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CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN TRAVEL-RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

The term of “consumer engagement” is extensively used in the digital era. It is believed that engaged consumers play an important role in products/services referral and recommendation, new product/service development and experience/value co-creation. Although the notion of consumer engagement sounds compelling, it is not fully developed in theory. Different interpretations coexist, resulting in confusion and misuse of the concept. This study attempts to define consumer engagement and develop a conceptual framework of consumer engagement, addressing antecedents of consumer engagement in online context. Moreover, some situational and social media usage-related factors are incorporated into the framework.

A set of propositions are presented based on literature review and the conceptual framework to illustrate the relationship between consumer engagement and related factors. To provide empirical evidence for the conceptual model, an online survey is conducted. Participants complete the self-administered survey by answering questions concerning their online experience with the travel-related social media website they visit most. Two-step structural equation modeling is employed to analyze the data. The results show that both community experience and community identification have significant and positive relationship with consumer engagement. Community experience is also a strong predictor of community identification. Attitude toward using social media and travel involvement influence the relationship between consumer engagement and its antecedents.

With focus on the interactive and experiential nature of consumer engagement, this study expands current understanding of consumer engagement and provides insights for hospitality and tourism businesses regarding how to engage consumers through travel-related social media.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study intends to illustrate the concept of consumer engagement in the online environment and identify factors influencing consumer engagement in travel-related social media. The current chapter provides background of the study, discusses research contributions and outlines research problems and questions.

Background

Consumer behavior has been increasingly transformed by the advances of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and in particular, the development of Web 2.0 technologies (De Valck, Van Bruggen, & Wierenga, 2009; Hoffman & Novak, 1996). As predicted by Toffler (1980) in his well-known book “The Third Wave”, people in the information age are looking for involvement, participation and co-creation experience (Govers & Go, 2006). Therefore, a marketing paradigm shift is required from exchange-centric to experience-centric (Li & Petrick, 2008; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In the traditional marketplace, companies and consumers had distinctive roles of production and consumption. There was little or no intervention from consumers in companies’ product development, sales promotion and channel selection. Consumers were passive buyers with roles predetermined by companies (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000, 2003). Today the distinction between production and consumption has disappeared. Consumers are changing from their traditional roles and are engaging in the value-creation process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo, 2009).

The call for a new paradigm is not new to the marketing field (Shaw, Bailey, & Williams, 2011; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Since the 1980s, new perspectives such as network marketing, relationship marketing, real-time marketing, service marketing and brand

relationships have emerged and triggered paradigm debates among marketing scholars (Li & Petrick, 2008; Smit, Bronner, & Tolboom, 2007). For instance, relationship marketers challenged transaction marketing paradigm by arguing that trust and commitment could facilitate value creation and long-term relationship could bring competitive advantage (Berry, 1983; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Although some arguments are superficial, fragmented (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), and might lose customer perspective (Ambler, 2006), overall they help healthy development of marketing discipline (Li & Petrick, 2008).

The latest paradigm debate indicates that marketing is evolving to a new, transcending dominant logic (i.e. service-dominant (S-D) logic) where a higher-order, S-D-logic-compatible relationship is developed (Vargo & Lusch, 2010). By re-conceptualizing services, goods and transactions, Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that marketing paradigm has transformed from the exchange of tangible goods to the exchange of intangibles such as skills, knowledge and processes. A new S-D logic is emerging and transcending the goods-dominant (G-D) logic. The difference between the two logics lies in a changed understanding of resources and value (Li & Petrick, 2008). In the goods-centered paradigm, tangible resources, embedded value and transaction are the focus. Both goods and customers are operand resources. The role of marketing played in production is to create time, place and possession utilities (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). The goods-centered paradigm is sufficient during the time when marketing is primarily dealing with distribution of physical goods (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). However, it might hinder a complete understanding of marketing for its ignorance of the role of services (Kotler, 1997). The S-D logic for marketing proposes a revised focus on intangible resources, the co-creation of value and relationships. In the service-centered paradigm, goods are transmitters of operand resources and customers are co-creators of value.

Vargo and Lusch's award-winning paper unifies a number of previously disparate marketing concepts and ideas and develops an exciting basis for emphasizing consumer-oriented perspective (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009). They argue that "value can only be created with and determined by the users in the 'consumption' process and through use or what is referred to as value-in-use" (Lusch & Vargo, 2006, p. 284). The new service-dominant logic highlights the customer-supplier relationship through interaction and co-creation. Interaction is seen as a source of value creation (Bolton & Saxena-Iyer, 2009). Through interaction, firms and consumers learn as much as possible about each other. A series of interaction occur between consumers and their suppliers during product design, production, delivery and consumption (Bolton & Saxena-Iyer, 2009). The interactions can be initiated by either the company (e.g. via an invitation to online chat) or the customer (e.g. through inquiry or complaint), or both of them (e.g. attending online auction) (Payne et al., 2009).

Co-creation refers to the process by which both consumers and producers collaborate or participate in creating value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Consumers are assumed to utilize their knowledge and skills to create value-in-use or co-create value with organizations (Vargo & Lusch, 2010). It is acknowledged that consumers can play an important role in co-creating innovative ideas for product design (Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, Krafft, & Singh, 2010). For instance, Threadless.com, a T-shirt manufacturer, encourages consumers to submit graphic designs for T-shirts online and invites members of the Threadless.com consumer community and visitors to its website to vote on the submission. The most-liked designs will be used for production and sale (Parent, Plangger, & Bal, 2011). The active role that consumers play in consumption and value-creation process shifts power from producers to consumers and blurs the boundaries between companies and customers (Pongsakornrunsilp & Schroeder, 2011).

Both companies and consumers can benefit from the co-creation process. On the one hand, consumers can obtain more information on companies and their products, and co-develop their personalized experience; On the other hand, companies can find out what consumers really think and get consumers involved into the research and development process. Consumers have become a new source of competence for companies (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). However, companies can't obtain the competence or create any value without consumer engagement. In the new economy, access to consumers is more important than selling tangible products (Straus, 2000). The biggest challenge for most practitioners is how to "lock-in" their customers (Govers & Go, 2006).

The advance of ICTs, particularly the Internet has dramatically changed the dynamic of the marketplace by offering a plethora of new media, such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other online communities. As observed by Wellman and his colleagues (i.e. Wellman, Boase, & Chen, 2002; Wellman et al., 2003), the ICTs shift "work and communities ties from linking people-in-places to linking people at any places". Therefore, connections are to people instead of places. New media offer companies various opportunities to reach consumers, communicated with them and understand their purchase and consumption behavior (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). On the other hand, the growth of new media has enabled consumers to provide their own content, increasing the possibilities of personal experiences and co-created value. Consumers today are able to access and learn about companies without temporal and spatial limit. They increasingly provide voluntary product reviews or initiate a dialogue with companies. Through different types of network established by new media, the empowered consumers now seek to influence every part of business system (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

The market has become a forum where business and consumers can work together to introduce innovation and create value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000).

The importance of new media for marketing, especially customer relationship building is acknowledged by academia and practitioners. For instance, Deighton and Kornfeld (2009) argue that new media create new marketing environment where the flow of brand information is out of companies' control and becomes multidirectional, interconnected and difficult to predict. The interactive nature of social media allows information sharing and exchange not only between companies and consumers but among consumers as well (Sashi, 2012). Consumers are well aware of the influences they can make to businesses (Nuttavuthisit, 2010). They may initiate an idea of new product design or manifest their recent brand experience. Sometimes, companies find themselves the last one that receives consumers' feedback when it is all over the virtual space. Consumers would rather spend more time searching and reading others' review instead of "chatting" with companies. Thus, it is suggested that companies have a thorough understanding of why consumers utilize these new media and how interactions through new media influence consumers' cognition, affect and behavior (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

The interactive features of social media have captured the attention of practitioners in diverse industries and led to an explosion of interest in consumer engagement (Sashi, 2012). In recent business practice discourse, the term "consumer/customer engagement" is frequently discussed and used to describe the nature of interactions or interactive experience on various new media (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeck, 2011). For instance, at Gartner Symposium, engagement is claimed to be the key to social media marketing. It is strongly advocated that companies provide or connect to social media to engage customers since the population of "Generation Virtual" is growing (Gartner Inc., 2008). After reviewing social media practices in the hospitality

industry, Kasavana, (2008) concluded that stimulating consumer engagement is the first objective of social media. For some businesses, consumer engagement is considered as an accurate measure of social media success (Jamthe, 2012).

Although academic research on consumer engagement has lagged behind practice (Sashi, 2012), “engage” or “engagement” has appeared in academic journals more often than before. Brodie, Ilic, et al. (2011) notice that engage and/or engagement are used more than fifty times in a pioneering article discussing the social influence of brand communities. In 2010, the *Journal of Service Research* published a special issue on “consumer/customer engagement”, indicating a new research area in networked, interactive and co-creative environments (Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). Van Doorn et al. (2010) define consumer engagement as “a customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (p. 254). Consumer engagement is an overarching construct covering non-transactional consumer behavior. However, Kumar et al. (2010) disagree and argue that consumer engagement behavior should include consumer purchase. Further, researchers demonstrate their interests in consumer engagement with brand community. Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann (2005) define brand community engagement as “the consumer’s intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members” (p. 21). Consumer engagement denotes a positive influence of the brand community. All examples mentioned above have captured the interest of both practitioners and academia, seeking to better understand consumer engagement and satisfy consumers’ need through technologies and tools.

Statement of Problem

Both practitioners and researchers show their passion about consumer engagement and exert great efforts to define and measure it (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011). Literature

identifies considerable variation in understanding and interpreting the concept of consumer engagement. The difference in defining consumer engagement occurs between practitioners and researchers, and even then, researchers can't reach an agreement. To make things worse, consumer engagement is used interchangeably with other constructs, depending on researchers' preferences. In Yoo and Gretzel's study (2011) addressing the influence of personality on travel-related consumer-generated media (CGM), the three terms "engagement", "participation" and "involvement" are used alternately to denote how consumers deal with travel-related CGM. For instance, "Similarly, a number of previous studies (Nonnecke & Preece, 2001; Tedjamulia, Olsen, Dean, & Albrecht, 2005; Van Dijck, 2009) understood CGM behavior in terms of the level of *participation*. These studies also suggested three different types of CGM *engagement*. The most prevalent way of *involvement* is browsing and consuming CGM contents but not contributing. The second type of *involvement* is mere content contribution like asking specific questions when CGM users do not find the specific type of information they want... The final type of *engagement* is active participation including responding to other individuals' questions, engaging in social interactions and making content contributions" (p. 610). It is no wonder that some people doubt whether consumer engagement is a new construct or the same concept repackaged, and whether there is a fundamental difference in these concepts.

