:

"[...] that [Facebook] is not relevant for somebody who likes to travel." (Traveler3, 26:50-26:51)

The independent travel reviews were found really useful in the information search phase, also for evaluating the alternatives, therefore, to narrow down the choices, which could even result in purchase decision. As the below integrative figure shows (Fig.7.15) searching for reviews regarding hotels, restaurants or attractions is of the greatest interest (51,8%) of why the Danish travelers use social media during travel planning.

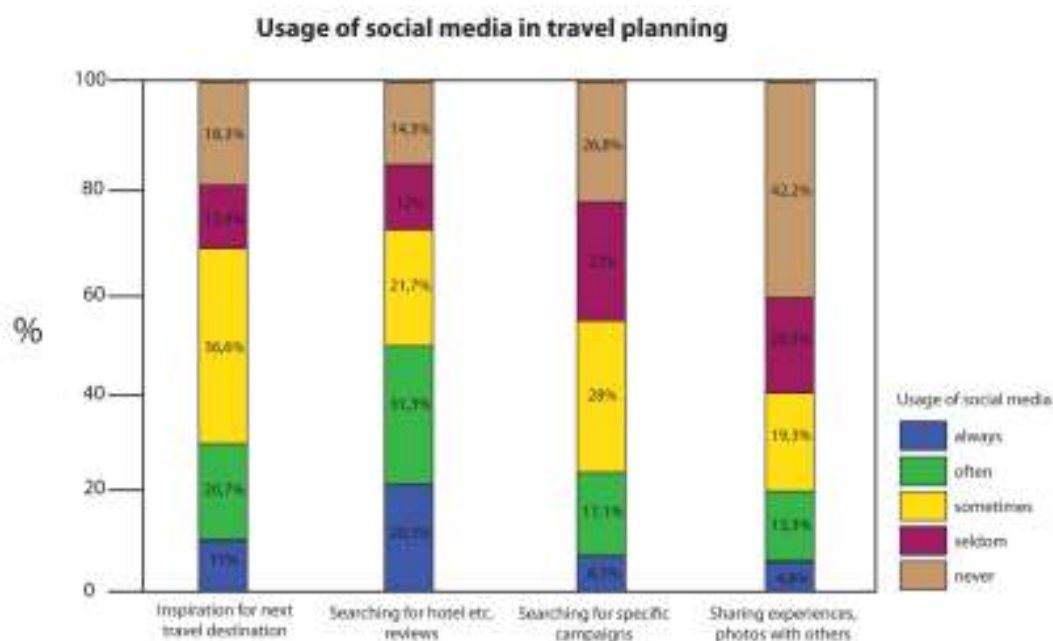


Fig.7.15 Social media usage in the travel planning process

Social media is used for idea generation, by gathering inspiration in the pre-trip phase (31,7 %) as well, which as argued also mainly takes place on those social media sites that incorporates other travelers' reviews. However, pictures of friends posted on the social networking sites might influence and induce further information searches. Social media is significantly less used onsite as Gretzel & Yoo's (2008) study reported as well, and also in the post-trip phase to share the travel experiences either through pictures or reviews and blogs. Social media's post-trip usage is not just influenced by the different behavioral characteristics but also by the intensity of experience while being onsite, either positive or negative.

It can be pointed out in consistence with the study of Cox et al. (2009) that generally social media is not used as a sole, decisive source during the different phases of travel planning, but is used more in combination with other sources; therefore, it can be seen more as a contributory source. As the travelers below pointed out:

"Of course you are using these social medias, but is a not a guarantee it is just another entry for deciding what and when and where to go [...] It is some extra source (Traveler2, 13:04 - 12:43)

[...] Is one of the possibilities [social media] but not the only one. (Traveler4, 13:52 - 13:50)

However, again its role as an information sources whether it is seen as contributory or decisive can depend on the individual behavior characteristic. In addition, the extent of its contribution can depend on the travel planning phase, as clearly in the information search stage of the travel planning, by e.g. using it for cross-checking, its contribution to the information derived from other sources is even greater.

Among the different variables the purpose of the trip clearly influence the reviews' usage where the leisure travelers reported a greater use of it, then the travelers who visit friends and relatives, and with reported no importance for the business travelers.

Moreover, no significant correlations were pointed out among age, gender and the general usage of the different social media sites. The Chi-Square test (see App.14-17) also showed

insignificant relationships between the age groups and the different purposes of using social media ($p=0,576$ -inspiration; $p=0,617$ -review search; $p=0,799$ -specific campaign; $p=0,739$ -sharing experiences). Therefore, it can be concluded that age is not an influencing factor in the social media usage during travel planning. Thus, the extent of social media usage apart from the purpose of the trip has to be linked to the behavioral characteristics of the travelers, such as in case of Traveler3; then to demographic variables, such as age or gender.

8. Perception of the information presented in social media

This chapter will analyze how Danes perceive the different social media sites and the content presented on these sites. It will be discussed whether the age as a demographic variable plays an important role in the different perceptions of social media sites. Additionally, it will be pointed out how the official tourism destination promotions are perceived if those are presented on social media sites.

8.1. Perceived content of social media

To analyze the Danes' perception of social media multi-choice close-ended questions (q4) were proposed in the survey, questioning the reason of using social media during travel planning. 32% of all respondents did not choose among the given alternatives claiming that they do not use social media. The result of the rest (68%) of the respondents is presented in the below Figure 8.1:

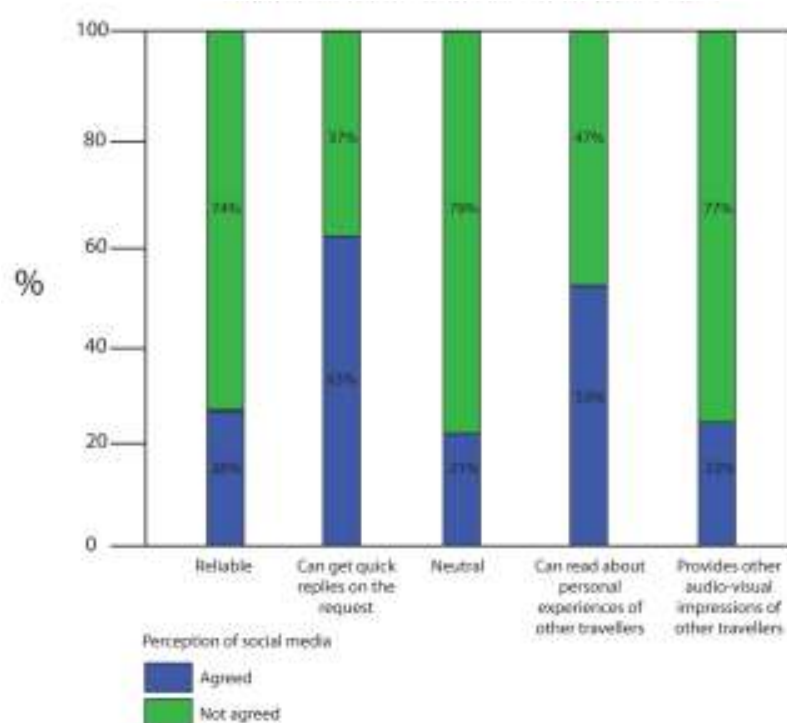


Fig.8.1 Perception of social media

The question can be raised here whether there can be seen any age correlation among those 32 % of all respondents who stated not to use social media. Interestingly the Chi-Square test

resulted in an insignificant relationship ($\chi^2=0,111$; $p=0,739$; see App.18). Therefore, it can be pointed out that the age does not influence whether the respondents perceive or not social media as an information source, and thus, uses it during their travel planning.

Moreover, before starting to analyze in detail the respondents' perception of social media according to the figure (Fig.8.1), it has to be pointed out that the survey question did not give the possibility to answer separately to the diverse types of social media, ranging from independent travel reviews till social networking sites, although, might have been some discrepancies in the answers regarding to the different social media sites. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the interviewees mainly use the independent travel reviews, travel blogs and ratings of hotels, attractions than the social networking sites during the different phases of travel planning. The question here remains whether these travelers' preferences of using mainly one type of social media during travel planning indicates their perception of the different sites as well. As Traveler1 and Traveler2 argued:

[...] Social networking sites are not meant for tourism so I don't expect anything from them
(Traveler1, 8:48 - 8:40)

[...] It is just like some kind of communication form (Facebook), so it's more like staying in touch with people [...] (Traveler2, 21:25 - 21:21)

Therefore, as the above quotes show, and in accordance with Carrera et al. (2008), due to the profile of the social networking sites, as those were created to maintain contact with one another, travelers do not perceive those as relevant information sources during their travel planning. However, as it was argued it might happen that these sites inspire and generate further information search, but are not reviewed with the purpose for searching information for travelling.

By analyzing the respondents' perception of social media the above figure (Fig.8.1) shows the great majority of the respondents claimed the fast communication capabilities (63%) and the user-generated content (53%) as the main reasons for using social media.

For 63% of those who use social media the possibility of getting **quick replies** are of the greatest interest, where arguably social media's low barrier can be claimed. Therefore, it can be pointed out that due to the perceived low cost of using social media, either regarding the time spent or the cost plays an important role in this high percent for its usage as an information source. Moreover, the Chi-Square test showed no correlation ($\chi^2=0,0$; $p=1,00$; see App.19) between the age groups and using social media for its fast communication features with exactly the same distribution percentage among the different age groups. Therefore, using social media due to its fast reply providing ability upon request does not depend on the age.

Reading about **personal experiences** of other travelers is an important feature of social media for 53% of the respondents. As it was argued due to its credibility and informativity the personal experiences of other travelers are clearly valued, and even used for crosschecking information originated from other sources including the official sites as well. As it was pointed out due to the different traveler motivations the personal characteristics of the posting traveler as the contextual clues for interpreting the information have to be taken into account. Moreover, as the below Chi-Square test results (Fig.8.2) show ($p=0,024$) there is a significant correlation between age groups and using social media for reviewing others' experiences.

Chi-Square Tests ^a					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,067 ^a	1	,024		
Continuity Correction ^b	3,879	1	,049		
Likelihood Ratio	5,146	1	,023		
Fisher's Exact Test				,047	,024
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,978	1	,026		
N of Valid Cases	57				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9,00.

Fig.8.2 Correlation between age groups and using social media for the personal experiences

Thus, for the younger age group reading about the personal experiences of others is more highly valued than for the older age group which can be correlated to theory of Beckendorff et al., (2010) where they pointed out that Gen Yers tend to use more their friends in the

decision making, therefore, even other travelers' WOM, than Xers who rely more on expert information. Although, in the younger age group not everyone belongs to Gen Y, therefore, this behavior should not be linked to a certain generation but more to the age group suggested by the Danish Statistics. Moreover, the question can be raised to which extent the credibility or the informativity of the personal recommendations plays a role for the younger age group.

Only 26% pointed out to use social media because of its **reliability**. It has to be argued here again that this low reliability rate might be the result of the different perceptions of the various social media sites, as the question did not allow any distinguishing among the reliability of the various sites. Therefore, this low rate might include the perception of social networking sites, which are not really considered to use for travel information search purposes. Among all social media sites Traveler1 claimed TripAdvisor as the most reliable source, which even used for validating the information gathered from other sources:

[...] that [TripAdvisor] is the most reliable that I use [...] and everything I crosscheck with TripAdvisor. (Traveler1 15:25-15:07)

Traveler3 pointed out the importance of the date when the review was created, as an old review might not be that relevant in the present as e.g. the tourism service provider, such as a hotel or restaurant might have taken into consideration the comments of the travelers and revised or improved their service.