As an emerging construct, consumer engagement is not fully developed in theory. "There are gaps in our understanding of how, why and when consumers engage themselves with offerings and activities" (Vivek, 2009, p. 7). Consumer engagement should be investigated from consumers' perspective (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Businesses feel extreme pressure to engage their customers, and most of them find it challenging to engage customers effectively (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). In addition, the construct of consumer engagement is applicable to both online

and offline environment. In the context of online, social media have created huge impact and can be hardly ignored. There are more than 125 billion friend connections on Facebook at the end of March 2012 (Facebook Inc., 2012). According to Dunn (2011), Twitter is paid \$120,000 by businesses to sponsor a promoted trending topic for a day. Social media provide businesses unprecedented potential to engage consumers in rich and complex ways (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011; Sashi, 2012). There is a need for research to investigate consumer engagement in the online context (Nambisan & Baron, 2007). Therefore, with consideration of practical constraints to study consumer engagement in both online and offline settings, this study focuses on consumer engagement via social media.

The tourism industry is a leader of applications of ICTs in business-to-consumer environment, and in particular, social media built upon the technological foundations of Web 2.0 (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007). A successful example is TripAdvisor where individuals can write reviews of all hotels around the world and get together virtually in discussion forums. A study from HubSpot indicates that small businesses are more willing to spend more on social media, compared with large businesses (Dunn, 2011). The vast majority of tourism enterprises (e.g. travel agency) are small or medium sized. They have always suffered from their marketing function due to a number of factors such as lack of capital, insufficient management and marketing skills, and inadequate bargaining power within the distribution channel, to name a few (Buhalis, 1999). Social media have introduced tourism enterprises to cost-effective opportunities to connect consumers (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

The emergence and popularity of social media has fundamentally changed the way consumers search and use travel information (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), thus influencing how travelers make their travel decisions. People now turn to social media sites to share travel

experience, recommend preferred accommodations and offer comments on restaurant food and service. The participatory feature of the social media websites enable people with common interest to interact with each other whenever and however they like. A vast pool of high quality and relevant consumer-generated information, therefore, could be identified in various forms of social media websites such as blogs, virtual communities, user reviews, wikis, social network, etc. (O'Connor, 2008). The information sharing and social interaction among members of a social media site provide potential travelers with a variety of benefits facilitating their decision making (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004b; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011).

Despite the popularity of social media and its particular relevance to the tourism industry, a comprehensive and clear understanding of how consumers engage in travel-related social media has not been developed. The current research on social media applications focuses on what motivates travelers to participate (e.g. Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a, 2004b; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008, 2011) and how social media impact travelers' decision-making (e.g. (Arsal, Backman, & Baldwin, 2008; Gretzel, Lee, Tussyadiah, & Fesenmaier, 2009; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). To the author's knowledge, very few studies have rigorously investigated consumer engagement in travel-related social media. As Li & Petrick (2008) concluded, "because of the recency of the proposal of the S-D logic, the authors have not noted any explicit discussion on this issue in tourism literature" (p. 240). Therefore, they call for further examination of S-D logic (e.g. consumer engagement) in tourism marketing. To address the gap, this study will provide an empirical investigation into factors which can impact consumer engagement in travel-related social media.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to define consumer engagement and develop an explanatory framework of consumer engagement addressing antecedents of consumer engagement via travel-related social media. To achieve this purpose, the effects of situational factors and social media usage-related factors on consumer engagement are integrated into the framework to obtain better understanding of this important topic.

To be more specific, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To define consumer engagement in online context.
- (2) To identify antecedents of consumer engagement in the context of travel-related social media and empirically test the effects of these antecedents.
- (3) To examine the moderating roles of attitude toward using social media and travel involvement on consumer engagement.

Significance of the Study

The interactive features of social media transform the relationship between consumers and businesses. Consumer engagement via social media has been recognized by both practitioners and researchers essential to build long-term relationship.

In response to the calls to investigate consumer engagement (e.g. Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010), and particularly, in the hospitality and tourism industry (Li & Petrick, 2008; Shaw et al., 2011), the current study can expand the understanding of how to engage travelers through social media tools. This study draws upon the concept of S-D logic and experiential marketing (Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004), and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which have been well

documented through a number of studies on social media phenomenon. The review of engagement in various disciplines and industry practices help elucidate the multidimensional aspects of consumer engagement and formulate a theoretical framework of consumer engagement with travel-related social media. The major contribution of this study is the development and testing a conceptual model of consumer engagement in travel-related social media. This study goes beyond exploring what motivates people to engage with social media. Instead, it addresses the interactive and experiential nature of engagement and how the interactive experience stimulates the ongoing engagement through social identification.

From managerial perspective, the study offers several useful guidelines. Previous research indicates that consumer engagement plays a central role in the process of relationship building, resulting in customer satisfaction, loyalty, trust and commitment (e.g. Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010). Companies attempt to take advantage of the active and fast-growing media to target individual members of the network and engage consumers in brand related conversation. Unfortunately, companies realize that their efforts are met with ignorance or rebuff. Some consumers may start a conversation with brand and lose their interests after several tries. Other consumers may feel their virtual social spaces invaded since not all social media sites are created to sell products. They resist any types of brand activities, and even worse made a parody to show their resentment (Fournier & Avery, 2011). This study provides insights for tourism businesses regarding how to engage consumers through social media, and more importantly, how to drive initially-engaged consumers to the committed status. Tourism marketers can develop marketing strategies by considering the experiential and personal factors suggested in the study.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are useful to successfully managing social media websites. While initial acceptance of a social media website is an important step towards the success of the website, user loyalty determines its long-term viability and eventual success (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Sites such as Sixdegree and Friendster, for example, were out of market long before they became mature in the market (Noone, McGuire, & Rohlfs, 2011). As quickly as users flock to a trendy social media site, they can just as quickly move to another, without any advance warning or explanation. Nowadays, thousands of social media sites are available and any of them can become the next outcast. As more and more social media websites are established, attracting users to stay with a website becomes challenging and important. The long-term success of social media sites depends on their ability to retain the interest of their members (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). By integrating the factors identified in this study into site design and promotion, travel-related social media sites could achieve their engagement goals.

Definitions of Key Terms

- Consumer engagement in travel-related social media - the level of an individual consumer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral presence arising from interactive experience with travel-related social media.
- Community experience - the overall experience a consumer derives from his/her interactions with travel-related social media.
- Community identification – the perceived sense of belonging to a particular travel-related social medium.
- Travel-related social media – a group of social media platforms which enable communities of travelers to create, circulate and consume travel information.

- Attitude toward using social media - an individual's overall affective reaction to using social media
- Travel involvement – a person's perceived relevance of travel and tourism based on inherent needs, values and interests.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a review of social media, the definition, typology, importance and application to marketing, particularly in tourism industry. Next, it provides the theoretical underpinnings of this study and development of the constructs. The research model and hypotheses are subsequently presented.

Social Media

The ICTs have already created a huge impact on our society (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Hoffman & Novak, 1996). More and more people use the internet to be informed, entertained and connected with their external environment. Ten years ago, the internet was about connecting computers. Nowadays the internet is about connecting people. Through a new generation of Internet-based technology (i.e. Web 2.0), the Web has evolved into an interactive environment of sharing information and feedbacks (Kim, Jeong, & Lee, 2010).

Social media are considered as an outcome of the implementation of the Web 2.0 and have emerged as an effective business tool. Social media connect service providers, companies and corporations with a wide audience of consumers. Through social media, companies can increase traffic, followers and brand awareness. In the past few years, social media have been experiencing dramatic growth. Top 15 social media sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Wikipedia, and Twitter accounted for more than 11 percent of global internet traffic in April 2010 (Alexa, 2010). By early May, 2012, about 62% of adults worldwide use social media and 90% of marketers implement social media into their business. Social commerce sales are expected to total \$9.2 billion in 2012 and grow to \$14.25 billion in 2013 (Pring, 2012).

Definition of Social Media

Social media have become a mass phenomenon. Many studies have been done to comprehend the essential nature of social media. However, most of them do not provide adequate explanations (Kim et al., 2010). With the fast pace at which social media evolves, most studies become obsolete rapidly. The term “social media” has been loosely defined and no agreement on the definition can be found in previous studies (Constantinides, Romero, & Boria, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kim et al., 2010). Table 1 present various definitions proposed by previous researchers. For example, Bradly (2010) defines social media as “a set of technologies and channels targeted at forming and enabling a potentially massive community of participants to productively collaborate.” McCann (2008) conceptualize social media as “application, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interaction, collaboration and the sharing of content” (p. 10). Constantinides et al. (2008) considers web 2.0 and social media the same, referring to “a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experience, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes” (p. 7). Mangold and Faulds (2009) view social media equivalent to consumer generated content by stating “social media refer to consumer-generated media, ... describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues” (p.357).

Table 1 - Definitions of Social Media

Author(s)	Definition
Bradley (2010)	Social media are a set of technologies and channels targeted at forming and enabling a potentially massive community of participants to productively collaborate.
Carton (2009)	Social media are internet-based technologies that facilitate conversations.
Chan & Guillet (2011)	Social media can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that exist on the Web 2.0 platform and enable the Internet users from all over the world to interact, communicate, and share ideas, content, thoughts, experiences, perspectives, information, and relationships.
Constantinides, Romero, & Boria (2008)	Web 2.0 or Social Media are a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experience, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes.
Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga (2010)	Social media are a mechanism for the audience to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites.
Kangas, Toivonen, & Bäck (2007)	Social media refers to applications that are either completely based on user generated content or in which user generated content and the actions of users play a substantial role in increasing the value of the application or service.
Kaplan & Haenlein (2010)	Social media are a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content.
Lehtimäki, Salo, Hiltula, & Lankinen (2009)	Social media are the new information channel on the internet.
Mangold & Faulds (2009)	Social media refer to consumer-generated media, describing a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers, intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues.
McCann (2008)	Social media are applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interaction, collaboration and the sharing of content.
Multisilta (2008)	Social media are a combination of people, technologies and practices that enable users to share their experiences with other users, and build shared meaning among communities.

Author(s)	Definition
Ovaska, Leino, & Riih� (2008)	Social media are systems and applications supporting content sharing and co-creation in sociable online environments.
Wikipedia (2012)	Social media include web-based and mobile based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals.
Xiang & Gretzel (2010)	Social media can be generally understood as Internet-based applications that carry consumer-generated content.

It is common in previous literature that social media are used interchangeably with related concepts, such as Web 2.0, consumer-generated content, user-generated content, social networking, etc. However, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that social media are different from these notions and define social media as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creations and exchange of user generated content” (p. 61). As a matter of fact, Web 2.0 is the technology platform of social media, which provides a functional environment for easy production and distribution of social media (Kangas, Toivonen, & B ck, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 is associated mainly with online applications whereas social media focus on the social aspects of Web 2.0 applications (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Mayfield (2008) summarizes the social characteristics of social media: (1) Participation. Social media encourage people to create their own content, read and respond to others’ content; (2) Openness. Social media are open to the public. People are free to use and share the content. (3) Conversation. Social media encourage two-way communications between information distributors and receivers. (4) Community. Social media allow the formation of communities where like-minded people can meet and share information. (5) Connectedness. People can link to each other through social media and make use of the resources of others.

User-generated content refers to the various forms of media content produced by end-users and publicly available, such as photos, videos, text, bookmarks of web pages, user profiles, etc. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kim et al., 2010). However, not all contents created by consumers are user-generated content. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007), user-generated content has to meet three essential requirements. First, the content has to be written and published online, available to at least a few number of people who have access to it. Secondly, the content needs to demonstrate certain amount of creation. Finally, the content has to be created outside professional routines and practices.

Academic efforts have been made to understand the difference between social media and social networks. The majority of researchers agree that social networks are one of the categories of social media (e.g. Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lehtimäki, Salo, Hiltula, & Lankinen, 2009). Social network sites are defined as “ web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 2). According to Kim et al. (2010), social network sites are web sites that allow people to stay connected with other people in online communities. Examples of social networking sites include MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, etc. In comparison, social media sites are web sites that allow people to share user-generated content, such as YouTube, Flickr, Digg, etc. However, it is argued that the distinction between the two types of site is vanishing, for both types of sites add main features and functions of the other. Social network sites can be used to share user-generated content, and people now can manage personal profiles and form communities in social media

sites. Therefore, Kim et al. (2010) propose a new term of social web sites to combine both social media sites and social network sites. Social web sites are conceptualized as those web sites designed for people to form online communities and share user-generated content.

The importance of social media lies in the interactions between consumers and the community (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Communities are considered as an essential component of social media in addition to Web 2.0 and user-generated content (Baka & Scott, 2008; Kangas et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2010; Lehtimäki et al., 2009). Figure 1 illustrates the core concepts of social media. Web 2.0 offers the technological foundation upon which social media run and function. User-generated content indicates the source of the collective intelligence or wisdom in social media. That is, individual users create the content. However, social media emphasize the collective other than the individual. Communities serve as drivers of content and relationship-building. Users can easily create or participate in communities of special interest and then share their experience and knowledge. When people carry on public discussions long enough with sufficient human feeling, online communities form (Rheingold, 2000). In essence, social media are online communities (Baka & Scott, 2008; Kim et al., 2010). In the supportive environment of social media, people may develop “a feeling of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith the members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). It has been indicated that peer-group support, emotional connection, as well as a sense of social identity have greater impacts on community participation than information seeking (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009).

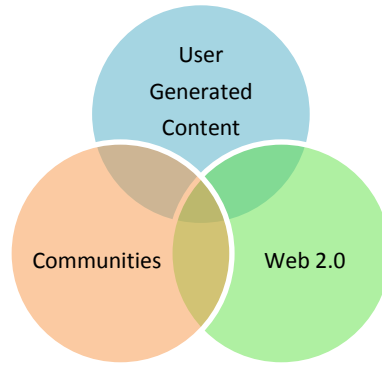


Figure 1 - Core Concept of Social Media

Typology of Social Media

Social media take various forms. Researchers attempt to classify social media from different perspectives. For instance, on the basis of application types, Constantinides and Fountain (2008) divide social media into five main categories: blogs/podcasts, social networks, content communities, forums/bulletin boards and content aggregators. Adapting the classification by Constantinides and Fountain, Lehtimäki et al. (2009) propose five types of social media. They are

- (1) Blogs and podcast. As the best-known category of social media, Blogs are public diaries in the Internet. They are usually text-based and organized in reverse chronological order. Blogs allow users to express themselves about different topics of interest. Blogs may be combined with podcasts, i.e. digital audio or video which can be streamed or downloaded to portable devices.
- (2) Social networks. Applications allowing users to build personal profiles accessible to other users for communication, exchange of personal content, maintaining friendship and networking with other users.
- (3) Communities. There are three types of communities. Online communities can be formed around users' mutual interests or established by a certain brand/organization.

Content communities refer to websites where particular types of content (e.g. video, photos, powerpoints) are organized and shared. Forum/bulletin boards are platforms for online discussion. People exchange ideas and information around specific topics and interests.

- (4) Content aggregators. Applications enabling users to organize the web content from different resources in the way they wish to access. These are RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feeds, widgets, bookmarks and tagging services.
- (5) Virtual worlds. Platforms that replicate all dimensions of face-to-face interactions in a virtual environment where users can appear in the form of personalized avatars and interact with each other as they would in real life (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Virtual worlds can be considered as substitutes for the real world.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) suggest a systematic classification should understand social media from social dimension and media perspective as well. Based on theories in the field of media research and social processes, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classify social media by two dimensions of social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure (shown in Table 2). The first classification, concerning the media-related aspect of social media, is based on the degree of social presence the medium allows and the richness of the medium. According to social presence theory, the higher the social presence, the larger the social influence on others' behavior. Social presence is influenced by the richness of the medium. The more and better quality information conveyed, the more effective the medium is. The second classification, relating the social dimension of social media, is based on the type of self-presentation the medium allows and the degree of self-disclosure it requires. Self-presentation indicates the desire to control impressions on other people in social interaction. Self-disclosure is the conscious or

unconscious exposure of personal information. Self-presentation is achieved through self-disclosure.

As such, various types of social media are categorized, including blogs, collaborative projects, social networking sites, content communities, virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds. For example, blogs are considered as low in terms of social presence/media richness, for they are usually text-based and allow for relatively simple information exchange. However, blogs indicate high level of self-presentation. Blogs are often created by bloggers themselves and reveal personal opinions and experience. In comparison, virtual game worlds provide high level of social presence and low level of self-representation. Virtual game worlds try to replicate all dimensions of real world in a virtual environment. Nevertheless, they require users to behave under certain rules, which limit the degree of self-presentation/self-disclosure.

Table 2 - Classification of Social Media by Social Presence/Media Richness and Self-presentation/Self-disclosure

		Social presence/media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

(Source: Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)

In addition, Fraser and Dutta (as cited in Parent et al., 2011) group social media into five broad categories: (1) egocentric sites which allow users to create profiles and facilitate identify construction and connection. Examples are Facebook.com, MySpace.com and Bebo.com; (2) community sites which replicate communities in real world and allow groups to form around similar beliefs. Examples include BigWaveDave.com, BlackPlanet.com and Dogster.com; (3) Opportunistic sites which facilitate business connection. Examples: LinkedIn.com,

Academia.edu, alibaba.com; (4) Passion-centric sites which connect people around interest and hobbies. Examples are TheSamba.com, chatterbirds.com, germancarforum.com; (5) Media sharing sites which enable users to share rich media content, such as image, audio and video. Examples: Flickr.com, YouTube.com, slideshare.com.

Travel-related Social Media

Social media have had enormous impact on people's daily life as more and more people use social media to get informed and connected (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2010). Currently, search engine sites such as Google, Baidu have become an important source of information. Online social networking tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are changing the way how people communicate with each other. Customers are connected in numerous ways which were not available in the past (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

Tourism and social media are a natural fit (Green, 2007). On one hand, tourists use social media before, during and after travel. Information has been called the "lifeblood" of tourism (Buhalis, 1998). Before travel, tourists need reliable and accurate information to plan and make purchase decisions due to the complexity of tourism products. Empowered by social media, tourists can interact with rich travel information and with other tourists whenever and wherever they like. More importantly, the information comes from the "collective intelligence" of tourists, which is based on personal experience and has more credibility (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The purchase of tourism products is now driven by the tourist-generated content (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). During travel, social media enable tourists to connect with families and friends, and keep them informed by posting pictures, videos or only a few words. Greetings or feedback from them can enhance tourists' experience and make the visit different. After travel, many tourists like to share their travel experiences and recommendations with others. Social media emerge as tourist-

friendly platforms where post-purchase product evaluations can be published and consumed. Moreover, the interactive nature of social media allows tourists who have similar interests, attitudes and ways of life to meet together online and establish relationships (Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002). Later those people may meet in real life and travel together. Therefore, social media have changed the way people travel (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

On the other hand, social media create new marketing environment for businesses (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Many tourism organizations use social media to effectively distribute product/destination information and engage consumers (O'Connor, Wang, & Li, 2011). One of the best examples is Queensland tourism campaign for “the best job in the world” (Watt, 2009). The Australian tourism bureau launched a user - generated video contest to win a job position for the caretaker of the Great Barrier Reef Islands. The campaign was a great success, which attracted more than 34,000 applicants from over 200 countries and generated more than \$200 million worth of global publicity. Abundant information created by real tourists enables tourism organizations to identify unmet needs, better understand tourist behavior, and react instantly to their requests and concerns (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Through social media, tourism organizations can reach consumers and listen to them about the quality of the products and services they produce, and about their competitors. Based on this information, tourism organizations can improve their performance, justify their positioning and pricing strategies and gain competitive advantage (Wang et al., 2002). In addition, well-developed social media strategies help tourism organizations identify their advocates and leverage the power of electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). It is evident that many US destination marketing organizations create blogs or provide links on their official destination

websites to major social media sites, such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and Twitter (Li & Wang, 2011).