"Absolutely, [reliable] but obviously you can actually see when different things are posted [...] if it is an old post [...] then you would go for something newer. (Traveler3, 22:08-21:39)

A weak correlation ($\chi^2=1,629$; $p=0,202$) was found between the age and perceiving social media as reliable, which cannot be considered significant (see App.20). Thus, reliability of the social media sites is not perceived differently among the different age groups.

Moreover, 23% claimed to use social media because it gives **audio-visual impressions of other travelers**. It was argued in the previous chapter the photos help to imagine the travel

where the photos posted by real travelers are even perceived with a greater credibility due to the lack of commercial interest by sharing those pictures. Moreover, the experiential nature of social media by providing live pictures, such as e.g. the video sharing site YouTube, can further assist to imagine the destination.

“You also search on YouTube because you can get live pictures, I have been using that for China but also for Budapest, [...]you can also get some recommendations also of some people who have been there [...]some of them are giving very good information (Traveler2, 4:45-4:04)

As pointed out above, YouTube also gives a platform for traveler recommendations, therefore, supporting the information presented in an audio-visual form. While analyzing the age group correlation in case of this perception the Chi-Square test indicated a significant correlation, therefore, using social media because of its audio-visual features does depend on the age (Fig.8.3).

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,983 ^a	1	,026		
Continuity Correction ^b	3,600	1	,058		
Likelihood Ratio	5,977	1	,014		
Fisher's Exact Test				,042	,023
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,895	1	,027		
N of Valid Cases	57				

a. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,33.

Fig.8.3 Correlation between age groups and using social media for its audio-visual features

Perceiving social media more useful due to its audio-visual features can be linked to the claimed generational features of the Gen Yers, thus, to their high comfort level with information and communication technologies (Beckendorff et al., 2010), although, not everyone in the younger age group belongs to Gen Y.

Neutrality was pointed out by only 21% as the reason for using social media. Therefore, the majority of travelers tend to not perceive social media neutral, however, the question here

remains whether it is due to the perceived commercial interest of certain sites, which allows user-generated content but still driven by financial motives such as hotels.com, expedia.com or due to the “fake content” generated by service providers in the name of travelers (as argued by O’Connor, 2008; Cox et al., 2009). Traveler2 argued that by monitoring and controlling the reviews can help to maintain the quality of the information presented in social media sites (mainly travel reviews); however, he raised the concern of objectivity if the negative comments are removed.

“I think it [content] [...] is of high quality, of course you can find other comments, like silly comments [...] It is pretty nice that lot of those sites actually can remove those things which are not necessary. (Traveler2, 16:24-15:52)

[...] of course it gives some problem if you just remove all the negative information, so I believe they also have some negative information staying there so it looks objective and looks neutral. (Traveler2, 15:35-15:25)

Removing the negative comments on the one hand can be to support the perception of certain tourism services which clearly interferes in the neutrality of the site. On the other hand eliminating the negative comments might be due to its not adequate formulation on a site which dedicates to provide quality travel information. However, from the above comment it is not clear whether he is concerned with the interference of tourism service providers by either eliminating negative comments of their product, therefore, questioning the site’s neutrality or he is referring to the manipulation of the content to maintain its quality. Furthermore, none of the interviewees pointed out their concern about the possible false content posted by the service providers as travelers to enhance the judgment of their products. In addition, neutrality correlated with the age groups showed low correlation which cannot be considered significant ($\chi^2=1,900$; $p=0,168$, App.21), therefore, age is not an influencing variable on social media’s perception as neutral.

As it was pointed out above the majority of the respondents use (68%) social media in their travel planning. The possibility to get quick replies and reading about other travelers’ personal experiences is of the greatest importance for the respondents. While relatively small percentage perceives social media as neutral or reliable or uses it for its audio-visual

characteristics. Moreover, other's personal experiences and the audio-visual features are of much greater importance for the younger age group, where generational traits pointed out by Beckendorff et al (2010) were found. Though perceiving social media as neutral or reliable does not depend on the age but should be linked more to the individuals' behavioral characteristics.

8.2. Perception of tourism destination promotion presented in social media

In the previous section it was pointed out how people perceive social media, thus, why do they use the different sites during their travel planning. In order to get one step further to point out the possibilities of social media in official destination promotion this section will analyze how the official promotional campaigns are perceived if those are presented in social media.

As it was already pointed out in the methodological section, the discussion of how Danes react on the official campaigns presented in social media will rely only on the qualitative interviews, thus, on the interviewees' comments. When asking the interviewees about their perception of choosing social media as a channel for official promotions none of them hold aloof and claimed it as a non adequate approach. As Traveler1 and Traveler3 pointed out:

"Actually I think it is okay, I recently got my Icelandic friend posted on her wall [Facebook] a new video created to promote Iceland. The music was really cool, the video itself was really cool, and I think that is good for Iceland. [...] I think it would be okay if the official body would post some stuff like that." (Traveler1, 6:05 – 5:25)

[...] I think it is all right it should be there (official promotion on social media) it should be done, it is like a teaser, a carrot come to our country [...] it could be anywhere on TV, on magazine, the more the merrier, advertise [...] (Traveler3, 4:08 – 03:39)

As the above quotes say travelers feel right about official campaigns presented on social media sites. Traveler2 added that using social media for official promotional activities gives the perception of a modern, proactive organization that is able to follow the latest trends:

“It gives me a feeling that they are on the beat with the new times [...] saying that they are ready for using new methods, gives proactive profile, it is a good idea [...]that gives the picture that they are moving forward.” (Traveler2, 00:50 -00:16)

However, in relation to VisitDenmark’s recent promotional video posted on YouTube Traveler5 argued that not the promotional channel, in this case social media, but the content is which influences the perception of the promotion.

“It depends what it is, like that Karen video, not serious at all, that was a huge joke, embarrassing. [...] it depends what kind of promotion it is, of course one can have a good connection to it. (Traveler5, 06:35-06:06)

Therefore, as stated below and also argued by Aarsal et al., (2008) Traveler1 pointed out the advantageous eWOM feature of social media, which provides a larger information scale than the traditional WOM, of which the promotion could benefit as well.

“I think the best thing you can get out of social media is the network and the network effect. It is very easy very fast, it is word of mouth, and it is spreading [...] so I think it is very easy for promotion of a destination (Traveler1, 4:18-3:53)

The travelers gave a few constructive suggestions as well of how official promotion could benefit from the social media, while also easing the travelers’ information search by providing a greater informativity within a short time frame. As Traveler3 pointed out:

[...] that would be the clever thing to work together, [...] if you go into expedia e.g and somebody is just about to book a hotel in Hungary, Budapest [...] it would be fantastic to have that [official homepage] as a link. Go into the official tourism site [...] what to then see, what to then do. (Traveler3, 02:59-02:26)

Or from the other way around, reaching social media from the official website, Traveler4 claimed the importance of lowering the cost of the information search:

I think it would be great [...] when you go on the Hungarian tourist information homepage, then you could have links to hotels or attractions then it is all there. [...] Some social medias are more specific in some countries [...] so if they would give you the link [on the official page] that you need, that would be definitely cut your work, make it easier. (Traveler4, 8:15-7:40)

Moreover, allowing social media features on the DMO website increases the informativity of the page, as the objective information can be supplemented with other travelers' subjective experiences, which is seen by Litvin et al. (2008) as a revenue generating strategy, though only if good WOM is included. In addition, the possible reliability concerns towards the user generated content (Cox et al., 2009) would be eased if those are presented on an official platform.

There can be a little corner or a banner, where you can click then go to another homepage where you could get more stuff actually from people [...] than you can imagine if it comes from there it is then more reliable [...] you will assume at least that they are more reliable (Traveler4, 2:13-1:33)

However, allowing social media features on the main page of the official body can raise credibility and informativity concerns about the official page.

I don't like the social media stuff, blogs and chat forums to be on the official page, because it can turn to be a chat forum for teenagers. But it is nice to have [...] another link that directs to another page. (Traveler5, 08:00-7:20)

Therefore, as suggested above, in order to keep the objectivity and informativity of the official page but still benefit from the social media the different features should be placed in a subpage.

As the above discussion shows due to the interviewees' reactions, it can be argued that travelers are not adverse to the official promotions placed in social media, but might even see it as a positive proactive approach, which as the suggestions show as well, clearly gives a potential for DMOs to further use social media in their destination promotion activities.

9. Discussion and conclusion

Word-of-mouth recommendations play a high influential role in travelers' decision-making process, which undoubtedly gives a significant potential to its electronic version, to the eWOM as well. The results of this study confirm previous researches (Gretzel et al., 2008; Litvin et al., 2008; Cox et al. 2009) suggesting that social media sites allowing eWOM are considered as really important information sources during the travel planning process, owing to particular qualities such as informativity and credibility. The findings open up new opportunities for destination marketers, indicating to further exploit social media in their promotional activities. However, in order to take advantage of beneficial features of social media, it is crucial to acknowledge its role in travelers' decision making process and the characteristics influencing its usage.

This project's case study focused on the young Danish travelers' information search process in general as well as concerning their recent trip to Hungary, in order to draw conclusions about the role of social media in their travel planning and thus, suggest potential ways of using social media in the HNTO's marketing and promotional activities.

It has been pointed out that social media is used among the majority of the travelers (68%) and is even consulted in the first places among all information sources. Still, clear differences were seen among the different types of social media sites, where the independent travel reviews are considered of much greater importance as information sources than the social networking sites, which can be linked to the perception of the latter.

Regarding the influencing factors towards social media's usage in travel planning a hierarchical structure of the influencing variables was observed.

Survey findings indicate that the act and extent of social media usage during travel planning depends on the purpose of the trip alone and not on any demographic variables, such as the age as pre-assumed. Leisure tourists reported the greatest use of it, following with the VFR tourists while for business tourists it does not play any role as an information source.

However, there was found some variation in the way various age groups used social media during travel planning. The younger age group reported greater benefits from the personal recommendations of others and from its audio-visual features than elder group. While in general, travelers use social media for its fast communication abilities, thus, for its low entry

barriers and for reviewing others' experiences. Therefore, reaching other travelers' recommendations and comments in a cost effective way are clearly considered important for all travelers, where those informativity and credibility aspect can be claimed.

Moreover, social media is mainly used in the pre-trip phase for information search and to narrow down the choices, though it might serve as an inspirational source as well. While during the trip social media is not considered as an adequate information source and is yet underused due to its computer and internet based features. However, its adequacy might be changing with the increasing popularity of mobile devices, e.g. Smartphone applications. In the Post-trip phase Danes share their experiences online (i.e. beyond their traditional social circle) only if the experience was extraordinary, either in a positive or negative way. The young travelers are not adverse to the official promotions placed in social media; they even perceive it as modern and proactive approach, though the content of the promotion still plays a significant role. Moreover, allowing features, both on social media and DMO sites that supplements the information conveyed by the official body with subjective travel reviews is seen favorable among the travelers.

All these above stated give an indication to the DMOs, in this case the HNTO to around which type of social media they should mainly center their promotional or revenue generating strategies which target group of tourists they should consider and at which travel planning phase they should focus on when exploiting social media. Either using the travel reviews' sites as promotional channel or allowing traveler reviews on their official homepage, which increase the informativity of the site are possible ways to benefiting from social media. However, other types of social media sites, networking sites or photo/video sharing sites should not be underestimated either as those can be of inspiration for possible future travels.