While offering tourism businesses marketing opportunities, social media create some challenges (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). WOM transmitted via social media is hard to control and not all the information favors businesses. Previous research indicates that WOM can be positive or negative, and negative WOM is more influential due to the fact that dissatisfied customers are more likely to vent their unpleasant feelings than those who are satisfied (Bailey, 2010; Bolting, 1989; Tybout, Calder, & Sternthal, 1981). A classic example in tourism industry is *Yours is a Very Bad Hotel* by two business travelers, who record their terrible lodging experience at a Houston hotel in a PowerPoint file. With the power of electronic WOM, the file was rapidly passed along and seen by thousands worldwide. As a result, it created negative impact on both the property and the chain (Shea, Enghagen, & Khullar, 2005). Moreover, as companies move branding activities into social media sites, they realize that their efforts to target individual consumers and engage them in brand-related conversations are not met with success (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Many consumers are jaded about businesses' invasion of social media and don't even want to start a conversation. Stimulating consumer engagement is always one of the objectives of social media marketing strategies and used to measure the success of virtual communities (Kasavana, 2008). Unfortunately, most tourism businesses do not really understand the essence of the community and fundamental needs of community members (O'Connor et al., 2011).

The increasingly high use of social media has drawn attention of hospitality and tourism researchers. Travel - related social media is defined in this study as a group of social media platforms which enable communities of travelers to create, circulate and consume travel-related

information. It is a broad term, consisting of not only social media developed particularly for travelers to interact and share, such as TripAdvisor.com, WAYN.com and IgoUgo.com, but also online travel communities built upon existing social networks. For instance, to leverage the trend of social networks, a hotel joins Facebook and creates its own specialized community with the aim of establishing brand loyalty. The hotel community integrated into Facebook is also considered as travel-related social media. With focus on hospitality and tourism industry, travel-related social media exist in various forms, such as travel blogs (e.g. travelblog.org and travelpod.com), online travel communities (e.g. IgoUgo.com and VirtualTourist.com), online travel review (e.g. TripAdvisor.com), travel social networks (e.g. Tripatini.com), etc. Travelers are allowed to interact and share their experience in different ways, from making comments, recounting travel stories to post personal pictures or videos.

Studies have been done in different forms of travel-related social media (Table 3). Among them, online travel communities have the longest history (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). As early as 2002, Wang and his colleagues conducted a series of research to define the concept of online travel community and its core features (Wang et al., 2002). Factors are identified to encourage members to participate and contribute to online travel communities (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). Those studies lay theoretical foundation for understanding fundamentals of online travel communities and other travel-related social media as well. The important role of online communities in tourism information search is confirmed by Xiang and Gretzel (2010). Online travel communities account for the largest percentage of social media sites represented by Google, followed by online reviews and blogs. Keywords associated with online travel communities indicate that travelers prefer sharing experience concerning core tourism activities in online communities. Travel blog is the most popular subject investigated in

research on travel-related social media, for there is the largest number of studies on this topic. Similar to travel journals, travel blog records visitors' real experience and can be updated frequently (Pan et al., 2007). Recently, evidence show that travel blog can create and maintain online communities through discussing tourist experience and providing connections between consumers (Lin & Huang, 2006; Sigala, 2011). Online travel review also constitutes a substantial part of travel-related social media. Compared with other forms of social media, travel reviews are more structured, brief and directed for others (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008). Due to the absence of contextual cues, credibility and trust are major concerns of online travel review, which is discussed in several studies.

Table 3 - Studies on Travel-related Social Media

Authors (year)	Social media form	Findings
Arsal, Backman, & Baldwin (2008)	Online travel community	Destination information posted by residents in online travel communities are more influential regarding food and beverage recommendations, safety concerns at the destination, and travel itinerary refinements (including things to do and places to see) whereas experienced travelers were more influential in accommodation recommendations, transportation, monetary issues, etc.
Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalú (2010)	Online travel community	Perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, identification, attitude, and perceived behavioral control have a positive impact on the intention to participate in firm-hosted online travel communities whereas subjective norm has a negative impact.
Casaló, Flavián, Guinalú (2011a)	Online travel community	Perceived similarity and reciprocity affect new members' integration into online travel communities. Both integration and satisfaction with the community influence community participation.
Casaló, Flavián, Guinalú (2011b)	Online travel community	Perceived usefulness of the advice, trust in online travel communities and attitude toward the advice have a positive effect on the intention to follow the advice obtained in an online travel community.
Chung & Buhalis (2008)	Online travel community	Three community members' benefits (i.e. information acquisition, socio-psychological and hedonic) have a positive impact on the level of participation and attitude towards the online travel community.
Kim, Lee, & Hiemstra (2004)	Online travel community	A sense of community has a positive influence on members' loyalty to an online travel community and a company's homepage.

Authors (year)	Social media form	Findings
Qu & Lee (2011)	Online travel community	Members' participation has a positive impact on their sense of belonging to the online travel community, which encourage several pro-community behaviors including knowledge sharing, community promotion and behavior changes.
Sanchez-Franco & Rondan-Cataluña (2010)	Online travel community	Both visual aesthetics and usability positively affect satisfaction with online travel communities, which in turn impacts members' trust and commitment to online travel communities. Purchase involvement moderates the effect between satisfaction and visual aesthetics, usability respectively.
Stepchenkova, Mills, & Jiang (2007)	Online travel community	Users' experience affects their satisfaction with online travel communities. It is suggested to enhance satisfaction by focusing on the social aspects of online travel communities, such as building relationship with other members, developing a feeling of community.
Wang & Fesenmaier (2003)	Online travel community	Motivations of efficacy, instrumental and expectancy have positive effect on level of contribution to online travel communities.
Wang & Fesenmaier (2004a)	Online travel community	Social and hedonic needs have positive impacts on level of participation in online travel communities whereas the effects of functional needs are negative.
Wang & Fesenmaier (2004b)	Online travel community	Participation in online travel communities is motivated by social and hedonic benefits perceived from the communities. Moreover, three incentives of instrumental, efficacy and expectancy can encourage level of contribution to the communities.
Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier (2002)	Online travel community	The paper attempts to conceptualize the notion of an online travel community and identify its core features. Marketing implications of virtual tourist community are discussed.
Wu & Chang (2005)	Online travel community	Members of online travel communities gain flow experience through interactivity other than trust. The flow experience has a positive impact on transaction intentions.
Gretzel & Yoo (2008)	Online travel review	Online travel reviews play an important role in the trip-planning process by offering ideas, narrowing down choices and confirming decisions.
O'Connor (2008)	Online travel review	Online travel reviews provide rich information for consumers to plan travel. False reviews to enhance hotels reputation or damage that of competitors are not found.
Ricci & Wietsma (2006)	Online travel review	The role of product reviews in travel decision-making varies depending on the stage of the decision process, product involved (e.g. hotel vs. activities) and user characteristics (e.g. gender, familiarity with product). However, there is no significant difference between positive and negative reviews in the importance to decision-making.
Sidali, Schulze,	Online travel review	Online travel reviews are more frequently used for booking a

Authors (year)	Social media form	Findings
& Spiller (2009)		hotel than hotel rating systems, recommendations of travel agents and travel guides. Trust in online travel review is influenced by perceived expertness of the reviews, consumer brand familiarity and credibility of the source of the reviews. In addition, trust has a positive impact on hotel choice.
Vermeulen & Seegers (2009)	Online travel review	Hotel reviews affect hotel awareness, attitude and consideration. The impacts are stronger for less-known hotels. The role of reviewer expertise is limited.
Ye, Law, & Gu (2009)	Online travel review	Online hotel reviews have a positive impact on hotel room sales.
Yoo & Gretzel (2008)	Online travel review	Motivations to write online travel reviews are identified, including helping a travel service provider, concerns for other consumers, and needs for enjoyment/positive self-enhancement. Gender and income level affect motivations.
Yoo & Gretzel (2009)	Online travel review	The language structure of deceptive and truthful hotel reviews is examined. They are different in terms of lexical complexity, the use of first person pronouns, the inclusion of brand names, and their sentiment.
Carson (2008)	Travel blog	The value of travel blog to destination marketing is recognized. It is suggested to analyze travel blogs written by travelers from major markets.
Law & Cheung (2010)	Travel blog	Destination image of Hong Kong is presented after content analysis of Hong Kong related travel blogs.
Li & Wang (2011)	Travel blog	Content of travel blogs related to China is analyzed. Perceived destination image of China is presented.
Lin & Huang (2006)	Travel blog	Travel blog is an effective marketing tool in increasing attention, interest, desire and action. Success factors of travel blog sites are discussed.
Mack, Blose, & Pan (2008)	Travel blog	The level of credibility of traditional word-of-mouth is higher than both corporate and personal blogs.
Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts (2007)	Travel blog	Travel blogs can be used to understand strengths and weaknesses of destinations.
Pudliner, (2007)	Travel blog	The paper attempts to understand the promotional power of blogs in tourism industry by interpreting tourism as a language, as a place of experience and addressing authenticity.
Puhringer & Taylor (2008)	Travel blog	The paper offers an example of destination approaches to e-tourism, particularly to travel blogs. Suggestions on how to develop e-strategies are discussed.
Schmallegger & Carson (2008)	Travel blog	The paper discusses how travel blogs affects marketing functions of destination organizations in terms of promotion, product distribution, communication, management and research.
Thevenot	Travel blog	Blog as a marketing tool for destination has both positive and

Authors (year)	Social media form	Findings
(2007)		negative impacts.
Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier (2008)	Travel blog	Structure of travel blog is examined and key marketing elements are identified. Characterization indicates the identity of blog writers. Space categorization presents the evaluation of destinations and travel experience.
Wang (2011)	Gastronomy blog	Readers' behavioral intention to taste is influenced by the content in gastronomy blogs through inspiring taste desire (i.e. experiencing appeal and generating empathy), forming taste awareness (i.e. providing image and presenting guides), and facilitating interpersonal interaction (i.e. social influence and cyber community influence).
Wang (2012)	Travel blog	Bloggers' perceptions of destination image depend on factors assisting in building affective image (i.e. generating empathy and experiencing appeal), cognitive image (i.e. providing guide), and interpersonal interactions (i.e. social influence, cyber community influence). Those perceptions also affect behavioral intention to travel.
Wenger (2008)	Travel blog	Content of travel blogs is analyzed, as well as demographic characteristics of blog writers. It is suggested that destinations focus on the blogs written by travelers from their major markets before monitoring the blogs.
Gretzel, Kang, & Lee (2008)	Consumer generated media	There are differences in consumer-generated media adoption and use in the US, the UK, Germany and China, due to the differences regarding culture, technology infrastructure, media systems, and use of the Internet for travel planning and purchases in the four visitor markets.
Yoo & Gretzel (2011)	Travel-related consumer generated media	It is suggested that travelers' personality impacts motivations and barriers to creating consumer generated content, and creation behavior.
Yoo, Lee, Gretzel, & Fesenmaier, (2009)	Travel-related consumer generated media	Level of trust in travel-related consumer generated media depends on the type of hosting websites and perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the creators. Moreover, people with greater trust are more likely to be influenced by consumer generated media.
Xiang & Gretzel (2009)	Social media	The important role of social media in travel planning is confirmed.
Parra-López, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutiérrez-Taño, & Díaz-Armas (2011)	Social media including social networks, blogs, online travel communities, etc.	Intentions to use social media in organizing and taking vacation trips are positively affected by the perceived benefits (social, functional, psychological and hedonic) but not the perceived cost. Incentives including availability of the technology, altruism, the environment, individual predisposition, and trust on the information also have positive influence on the intentions to use social media.
Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier	YouTube	The role of online shared travel videos as mediators of tourist experience is identified. The videos can bring travel enjoyment

Authors (year)	Social media form	Findings
(2009)		by stimulating fantasies and daydreams, and providing access to filmed places.