Concerning the target group, clearly the leisure tourists and their needs and motivations should be in focus when designing the destination promotion to be presented in social media or the social media features on the official page. To reach all segments of tourists others' personal experiences should be emphasized, while designing certain tools that facilitate to reach this information in a time and cost effective way. Audio-visual features can even further enhance the information search of the younger segment of travelers.

Moreover, age had an impact on the travel reviews usage concerning their recent trip to Hungary, where the younger age group reported greater usefulness of their usage than the elder group, which indicates concerns about the content of the existing reviews of Hungary, as those tend to be more appealing to the younger segment. Therefore, if HNTD wants to reach all age groups of the leisure tourists through their promotion presented in social media they should encourage travelers from the older age group as well to share their experiences, therefore, providing greater informativity for this segment.

Social media can be exploited in the Pre-trip phase of travel planning either for inspiration but more for providing greater informativity through social media, which can lead the traveler towards choosing the destination. Moreover, to enhance social media usage onsite, HNTD could cooperate with software developers to design specific features for mobile devices such as image recognizing software that links together with travel reviews. However, as in the Post-trip phase Danes engage themselves in both the really positive and the negative eWOM, to favor the positive WOM of the destination and to build up loyalty positive comments and reviews should be encouraged. However, negative comments should not be underestimated as all comments together can present a more unbiased opinion of the destination, and negative comments can serve as a pulling factor or an indication of where the product needs alteration or improvement.

Even though this research has pointed out some possible directions of how the HNTD can benefit from social media, it would be necessary to conduct more research with different data design among the different types of travelers and age groups of Danes in order to effectively design their exact promotional tools in social media.

Bibliography of the project

Arsal, I., Backman, S. & Baldwin, E. (2008) Influence of an Online Travel Community on Travel Decisions. In O'Connor, P., Höpken, W. & Gretzel, U. (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 2008* (pp. 82-93). Wien: Springer.

Beckendorff, P., Moscardo, G. & Pendergast, D. (2010) *Tourism and generation Y*. Oxfordshire: Cabi.

Beldona, S., Nusair, K. & Demicco, F. (2009) Online Travel Purchas Behavior of generational Cohorts: A Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18 (4), 406-420

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: University Press

Carrera, P., Chiu, C., Pratipwattanawong, P, Chienwattanasuk, S., Ahmad, S. F. & Murphy, J. (2008) MySpace, My Friends, My Customers. In O'Connor, P., Höpken, W. & Gretzel, U. (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 2008* (pp. 94-105). Wien: Springer.

Choi, S., Lehto, X. Y. & O'Leary J. T. (2007) What Does the Consumer Want from a DMO Website? A Study of US and Canadian Tourists Perspectives. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9 (2), 59-72

Chung, J. Y. & Buhalis, D. (2008) Web 2.0: A study of online travel community. In O'Connor, P., Höpken, W. & Gretzel, U. (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 2008* (pp. 70-81). Wien: Springer.

Compete (2006) *Embracing consumer buzz creates measurement challenges for marketers*. Last retrieved 21 May, 2010 from:
http://media.competeinc.com/med/uploads/files/Compete_Spark_12_06_Embracing_Consumer_Buzz_Creates_Measurement_Challenges.pdf

Cox, C., Burgess, S., Sellitto, C & Buultjens, J. (2009) The Role of User-Generated Content in Tourists' Travel Planning Behavior. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18 (8), 743-764

Creswell, J. W. (2003) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Danish Statistics (2010) *Use of internet for communication activities by type and communication activity*.

Last retrieved 24 June, 2010 from: <http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1280>

Decrop, A. (1999) Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20 (1), 157-161

Decrop & Snelders (2004) Planning the summer vacation: An adaptable process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31 (4), 1008-1030

Fall, L. T. (2000) An Exploratory Study of the Relationship Between Human Values and Information Sources Within a Tourism Framework. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 7 (1), 3-28

Fall, L. T. (2004) Developing Innovative Public Relations Strategies: Using Grunig's Nested Segmentation Model and Yankelovich's Generational Influences Model to Distinguish Pleasure Traveler Publics. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 11 (1), 5-29

Fernando, A. (2007) Social media change the rules: Say farewell to top-down and hello to consumer-led communication. *Communication World*, 24 (1), 9-10

Fodness, D. & Murray, B. (1999) A Model of Tourist Information Search Behavior. *Journal of Travel Research*, 37 (3), 220-230

Gretzel, U., Myunghwa, K. & Woojin, L. (2008) Differences in Consumer-Generated Media Adoption and Use: A Cross-National Perspective. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 17 (1), 99-120

Gretzel, U. & Yoo, K. H. (2008) Use and Impact of Online Travel Reviews. In O'Connor, P., Höpken, W. & Gretzel, U. (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 2008* (pp. 35-46). Wien: Springer.

Gursoy, D. & McCleary, K. W. (2004) An Integrative Model of Tourists' Information Search Behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31 (2), 353-373

Island Caretaker Blog (2010) *Island Caretaker Blog- The Best Job in the World*. Last retrieved 26 July, 2010 from: <http://www.islandreefjob.com/>

Johns, N. & Lee-Ross, D. (1998) Research methods in service industry management. London: Casell

Kvale, S. (1996), *Interviews- An introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. California: Sage Publication.

Kvale, S. & Birkmann, S. (2009) *InterViews: learning the craft of qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Lin, Y. S., & Huang, J. Y. (2006) Internet blogs as tourism marketing medium: A case study. *Journal of Business Research*, 59, 1201-1205

Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E. & Pan, B. (2007) Electronic word-of mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism management*, 29 (3) 458-468

Munar, A. M (2009). *Challenging the Brand*. In: Cai, L, W. C. Gartner and A. M. Munar (eds). *Tourism Branding : Communities in Action*. Emerald, pp. 17-35 (Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice).