A few trends are identified through observing the change of research focused on different types of travel-related social media. First, distinctions between various forms of travel-related social media blur as their features are rapidly evolving. At the early stage of Web 2.0 applications to tourism industry, researchers try to define and categorize various forms of social media. Recognizing the unique features of each social media tool is considered critical for tourism organizations to utilize it effectively. However, the convergence of technologies has resulted in disappearance of unique characteristics of different types of social media (Kim et al., 2010). As commented by O'Connor (2008), "part social network, part virtual community and part blog, like all Web 2.0 sites, TripAdvisor is difficult to categorize" (p. 52).

Secondly, a recent resurgence in researching online travel communities has further elucidated that the notion of community is the core of online social media. Based on the chronological sequence of previous publication, it is found that researchers start investigation in online travel communities first, then move to travel blog, online travel review, consumer-generated media. Recently, reappearance of online travel communities is observed (e.g. Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalú, 2011a, 2011b; Qu & Lee, 2011). Social web is in essence online communities, connecting people with similar interests or make it easier for friends to communicate with each other. It is community that draws people to and holds people in the social web (Wang et al., 2002). "Whatever language we use to describe it, the beating heart of the Internet has always been its ability to leverage our social connections" (Green, 2007, p.15). Thus, online community is the central element of the social web and deserves more research attention.

Several research themes emerge from the literature review on travel-related social media. Researchers demonstrate great interest in the impacts of various forms of travel-related social media. First, the important role of these social media in tourism marketing is recognized (Carson, 2008; Law & Cheung, 2010; Li & Wang, 2011; Lin & Huang, 2006; Pan et al., 2007; Pudliner, 2007; Pühringer & Taylor, 2008; Schmallegger & Carson, 2008; Thevenot, 2007; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2008; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). Travel-related social media can be used to promote destination and enhance destination image. Through analyzing the content presented in the media, destinations can have better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses (Law & Cheung, 2010; Li & Wang, 2011; Pan et al., 2007), and thus improve the performance of tourism industry. Moreover, hotel reviews influence hotel awareness, attitude and sales (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Ye et al., 2009). Secondly, as an important form of digital WOM, travel-related social media affect a series of travelers' behavior, such as information search, trip planning and decision-making (Arsal et al., 2008; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; O'Connor, 2008; Ricci & Wietsma, 2006; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Wang, 2011, 2012; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). According to Gretzel and Yoo (2008), consumer generated travel information assist trip planning by offering ideas, narrowing down choices and confirming decision. Shared travel videos can transform travel experience by stimulating fantasies and day dreams, and providing access to filmed places (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009).

Research efforts are also made to identify determinants of participation and active contribution to travel-related social media (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalú, 2010; Casaló et al., 2011a; Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Parra-López, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutiérrez-Taño, & Díaz-Armas, 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008), and members' loyalty and commitment (Kim, Lee, & Hiemstra, 2004; Qu & Lee, 2011; Sanchez-Franco &

Rondan-Cataluña, 2010). Most studies take an approach of needs and gratifications (e.g. Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Parra-López et al., 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). That is, consumers participate to fulfill their functional, social, psychological and hedonic needs. If travel-related social media are able to satisfy these needs, consumers are willing to visit them. Different from the majority of research, Casaló et al. (2010) integrate the theory of planned behavior, the technology acceptance model and social identity theory into a conceptual model. Results indicate that perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, identification, attitude, and perceived behavioral control have a positive impact on the intention to participate in firm-hosted online travel communities whereas subjective norm has a negative impact. Online social media have lower barriers of both entrance and exit. Individuals can join easily and leave without any advance notice. It is a sense of community that bond members and bring them back (Kim et al., 2004). When participants experience feelings of community, they are more likely to increase or maintain their participation (Qu & Lee, 2011; Wang et al., 2002).

In addition, the issue of trust and credibility is investigated in main forms of travel-related social media, including online travel community (Casaló et al., 2011b; Wu & Chang, 2005), travel blog (Mack, Blose, & Pan, 2008), online travel review (O'Connor, 2008; Sidali, Schulze, & Spiller, 2009; Yoo, Lee, Gretzel, & Fesenmaier, 2009). Trust determines whether and how individuals conduct online activities (Wang et al., 2002). When trust exists among people, they are more willing to participate in cooperative interaction and build relationship (Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006; Preece, 2000). Lack of trust inhibits individuals' participation in online travel communities (Wu & Chang, 2005). According to Yoo et al. (2009), level of trust in travel-related social media depends on the type of hosting websites and perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the creators. People with greater trust are more likely to be influenced by media content.

Current studies on travel-related social media contribute to understanding of online travel domain. However, some important issues are neglected. To the best of the author's knowledge, there is no study measuring participants' experience with travel-related social media. According to Hoffman and Novak (1996), consumers gain a virtual experience from an interaction between consumers and web sites or among consumers through the internet. Virtual experience is a visual simulation of physical experience (Daugherty, Li, & Biocca, 2008). In an experience economy, organizations must facilitate consumer experience in order to succeed. Therefore, a growing body of research on community-based virtual experience appears (Hsu, Chiang, & Huang, 2012). It is believed that examining online community experience is as important as identifying participants' motivations. Providing benefits may draw people to an online community whereas creating unique experience will bring participants back to the community. Ongoing participation in an online community guarantees its survival in the long run (Casaló et al., 2010; Koh & Kim, 2003). Unfortunately, it is unknown what constitutes consumer experience in online travel communities. Moreover, social identity is an essential concept in community research (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). It is considered as a key component of sustaining a community (Blanchard, 2008). Despite of its importance and implication, social identity in travel-related social media has rarely seen in extant research (Qu & Lee, 2011). Only three studies (i.e. Casaló et al., 2011b; Kim et al., 2004; Qu & Lee, 2011) are found to use a sense of community or community identification as a critical construct. Hence, more research is needed to apply the concept of social identity to online travel communities. In addition, engagement is frequently used in extant studies on travel-related social media. However, there is still a lack of consensus on what engagement means. Most of the time, engagement is used to avoid repetition of several words, such as participation and contribution. As a matter of fact, engagement has been recognized as a

critical concept in the new marketing paradigm of service-dominant logic (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010). According to Kasavana (2008), stimulating consumer engagement is the first objective of social media. Misuse of this concept will result in confusion of several concepts and inhibit development and progress of marketing theory. Hence, it is imperative to define consumer engagement in the online travel context and examine its relationship with other experiential concepts.

All research gap mentioned above will be addressed in this study.

Defining Engagement

The term “engagement” is not new among academia and practitioners. However, many definitions, interpretations and perceptions subsist. Considerable attention was given to define and measure consumer engagement due to the claims that in an interactive and dynamic business environment, engaged consumers play an important role in products/services referral and recommendation, new product/service development and experience/value co-creation (Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Hoyer et al., 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

The theoretical roots of the consumer engagement concepts lie in the S-D logic of marketing, which proposed a revised focus on intangible resources, the co-creation of value, and relationships (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The S-D logic suggests a focus on customers’ and/or other stakeholders’ interactive experiences in the complex, co-creative environments (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). The engaged consumers are believed to affect the brand or company in ways other than purchasing (Van Doorn et al., 2010). They expect to become active partners of companies and create their personalized products. They like to share their experience and opinions about products and services through different types of social media, such as blogs, podcasts, forums and online communities (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). All this information truly

reflects what consumers want and can be considered as valuable market resources for companies. On the other hand, companies themselves may find it easy to reach the engaged consumers, pass product messages to them, encourage their feedback, and increase interaction with them (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000).

Although the notion of engagement sounds compelling, the meaning of the engagement concept is unclear. Numerous definitions of engagement emerging from sparse and diverse perspectives enrich the body of knowledge and contribute to the development of theory. However, confusion exists owing to inconsistent interpretations of the meaning of the construct.

Engagement Drawn from Diverse Academic Disciplines

According to Oxford English Dictionary (2009), the term “engagement” was first recorded in the 17th century, when it was used to describe a number of notions, including a sense of moral or legal obligation, tie of duty, betrothal, employment, and/or military conflict (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). The last two decades have witnessed an extensive application of the term “engagement” in the fields of sociology, psychology, political science and organizational behavior (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). Everyone agrees that engagement is good. Nevertheless, everyone has own definition of what it is. It is argued that engagement arises from two-way interactions between pertinent engagement subjects and objects (Hollebeek, 2011). Examples of engagement subject include citizen, students and employees. Engagement objects might be community, school, jobs, etc.

‘Engagement’ research is predominantly located in the discipline of psychology. The concepts of “connection”, “attachment” and “emotional involvement” are frequently used as certain engagement forms (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). In social psychology, Achterberg et al. (2003) define ‘social engagement’ as “a sense of initiative and involvement, and can respond

adequately to social stimuli in the social environment - participate in social activities and interact with others” (p. 213). Huo, Binning, and Molina (2010) describe social engagement as “individuals’ identification with and commitment to the group’s goals and welfare” (p. 202). In educational psychology, “student engagement” has been extensively assessed due to its significance to student academic success. However, definitions of student engagement vary (Leach & Zepke, 2011). Chapman (2003) suggests it refer to students’ cognitive investment, active participation, and emotional engagement with specific learning tasks. Three interrelated criteria to assess student engagement levels were (1) cognitive criteria which indicate “the extent to which students are attending to and expending mental effort in the learning tasks encountered;” (2) behavioral criteria which imply “the extent to which students are making active responses to the learning tasks presented;” and (3) affective criteria which indicate “the level of students’ investment in and their emotional reactions to the learning tasks.” Leach and Zepke (2011) define student engagement as a complex interaction between personal and contextual factors. Student engagement included both social and psychological dimensions. Six perspectives on student engagement was developed, including motivation and agency, transactional engagement with teachers, transactional engagement with students, institutional support, active citizenship and non-institutional support. It is suggested that institutions enhance student engagement practices based on the six perspectives. Moreover, Bryson and Hand (2007) argue that there was a continuum of engagement from disengaged to engaged, indicating that students exhibited different levels of engagement with a particular ask/assignment, model, course of study and university/higher education.