Murphy, L., Mascardo, G. & Beckendorff, P. (2007) Exploring word-of-mouth influences on travel decisions: friends and relatives vs. other travelers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31 (5), 517-527

O'Connor, P. (2008) User-Generated Content and Travel: A Case Study on Tripadvisor.Com. In O'Connor, P., Höpken, W. & Gretzel, U. (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in*

Tourism 2008: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 2008 (pp. 47-58). Wien: Springer.

Pan, B. & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2006) Online information search: Vacation planning process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33 (3), 809-832

Park, D., Lee, J. & Han, I. (2007) The effect of On-Line Consumer Reviews on Consumer Purchasing Intention: The Moderating Role of Involvement. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 11 (4), 125-148

Pike, S. (2004) *Destination Marketing Organizations*. Amsterdam: Elsevier

Seabra, C., Abrantes, J. L. & Lages, L. F. (2007) The impact of using non-media information sources on the future use of mass media information sources: The mediating role of expectations fulfillment. *Tourism Management*, 28 (6), 1541-1554

Swarbrooke, J. & Horner, S. (1999) *Consumer Behavior in Tourism*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann

Sweney, M. (2009) 'Best job in the world' campaign storms Cannes Lions advertising awards. Last retrieved 27 July, 2010 from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/jun/23/best-job-advertising-awards>

Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (2003) *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks: SagePublications, Inc.

Taylor Herring (2009) *The Publicity Stunt Hall of Fame*. Last retrieved 27 July, 2010, from <http://www.taylorherring.com/blog/index.php/tag/top-50-pr-stunts/>

Tourism Queensland (2010) Last retrieved: 27 July, 2010 from http://www.tq.com.au/news-room/best-job-in-the-world-media-centre/best-job-in-the-world-media-centre_home.cfm

Tourism Queensland (2009) Last retrieved: 27 July, 2010, from http://www.tq.com.au/fms/tq_corporate/news_room/Best%20Job%20media%20centre/13%20December%202009%20-%20Best%20Job%20Island%20Caretaker%20celebrates%20Christmas%20Queensland-style.pdf

Wang, Y. & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2004) Towards understanding members' general participation in and active contribution to an online travel community. *Tourism Management* 25 (6), 709-722

Appendix

Appendix 1. - Survey

SURVEY ON HOLIDAY PLANNING AND INFORMATION SEARCH

This survey is for Eva Treer's Master Thesis, Aalborg University, MA in Tourism Studies

Please fill out the questionnaire by replying to the questions or ticking in the adequate boxes.

About you

Your age: Gender: female ☐ male ☐
 Relationship status: Married ☐ in a relationship ☐ single ☐
 Children: none ☐ yes, how many Primary Secondary Tertiary
 Occupation: Level of education completed: ☐ ☐ ☐
 City of residence: Postcode:
 What is the purpose of your visit to Hungary? Leisure ☐ Business ☐ Visit friends and relatives ☐

General questions concerning your information searching process

1. Which of the following information sources do you use when you are about to go on holiday?

Please rank your answers from 1-7. (1 should refer to that sources which you use the most)

My friends and relatives ☐
 Official tourism organization of the certain destination ☐
 Travel agencies, tour operators ☐
 Independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet ☐
 Social networking sites, e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube ☐
 Printed media, e.g. guide books, newspapers ☐
 Other ☐ please specify: _____

2. Which social media sites do you use the most when planning your holiday?

Please mark maximum THREE.

Tripadvisor ☐ Lonely Planet ☐ Individual bloggers ☐
 Facebook ☐ Youtube ☐ Twitter ☐
 MySpace ☐ Other social media site ☐ please specify: _____

3. How do you use these social media sites in relation to holiday planning?

Please mark your frequency of usage.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
To get an inspiration for my next travel destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To share my experiences, photos, videos, comments with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for specific campaigns, offers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other use, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you marked never or seldom, why? _____

4. During holiday planning I use social media because...

- ...it is reliable.
...I can get quick replies on my request.
...it is neutral.
...I can read about the personal experiences of other travelers.
...it provides audio-visual impressions of other travelers.
I don't use social media.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions concerning your actual trip to Budapest/ Hungary

5. Which was the most useful source for your actual holiday planning to Hungary?

Please rank your answers from 1-7. (1 should refer to that sources which you use the most)

- Friends and relatives
Hungary's official tourism organization (Ungarns Turistråd)
Travel agencies, tour operators
Independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet
Social networking sites, e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube
Printed media, e.g. guide books, newspaper
Other ☐ please specify: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How did you use the following social media sites when you planned your actual trip to Hungary?

TripAdvisor Lonely Planet Individual Facebook Youtube Twitter MySpace Other social media site _____
Planet bloggers

- To get an inspiration for traveling to Hungary
To search for reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions
To check others experiences, photos, videos, comments about Hungary
To search for specific campaigns, offers
Other use, please specify: _____
Not used

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. How do you evaluate the information posted on social media sites about Hungary?

Thank you very much for your help!

Please write here your email address if you would like to be contacted for an interview as well:

--

Thank you again and have a nice stay in Hungary ☺

Appendix 2. – Example 1 of a filled out survey

72
27/05 Copenhagen

SURVEY ON HOLIDAY PLANNING AND INFORMATION SEARCH

This survey is for Eva Treer's Master Thesis, Aalborg University, MA in Tourism Studies

Please fill out the questionnaire by replying to the questions or ticking in the adequate boxes.

About you

Your age: Gender: female ☐ male ☒

Relationship status: Married ☐ in a relationship ☒ single ☐

Children: none ☒ yes, how many

Occupation: Level of education completed: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☒

City of residence: Postcode:

What is the purpose of your visit to Hungary? Leisure ☒ Business ☐ Visit friends and relatives ☐

General questions concerning your information searching process

1. Which of the following information sources do you use when you are about to go on holiday?
Please rank your answers from 1-7. (1 should refer to that sources which you use the most)

My friends and relatives	3
Official tourism organization of the certain destination	6
Travel agencies, tour operators	5
Independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet	1
Social networking sites, e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube	2
Printed media, e.g. guide books, newspapers	4
Other <input type="checkbox"/> please specify: _____	

2. Which social media sites do you use the most when planning your holiday?
Please mark maximum THREE.

Tripadvisor <input type="checkbox"/>	Lonely Planet <input type="checkbox"/>	Individual bloggers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>	Youtube <input type="checkbox"/>	Twitter <input type="checkbox"/>
MySpace <input type="checkbox"/>	Other social media site <input type="checkbox"/>	please specify: <u>Internet in general</u>

3. How do you use these social media sites in relation to holiday planning?
Please mark your frequency of usage.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
To get an inspiration for my next travel destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To share my experiences, photos, videos, comments with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for specific campaigns, offers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other use, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you marked never or seldom, why? _____

4. During holiday planning I use social media because...

...it is reliable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
...I can get quick replies on my request.	<input type="checkbox"/>
...it is neutral.	<input type="checkbox"/>
...I can read about the personal experiences of other travelers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
...it provides audio-visual impressions of other travelers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I don't use social media.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions concerning your actual trip to Budapest/ Hungary

5. Which was the most useful source for your actual holiday planning to Hungary?
Please rank your answers from 1-7. (1 should refer to that sources which you use the most)

Friends and relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hungary's official tourism organization (Ungarns Turistråd)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Travel agencies, tour operators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social networking sites, e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Printed media, e.g. guide books, newspaper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/> please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How did you use the following social media sites when you planned your actual trip to Hungary?

	TripAdvisor Planet	Lonely Planet bloggers	Individual Facebook	Youtube	Twitter	MySpace	Other social media site
To get an inspiration for traveling to Hungary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To check others experiences, photos, videos, comments about Hungary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for specific campaigns, offers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other use, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not used	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. How do you evaluate the information posted on social media sites about Hungary?

Fulfilling

Thank you very much for your help!

Please write here your email address if you would like to be contacted for an interview as well:

Thank you again and have a nice stay in Hungary ☺

Appendix 3. – Example 2 of a filled out survey

13/05 Norwegian

(45)

SURVEY ON HOLIDAY PLANNING AND INFORMATION SEARCH

This survey is for Eva Treer's Master Thesis, Aalborg University, MA in Tourism Studies

Please fill out the questionnaire by replying to the questions or ticking in the adequate boxes.

About you

Your age: 35 Gender: female ☒ male ☐

Relationship status: Married ☐ in a relationship ☐ single ☒

Children: none ☒ yes, how many ☐

Occupation: Consultant Level of education completed: Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☒

City of residence: Copenhagen Postcode: 1726

What is the purpose of your visit to Hungary? Leisure ☒ Business ☐ Visit friends and relatives ☐

General questions concerning your information searching process

1. Which of the following information sources do you use when you are about to go on holiday?
Please rank your answers from 1-7. (1 should refer to that sources which you use the most)

My friends and relatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1
Official tourism organization of the certain destination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4
Travel agencies, tour operators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5
Independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2
Social networking sites, e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Printed media, e.g. guide books, newspapers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6
Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> please specify: <u>flickr.com</u>	

2. Which social media sites do you use the most when planning your holiday?
Please mark maximum THREE.

Tripadvisor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lonely Planet <input type="checkbox"/>	Individual bloggers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>	Youtube <input type="checkbox"/>	Twitter <input type="checkbox"/>
MySpace <input type="checkbox"/>	Other social media site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	please specify: <u>flickr.com</u>

3. How do you use these social media sites in relation to holiday planning?
Please mark your frequency of usage.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
To get an inspiration for my next travel destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To search for reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To share my experiences, photos, videos, comments with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To search for specific campaigns, offers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other use, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you marked never or seldom, why? I use friends for inspiration

4. During holiday planning I use social media because...

- ...it is reliable.
 ...I can get quick replies on my request.
 ...it is neutral.
 ...I can read about the personal experiences of other travelers.
 ...It provides audio-visual impressions of other travelers.
 I don't use social media.

☐
☒
☐
☒
☒
☐

Questions concerning your actual trip to Budapest/ Hungary

5. Which was the most useful source for your actual holiday planning to Hungary?
 Please rank your answers from 1-7. (1 should refer to that sources which you use the most)

- Friends and relatives
 Hungary's official tourism organization (Ungarns Turistråd)
 Travel agencies, tour operators
 Independent travel reviews and blogs, e.g. Trip Advisor, Lonely Planet
 Social networking sites, e.g. MySpace, Facebook, YouTube
 Printed media, e.g. guide books, newspaper
 Other ☐ please specify: _____

☒
☐
☐
☒
☐
☐

6. How did you use the following social media sites
 when you planned your actual trip to Hungary?

TripAdvisor Lonely Planet Individual Facebook Youtube Twitter Myspace Other social media site flickr

- To get an inspiration for traveling to Hungary
 To search for reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions
 To check others experiences, photos, videos, comments about Hungary
 To search for specific campaigns, offers
 Other use, please specify: check offers
 Not used

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

☒
☒

7. How do you evaluate the information posted on social media sites about Hungary?

Due to source, comments, content
also it seems reliable

Thank you very much for your help!

Please write here your email address if you would like to be contacted for an interview as well:

Thank you again and have a nice stay in Hungary ☺

Appendix 4. - Interview questions

1. When do you mainly use the different social media sites during you travel planning, e.g. before, during or after the trip?
2. How do you use social media?
3. Can you maybe formulate why do you use different social media sites?
4. How do the different sites influence you in your travel planning?
5. What you think about the content presented in different social media sites?
6. Could you maybe summarize the role of social media for you in your travel planning process? Does it supplement other information sources or do you use it as the main source of information?
7. Do you think official tourism promotion can be linked with social media in a way or another?
8. How do you feel about official campaigns or official destination promotion if it is presented in social media sites?
9. Would you be more interested in checking Hungary's official tourism homepage, if it would allow interactive features, e.g. you could read about recommendations from other travelers, check their experiences, photos?