In the fields of sociology and political science, “civic engagement” is found to contribute to a number of desirable social outcomes, such as less crime, greater trust, better economies and

well-being (Putnam, 1995). It is generally conceptualized as “individual and collective actions designed to address issues of public concern, including political activism (e.g., signing petitions), volunteering (e.g. work for others without payment), and actions such as joining community associations” (Chung & Probert, 2011; Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). If people are civically engaged, they tend to participate in pro-social activities. Civic engagement and civic participation have been used interchangeably in the sociology and political science literature. Therefore, civic engagement was measured by asking whether respondents participated in certain civic or political activities. For instance, Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson, and Anderson (2010) examine the impact of personality on civic engagement. In their study, civic engagement was measured by two questions, including (1) attending a political party meeting; (2) participating in a protest. The results indicated positive effects of extraversion and openness to experience on civic engagement. However, conscientiousness and agreeableness are inversely related to civic engagement. In addition, ‘social engagement’ is also spotted in sociology literature. Thomas (2011) defines social engagement as “frequency of participation in activities that involve interactions between or among people.” Recognizing the dynamic nature of social engagement, this study identified patterns of change in social engagement over time and concluded that individuals who had trajectories of high and growing social engagement maintained better physical and cognitive health condition.

In the field of organization behavior and management, engagement at work has been explored as a means to attain organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and eventually better financial performance (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). According

to Saks (2006), about half of all Americans in the workforce remained disengaged or partially engaged, costing US business \$300 billion per year in lost productivity. Different terms have been used, including work engagement, personal engagement, employee engagement and burnout/engagement (Simpson, 2009). It is suggested that the notion of employee engagement can be extended into consumer engagement domain since employees are considered as internal customers (Buckingham, 2008).

Focusing on how people's experience and work context influence personal engagement, Kahn (1990) introduced the concepts of engagement and disengagement. Personal engagement was defined as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles" (p. 694). When people are engaged, they tend to express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance. Engagement was found to be significantly related to three psychological conditions of meaningfulness (a feeling of receiving return on investments in work role performances), safety (a sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences at work) and availability (a sense of possessing personal resources needed in performing work role). In contrast, personal disengagement referred to "the uncoupling of selves from work roles" (p. 694). When people are disengaged, they tend to withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performance. Two characteristics of Kahn's definition are noteworthy: (1) engagement indicates a psychological connection with the performance of tasks rather than an attitude toward the tasks; (2) engagement concerns the self-investment of personal resources on multiple levels/dimensions (physical, emotional and cognitive) (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Moreover, Kahn (1990) theorized various elements of work, social systems and individual distractions which influence the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability (i.e., task characteristics, work interactions,

interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style and processes, organizational norm, physical energy, emotional energy).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) declare that burnout was the erosion of engagement. Burnout and engagement were two ends of a continuum of psychological state. As burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome characterized by exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy, engagement, understood to be lack of burnout, is characterized by energy, involvement and efficacy. Job engagement should be associated with six areas of job-person fit, including a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and value work (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). However, Schaufeli et al. (2002) found that the three-factor pattern of engagement did not emerge when engagement was measured by reverse scoring of burnout. In other words, employees who have low level of burnout might not experience high level of engagement. Therefore, burnout and engagement were distinct constructs.

Acknowledging the distinction between burnout and engagement, Schaufeli et al. (2002) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is composed of vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to a strong involvement in one's work, experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated on and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties in detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). It is argued that engagement is a persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state of fulfillment in employees rather than a momentary and specific state (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Inconsistent definition and operationalization has plagued job engagement research (Christian et al., 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Confusions subside not only in what engagement is but also the validity of engagement as a distinct construct. Job engagement has been used interchangeably with other terminologies such as job involvement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Job involvement was defined as “a cognitive or belief state of psychological identification” (Kanungo, 1982, p. 342). It referred to a cognitive judgment about how much the job can satisfy one’s needs and be connected to one’s self-image (Saks, 2006). Engagement involves energy or efforts one needs to put into his/her work task. In addition to cognition, engagement requires the activation of emotion and behavior (Kahn, 1990). Therefore, job involvement can be considered as an aspect of engagement rather than its substitute (Christian et al., 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Organizational commitment refers to the emotional attachment that employees develop with their organization, based on shared values and interests (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Christian et al. (2011) argued that engagement differs from organizational commitment in two ways. First, organizational commitment is an affective attachment to the values of the organization, whereas the object of engagement is the work task. Second, organizational commitment is regarded as one’s attitude and attachment. Engagement is not an attitude and involves a holistic investment of the entire self in terms of cognition, emotion and behavior. As Macey and Schneider (2008) suggested, organizational commitment is an important facet of engagement.

Job satisfaction refers to “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience” (Locke, 1976, p.1300). Job satisfaction and engagement differ significantly (Christian et al., 2011). Job satisfaction is an attitude whereas engagement

connotes activation. Further, job satisfaction results from favorable evaluation of job conditions or characteristics. Engagement is experiential results from work task (Christian et al., 2011). In addition, results from empirical studies (i.e. Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010) provide further support for the distinctiveness of engagement relative to job involvement, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. For instance, Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) examine whether work engagement, job involvement and organizational commitment could be empirically separated by performing confirmatory factor analysis. The results not only specified three distinct constructs but also indicated that the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment was closer than that between work engagement and job involvement.

Consumer/Customer Engagement - A Marketing Perspective

The terms “consumer engagement” and/or “customer engagement” were not commonly used in academic marketing and service literature until 2005 (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). Due to lack of conceptual clarity, “consumer engagement” appears to be somewhat faddish. As some researchers may refer, it is “old wine in a new bottle.” What is consumer engagement? Is it a unique concept or just a repackaging of other construct?

The interest in consumer engagement first started among practitioners (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). Consulting companies, such as Nielsen Media Research, Forrester Consulting, the Gallup Group and IAG Research and advertising research associations (i.e. the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF), the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers) have paid substantial attention to the definition and measurement of consumer engagement. According to Joe Plummer, ARF Chief Research Officer, “engagement is turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding

context” (as cited in Wang, 2006). Compared with traditional media metrics such as ratings, readership, listenership and click-through rates, which happen inside the medium, engagement exists inside the consumer and demonstrates the connection between the consumer and the brand idea. Therefore, it is suggested that engagement is measured by time spent with the medium, surprise, utility/relevancy and emotional bonding (Wang, 2006). Moreover, Forrester Consulting defines consumer engagement as “creating deep connections with customers that drive purchase decisions, interaction, and participation over time”, and suggests that the Internet is an effective tool of engaging consumers (Sashi, 2012).

The academic community lags behind their industry peers. Despite the increasing usage of consumer engagement in the marketing research industry, little academic attention has been paid to the theoretical development of consumer engagement as a distinct construct (Van Doorn et al., 2010). In an increasingly networked society, understanding consumer experience and behavior, especially non-transactional consumer behavior become more important since consumers can easily interact with companies and other consumers through various new media (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Consumer/customer engagement is examined as a promising variable in the broader relationship marketing literature (Hollebeek, 2011).

Enlightened by the definition of engagement in related fields, marketing researchers attempted to conceptualize consumer/customer engagement (shown in Table 4). Those pioneers included Bowden (2009), Higgins & Scholer (2009), and Vivek (2009). For instance, Bowden (2009) defined customer engagement as “a psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand as well as the mechanism by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand” (p. 65). To put it simple, customer engagement is a psychological process which drives

customer loyalty. The process of engagement traces customers' progress from being a new client to becoming a repeat purchaser of a specific product, service or brand, capturing several constructs such as satisfaction, calculative commitment, affective commitment, customer delight, involvement, trust and loyalty. The process is iterative and consists of two distinct sub-processes of engagement. For new customers, trust and commitment are consequences of customer engagement and develop through interacting with a product, service or brand. For existing customers, trust and commitment can be viewed as customer engagement antecedents which ultimately come into a state of enduring loyalty. Bowden's view of customer engagement comprises both cognitive and emotional aspects since calculative commitment (cognitive) and affective commitment (emotive) are discussed respectively (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011). According to Regulatory Engagement Theory (Higgins & Scholer, 2009), engagement is a second source of value experience in addition to hedonic experience. It is defined as "a state of being involved, occupied, fully absorbed, or engrossed in something — sustained attention" (Higgins & Scholer, 2009, p. 102). The strength of engagement leads to attraction to or repulsion from the engagement object. When people experience attraction toward something, they get a positive value. However, people obtain a negative value when they feel repulsion. Engagement acts as an intensifier. That is, stronger engagement can make positive things more positive and negative things more negative. In contrast, Vivek's (2009) definition focused on behavioral dimension of consumer engagement. It is posited the consumer engagement is "the intensity of consumer's participation and connection with the organization's offerings and/or organized activities" (p. 7). Further, comparisons are made to distinguish consumer engagement from other related constructs such as connection, participation, co-creation and co-production, brand communities, involvement, attachment, and devotion.