Appendix 5. – Use of internet for private purposes (Danish Statistics, 2010)

Use of internet for private purposes by time, internet activity and type				
	Age: 16-19 years	Age: 20-39 years	Age: 40-59 years	Age: 60-74 years
2010				
Sending / receiving e-mails	93	94	85	60
Finding information about goods or services	82	90	83	54
Using services related to travel and accommodation	47	71	65	44
Downloading software (other than games software)	70	65	51	28
Reading or downloading online news / newspapers / news magazines	58	73	67	45
Looking for a job or sending a job application	30	46	28	3
Seeking health-related information	46	62	54	35
Internet Banking	50	86	75	48
Selling of goods or services, e.g. via auctions	23	39	30	13
Looking for information about education, training or course offers	70	55	39	11
Doing an online course (in any subject)	8	8	4	1

Consulting the Internet with the purpose of learning	84	73	53	28
Contact public authorities (2008)
Obtaining information from public authorities web sites in the past three months	44	79	75	49
Downloading official forms in the past three months	17	45	44	29
Sending filled in forms in the past three months	23	56	57	37

Unit: Percent of all individuals

Appendix 6 – Correlation between age and the usage of travel reviews

Correlations

		Age	Independent travel reviews
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-,121
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,273
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	5667,810	-153,952
	Covariance	68,287	-1,855
	N	84	84
Independent travel reviews	Pearson Correlation	-,121	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,273	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-153,952	285,238
	Covariance	-1,855	3,437
	N	84	84

Appendix 7 – Correlation between age and the usage of social networking sites

Correlations		Age	Social networking sites
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-,143
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,194
	N	84	84
Social networking sites	Pearson Correlation	-,143	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,194	
	N	84	84

Appendix 8 – Correlation between age group and social networking sites' usage concerning the trip to Hungary

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,540 ^a	1	,111		
Continuity Correction ^b	1,630	1	,202		
Likelihood Ratio	2,426	1	,119		
Fisher's Exact Test				,125	,103
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,510	1	,113		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,49.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 9– Correlation between gender and independent travel reviews’ usage

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,749 ^a	6	,840
Likelihood Ratio	2,758	6	,839
Linear-by-Linear Association	,022	1	,882
N of Valid Cases	84		

a. 7 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,62.

Appendix 10 – Correlation between gender and social networking sites’ usage

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,517 ^a	6	,607
Likelihood Ratio	4,923	6	,554
Linear-by-Linear Association	,021	1	,884
N of Valid Cases	84		

a. 11 cells (78,6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,62.

Appendix 11 - Correlation between gender and independent travel reviews’ usage concerning the trip to Hungary

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,377 ^a	1	,241		
Continuity Correction ^b	,890	1	,346		
Likelihood Ratio	1,396	1	,237		
Fisher's Exact Test				,260	,173
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,361	1	,243		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12,55.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 12 – Correlation between gender and social networking sites' usage concerning the trip to Hungary

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,026 ^a	1	,872	1,000	,563
Continuity Correction ^b	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	,026	1	,872		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	,026	1	,873		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5,26.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 13 – Correlation between purpose of trip and social networking sites' usage concerning the trip to Hungary

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,491 ^a	2	,288
Likelihood Ratio	4,140	2	,126
Linear-by-Linear Association	,000	1	,989
N of Valid Cases	84		

a. 2 cells (33,3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,70.

Appendix 14 – Correlation between age group and social media usage for inspiration

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,895 ^a	4	,576
Likelihood Ratio	2,976	4	,562
Linear-by-Linear Association	,032	1	,858
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 2 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,07.

Appendix 15 – Correlation between age group and social media usage for searching for reviews

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,654 ^a	4	,617
Likelihood Ratio	2,665	4	,615
Linear-by-Linear Association	,096	1	,756
N of Valid Cases	83		

a. 2 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,37.

Appendix 16 – Correlation between age group and social media usage for searching for specific campaigns

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,657 ^a	4	,799
Likelihood Ratio	1,645	4	,801
Linear-by-Linear Association	,445	1	,505
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (30,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,65.

Appendix 17 – Correlation between age group and social media usage for sharing experiences

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,984 ^a	4	,739
Likelihood Ratio	1,988	4	,738
Linear-by-Linear Association	,170	1	,680
N of Valid Cases	83		

a. 3 cells (30,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,40.

Appendix 18 – Correlation between age group and not using social media during travel planning

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,111 ^a	1	,739		
Continuity Correction ^b	,008	1	,930		
Likelihood Ratio	,111	1	,740		
Fisher's Exact Test				,808	,461
Linear-by-Linear Association	,110	1	,740		
N of Valid Cases	84				

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9,32.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 19 – Correlation between age group and using social media for its quick replies

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,000 ^a	1	1,000		
Continuity Correction ^b	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	,000	1	1,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				1,000	,617
Linear-by-Linear Association	,000	1	1,000		
N of Valid Cases	57				

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7,00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 20 – Correlation between age group and using social media for its reliability

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,629 ^a	1	,202		
Continuity Correction ^b	,916	1	,339		
Likelihood Ratio	1,580	1	,209		
Fisher's Exact Test				,220	,169
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,600	1	,206		
N of Valid Cases	57				

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5,00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 21 – Correlation between age group and using social media for its neutrality

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,900 ^a	1	,168		
Continuity Correction ^b	1,069	1	,301		
Likelihood Ratio	1,823	1	,177		
Fisher's Exact Test				,187	,151
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,867	1	,172		
N of Valid Cases	57				

a. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table