To address the importance of consumer engagement and create stronger research interest, the 2010 *Journal of Service Research* Special Issue included several articles of consumer engagement. Consumer engagement is viewed as an overarching construct encompassing non-transactional customer behavior. As Van Doorn et al. (2010) claimed, “consumer engagement behavior go beyond transaction, and may be specifically defined as a customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (p. 254). Consumer engagement is manifested in multiple behaviors including word-of-mouth activity, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging, writing reviews, co-creation activities, and so on. Considering that consumers may engage in different ways, Van Doorn et al. (2010) propose five dimensions of consumer engagement behavior: valence, form or modality, scope, nature of its impact and customer goals. In their study, consumer engagement is classified as positive and negative depending on its financial and nonfinancial consequences for the company. Antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement behavior are discussed from consumer, firm and environment aspects respectively. Customer-to-customer interactions and consumer co-creation are important manifestation of consumer engagement behavior. Two articles in the special issue focus on the two specific forms respectively. Libai et al. (2010) take a broader multi-dimensional view of customer-to-customer interactions and discuss how individual, system and contextual factors affect customer-to-customer interactions. The dimensions include observational leaning vs. verbal communication, online vs. offline, dyadic vs. group information flows, business-to-consumer vs. business-to-business markets and organic vs. amplified interactions. It is cautioned that organizations focus only on highly engaged consumers since value can be created at different engagement level. Both Van Doorn et al. (2010) and Libai et al. (2010) argue to consider the valence of consumer engagement. The

impacts of negatively valenced expression of consumer engagement on organizations and other stakeholders remain underexplored to date.

Table 4 - Definitions of Engagement in Marketing Literature

Construct	Definition	Dimension(s)	Research type	Author (year)
Customer engagement	A psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand as well as the mechanism by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand.	C, E	Conceptual	Bowden (2011)
Engagement	A state of being involved, occupied, fully absorbed, or engrossed in something — sustained attention.	C, E, B	Conceptual	Higgins & Scholer (2009)
Consumer engagement	The intensity of consumer’s participation and connection with the organization’s offerings and/or organized activities.	B	Scale development	Vivek (2009)
Consumer engagement behavior	A customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.	B	Conceptual	Van Doorn et al (2010)
Consumer brand engagement	The level of an individual customers’ motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions.	C, E, B	Conceptual	Hollebeek (2011)
Brand community engagement	The consumer’s intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members.	C, E	Empirical, quantitative	Algesherimer et al (2005)
Brand engagement	High relevance of brands to consumers and the development of an emotional connection between consumers and brands.	C, E	Conceptual	Rappaport (2007)
Advertising engagement	The amount of ‘feeling’ going on when an advertisement is being processed.	C, E	Conceptual	Heath (2007)

Construct	Definition	Dimension(s)	Research type	Author (year)
Media engagement	The sum of the motivational experiences consumers have with a media product.	C, E, B	Empirical, mixed mode	Calder & Malthouse (2008)
Consumer brand engagement	A cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.	C, E, B	Conceptual	Mollen & Wilson (2010)
Consumer engagement	A consumer's ongoing attention to a consumption object.	C, B	Qualitative	Abdul-Ghani, Hyde & Marshall (2011)
Virtual community engagement	A class of behaviors that reflects community members' demonstrated willingness to participate and cooperate with others in a way that creates value for themselves and for others ---- including the community sponsor.	B	Qualitative	Porter et al. (2011)
Consumer virtual brand community engagement	A context-dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement processes.	C, E, B	Empirical, qualitative	Brodie et al (2011 online)
Customer engagement	A psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, cocreative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships. It occurs under a specific set of context-dependent conditions generating differing CE levels; and exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships that cocreate value. CE plays a central role in a nomological network governing service relationships in which other relational concepts (e.g., involvement, loyalty) are antecedents and/or consequences in iterative CE processes. It is a multidimensional concept subject to a context- and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral dimensions.	C, E, B	Conceptual	Brodie et al (2011)

Construct	Definition	Dimension(s)	Research type	Author (year)
Organization community engagement	Participation in knowledge sharing activities.	B	Empirical, quantitative	Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado (2006)
Customer engagement in an online social platform	The level of a customer's physical, cognitive, and emotional presence in connections with a particular online social platform	C, E, B	Empirical, quantitative	Cheung, Lee, & Jin (2011)
Customer engagement	The intensity of customer participation with both representatives of the organization and with other customers in a collaborative knowledge exchange process.	B	Empirical, qualitative	Wagner & Majchrzak (2007)
Customer engagement	An intimate long-term relationship with the customer	C, E, B	Conceptual	Sashi (2012)

Engagement dimension: C = Cognitive; E = Emotional; B = Behavioral.

Due to lack of understanding of consumer co-creation, Hoyer et al. (2010) propose a conceptual framework of consumer co-creation with focus on the degree of consumer co-creation in new product development. Both stimulators and inhibitors of consumer co-creation are examined. At individual level, co-creation involves financial (e.g. financial reward), social (e.g. social status, good citizenship), technical (e.g. technology knowledge) and psychological (e.g. a sense of pride) factors. Companies can stimulate consumer co-creation by increasing the benefits consumer receive from the process or reducing the cost to consumers. However, some companies may hesitate to get consumers involved into new product development process because of their concerns about secrecy, ownership of intellectual property, information overload and infeasible production ideas. It is suggested that companies co-create with consumers at different stages of new product development, including ideation, product development, commercialization and post-launch, through which companies can increase productivity and improve effectiveness.

Disagreeing with Van Doorn et al.'s engagement definition (2010), Kumar et al. (2010) argue that consumer engagement behavior should include consumer purchase. They use customer engagement value as an overarching value construct which is comprised of four dimensions: customer lifetime value (the customer's purchase behavior), customer referral value (acquisition of new customers through incentivized referral programs), customer influencer value (customer's intrinsic-motivated behavior to influence other customers) and customer knowledge value (customer's feedback on firms). Different from the other three non-transactional types of value, customer lifetime value is created from transaction.

Researchers from New Zealand also demonstrated their interest in consumer engagement. Reviewing "engagement" in a range of social science disciplines, Brodie, Hollebeek, et al. (2011) developed five themes of consumer engagement. The first theme postulates that consumer

engagement is a psychological state derived from interaction between consumers and a focal engagement object (e.g. brand). The second theme claims that consumer engagement states take place within a dynamic and iterative process where value is co-created. The third theme recognizes the central role of consumer engagement in service relationship. The fourth theme asserts that consumer engagement is a multidimensional concept comprising cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. The final theme states that consumer engagement is an individual, context-dependent state characterized by a specific intensity level at a given point of time. It is argued that the first two themes are fundamental, which distinguish engagement from traditional relational concepts, such as participation and involvement (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011). Consumer engagement emerges from a customer's interactive, co-creative experiences with a specific engagement object, whereas other relational concepts "fail to reflect the notion of interactive, co-creative experiences as comprehensively as does consumer engagement" (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011, p. 257). In the dynamic, iterative process of consumer engagement, other relational concepts, labeled as antecedents of consumer engagement (such as involvement and participation), may extend to serve as its consequences. This conclusion is consistent with that of Bowden (2009), who adopts new and repeat customer dichotomy in analyzing consumer engagement process. Brodie, Hollebeek, et al.'s (2011) comprehensive review enhances our understanding of different aspects of engagement. It is recommended to adopt a multi-dimensional view of consumer engagement since the majority of reviewed marketing literature does so. However, the intensity level of consumer engagement may vary under different situation (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011).

Drawing on psychology and organizational behavior literature, Hollebeek (2011) acknowledges that academic research on consumer brand engagement is in its infancy to date.

Consumer brand engagement is defined as “the level of an individual customer’s motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions” (p. 790). Consumer brand engagement occurs from first-hand, physical interactions between a consumer, a focal subject, and a focal brand. The engagement state characterized by specific engagement level may fluctuate under certain contextual conditions, including industry, product/service attributes, consumer motivation/needs and online/offline (Hollebeek, 2011). According to Hollebeek (2011), consumer brand engagement comprises three dimensions. The cognitive dimension is demonstrated by consumers’ level of concentration and/or engrossment in the brand. The emotional dimension is expressed by consumers’ level of brand-related inspiration and/or pride. Finally, consumer engagement behavior is indicated by consumers’ level of energy employed in interacting with a focal brand.

Previous literature suggests a positive, linear relationship between consumer brand engagement and loyalty (e.g. Bowden, 2009). However, Hollebeek (2011) argues that their relationship is curvilinear rather than linear. In other words, below a particular point, higher consumer brand engagement level may lead to enhanced loyalty. As the level of consumer brand engagement increases beyond the point, customer loyalty declines because the excessive level of engagement may cause consumer draining and/or fatigue. It is also asserted that involvement is an antecedent to engagement which is required to exist before the occurrence of specific brand engagement level (Hollebeek, 2011).

It is believed that brand community is an effective and efficient way to disseminate information, influence consumers’ perceptions and actions, and collaborate with highly loyal customers (Muniz Jr & Schau, 2005). Therefore, many organizations are interested in creating a

community, through which relationship among enthusiasts of brand is established. However, getting consumer engaged is the greatest challenge to company-sponsored brand communities (Porter, Donthu, MacElroy, & Wydra, 2011). Brand community engagement is examined by Algesheimer et al. (2005). It is defined as “the consumer’s intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members” (p. 21). According to Algesheimer et al. (2005), consumers are engaged with brand communities when they perceive congruence between their own self-identity and community identity. Strongly engaged community members are likely to exhibit favorable brand-related behavior, including maintaining their membership, offer recommendations and participate in community activities (Algesheimer et al., 2005).

In addition, engagement is widely used in advertising research to describe a consumer’s active, sustained attention and emotion to a market offering (Calder, Malthouse, & Schädel, 2009; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). According to Rappaport (2007), brand engagement indicates “high relevance of brands to consumers and the development of an emotional connection between consumers and brands” (p. 138). In advertising context, the emotional aspect of engagement is also buttressed by Heath (2007). It is argued that engagement is a subconscious emotional construct and refers to “the amount of ‘feeling’ going on when an advertisement is being processed” (Heath, 2007, p. 18). In comparison, attention indicates a rational and conscious thinking and operates independently from engagement.

Media engagement, defined as “the sum of the motivational experiences consumers have with a media product” is found to enhance advertising effectiveness (Calder, Malthouse, & Schädel, 2008; Calder et al., 2009). Focusing on the experiential aspect of engagement, Calder et al. (2008) hypothesize that engagement is a second-order construct composed of a number of first-order experience factors. Therefore, to understand engagement, one must identify and learn

different experiences that consumers have when dealing with the media product (Pagani & Mirabello, 2011). Results of factor analysis identify two types of engagement: personal and social-interactive engagement. Personal engagement, largely intrinsically motivated, indicates how users feel and consume the content presented on the media. In comparison, social-interactive engagement is extrinsically and intrinsically influenced and demonstrates how users undertake social activities in connecting with the media (Calder et al., 2008; Pagani & Mirabello, 2011). Moreover, personal engagement is exhibited in experiences that people have with a variety of media, including newspapers, magazines, TV news and websites. However, social interactive engagement is more unique to the websites and arises from community connection experience, indicating the Internet is different from traditional media (Calder et al., 2009). Both personal engagement and social-interactive engagement have a significant positive influence on the active and passive usage of websites (Pagani & Mirabello, 2011).

Consumer Engagement in the Online Context

The Internet provides various virtual interaction and communication tools and facilitates consumer engagement with specific brands (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Although the term consumer engagement is extensively used in online environment, its theoretical foundations remain unexplored in the literature (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011). Mollen and Wilson (2010) define consumer brand engagement in the online context as “a cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value” (p. 923). The concept consists of the dimensions of “sustained cognitive processing”, and individual’s satisfaction with “instrumental value” (i.e. utility and relevance) and “experiential value” (i.e. emotional congruence with the narrative schema encountered in computer-mediated entities). Moreover, Mollen and Wilson (2010)

explain the difference between engagement and involvement. As they suggest, engagement goes beyond involvement, describing an active pursuit of relationship with the engagement objects and requiring satisfying of experiential value in addition to instrumental value. By contrast, involvement indicates consumers' interest in a consumption object and is associated with "passive allocation of mental resource" and perceived instrumental value. This argument is consistent with other researchers who view engagement derives from interactive experience (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011; Calder et al., 2008; Hollebeek, 2011).

Abdul-Ghani, Hyde, & Marshall (2011) offer emic and etic interpretations of engagement with a consumer-to-consumer online auction site. Engagement is a consumer's ongoing attention to a consumption object, which refers to a website in this study. Engagement requires not only paying attention to but developing feelings for the consumption object as well. Three bases of consumer website engagement are identified: utilitarian, hedonic and social benefits. To foster and sustain engagement in firm-sponsored virtual communities, Porter et al. (2011) propose a three-stage framework: understanding consumer needs and motivation, promoting participation and motivating cooperation. At the first stage, a sponsor must identify and understand the needs of community members which motivate them to participate in a virtual community. Secondly, the sponsor must provide additional extrinsic motivation to maintain the life of the community through encouraging content creation, facilitating interaction and relationship building, and creating enjoyable experience. At the final stage, the sponsor should focus on motivating cooperation among community members and generating member feeling of embeddedness and empowerment, through which value is created for both members and the sponsor. Although engagement is defined as "a class of behaviors that reflects community members' demonstrated willingness to participate and cooperate with others in a way that creates value for themselves

and for others ---- including the community sponsor” (p. 83), Porter et al. (2011) recognize the importance of cognitive and emotive perspective of engagement. As stated in the paper, “such actions (engagement behaviors) are motivated by both cognitive and emotional forces” (p. 83). Further, value of engagement in virtual communities is examined. The short-term benefits refer to financial value, such as repeat purchasing and cross-buying. In the long run, the values of participation and connection emerge since engaged community members are willing to participate in referral program and offering feedback on new product design and development (Porter et al., 2011).

A pioneering study by Brodie, Ilic, et al. (2011) empirically examines consumer engagement in a virtual brand community and provides evidence to support the five themes developed by Brodie, Hollebeek, et al. (2011). From a broad perspective, Brodie, Ilic, et al (2011) define consumer engagement as “a context-dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement process” (p. 3). Consumer engagement in online communities is an interactive, experiential process triggered by consumers’ need, especially information need. The findings also demonstrate the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of consumer engagement and the interplay among them, which results in different levels of engagement intensity. Consumer engagement behavior is manifested by a number of sub-processes, including learning, sharing, advocating, socializing and co-developing. Moreover, the investigation identifies a number of consumer engagement consequences, such as loyalty and satisfaction, empowerment, connection and emotional bonds, trust and commitment.

Corresponding with the multidimensional view of engagement and building upon the theoretical foundation of personal/employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002),

Cheung, Lee, & Jin (2011) define consumer engagement in an online social platform as “the level of a consumer’s physical, cognitive and emotional presence in connections with a particular online social platform” (p. 3). It is indicated that consumer engagement in an online social platform is a psychological state, which drives consumer engagement behavior. Moreover, involvement and social interactions are antecedents of consumer engagement in an online social platform.

It should be noted that in online environment, engagement is used interchangeably with those terms such as participation, commitment and involvement. For instance, Cabrera, Collins, and Salgado’s (2006) research examining determinants of engagement in an organization-sponsored community of practice, engagement refers to participation in knowledge sharing activities. Among a total of 11 factors including five psychological, four environmental and two system-related, the most influential factors are open to experience, self-efficacy and perceived support from colleagues and supervisors. Similarly, Yoo and Gretzel (2011) don’t differentiate engagement from participation and involvement in an investigation into the influence of personality on travel-related CGM.

A number of researchers (e.g. Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Nambisan & Baron, 2007, 2009) attempt to employ uses & gratifications theory (U&G) to explain why consumers engage with media. It is argued that consumers are motivated largely by the belief that benefits can be obtained from media engagement. Four types of benefits identified by U&G are cognitive, social integrative, personal integrative and hedonic benefits (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). Later MacQuail (1983) provides an updated version by adding remuneration and empowerment benefits. Nambisan and Baron (2007; 2009) contextualize each of Katz, et al’s benefits into virtual customer environment. The cognitive benefits refer to product-related information and

knowledge gained to help understanding of the products and their usage. The social integrative benefits are related to consumer's ties with other people developed through participating in online communities. The personal integrative benefits reflect gains in status, reputation and the achievement of a sense of self-efficacy when people share their product-related knowledge and usage skills. The hedonic benefits result from pleasurable interactive experience with other consumers. Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) argue that different benefits are associated with different social media usage behavior. For instance, people contributing content to social media are driven by personal identity, social integration and hedonic benefits, whereas consumers of social media content pursue information, entertainment and remuneration benefits.

It is claimed that not only individual-level motivational variables but also group-level variables are important drivers of virtual community engagement. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) introduce the concept of "we-intentions" and use the model of goal-directed behavior to explain members' we-intentions. At individual level, both positive anticipated emotions and desires determine we-intention to participate, whereas social identity is considered as a group-level motive. In a follow-up study, Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Pearo (2004) argue that individual variables are antecedents to group-level variables, which in turn influence community engagement. The individual variables consist of five perceived benefits (i.e. purposive value, self-discovery, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity, social enhancement and entertainment value). Group influence stems from social identity and group norms. Moreover, virtual communities are classified into small group-based, where members usually interact with the same group of people, and network-based, where members usually interact with different individuals or groups of people. Their findings demonstrate that participants of small-group-based virtual community seek social benefits. In comparison, informational and instrumental

benefits are the main reason for engaging in network-based communities. In both types of virtual communities, social identity and group norms have positive relationship with we-intention to engage.

Through the lens of social capital theory, Mathwick, Wiertz, and De Ruyter (2008) investigate the influence of voluntarism, reciprocity and social trust on consumer engagement level. Social capital accumulated in virtual peer-to-peer problem solving communities can generate both informational and social value, and hence determines members' engagement. Moreover, it is found that membership length affect engagement behavior. At the initial stage when members are not familiar with the environment or other members, they engage themselves in informational and instrumental activities. Later after they gain experience and develop social bond, they become more interested in the linking value and involved in affiliative and social activities.

Consumer Engagement – Common Themes and Confusions

Consumer engagement is the application of the term engagement in other disciplines and thrive in the Web 2.0 era due to the fact that the internet as a platform for consumer engagement. Despite the recent popularity of consumer engagement in marketing practices and research, the idea of consumer engagement is still emerging. The literature review examines marketing studies labeled with engagement and illustrates varied and sometimes conflicting opinions regarding the conceptualization of consumer engagement. The objects of consumer engagement can be brands, products, companies and brand/product communities, either offline or online. Most of the studies reviewed are descriptive in nature, attempting to build a conceptual framework of consumer engagement with its antecedents and consequences (e.g. Bowden, 2009; Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Among few empirical studies, the majority are qualitative

(e.g. Abdul-Ghani et al., 2011; Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011). Interview and netnography approaches are commonly used. There is lack of measurement of consumer engagement and thus, quantitative examination of the important construct. Based on the literature review, several common themes are identified.

The first theme is the experience perspective of consumer engagement (e.g. Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Calder et al., 2008; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2007; Van Doorn et al., 2010). The majority of researchers state explicitly or implicitly that consumer engagement can only occur when a consumer is willing and able to participate in the interactive experience. For instance, Brodie, Hollebeek, et al. (2011) argue that consumer engagement arises from personal experience. It is the experience perspective that distinguishes engagement from other similar constructs, such as participation, involvement, etc. (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Lusch & Vargo, 2010; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Vivek, 2009). In a series of studies on consumer engagement with media, Calder et al. (2008, 2009) conceptualize engagement as “the sum of the motivational experiences consumers have with a media product.” The need-driven view of engagement is also acknowledged by a number of researchers (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Calder et al., 2008; Hollebeek, 2011; Nambisan & Baron, 2007, 2009).

The second theme is the process perspective of consumer engagement (e.g. Abdul-Ghani et al., 2011; Bowden, 2009; Heinonen, 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Porter et al., 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Researchers in this perspective conceptually agree that consumer engagement represents a dynamic and iterative process, comprising a series of aggregated engagement states (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010). The intensity of engagement during the process can vary from low to high, and relatively stable to highly variable, depending on interactions over time.

The third theme is the state perspective of consumer engagement (e.g. Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Cheung et al., 2011; Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). According to researchers in this perspective, consumer engagement is a psychological state occurring under particular contextual conditions, such as industry, product attributes, and consumer needs. Although the level of consumer engagement varies, it is relatively persistent and pervasive (Hollebeek, 2011). This perspective corresponds with findings on employee/personal engagement in social psychology and organization behavior research. For instance, building upon employee engagement proposed by Salanova, Agut, and Peiro (2005) and Schaufeli et al. (2002), Cheung, Lee and Jin (2011) define consumer engagement in an online social platform as “the level of a consumer’s physical, cognitive and emotional presence in connections with a particular online social platform” (p. 3).

The final theme addresses the multidimensional perspective of consumer engagement, which comprises cognition, emotion, and behavior (e.g. Bowden, 2009; Cheung et al., 2011; Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Vivek, 2009). Under different circumstances, the relative importance of the three dimensions might vary. It is believed that the multidimensional perspective can reflect a complete conceptual scope of engagement (Cheung et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011). Therefore, it is suggested that future research adopt this approach.

In addition, it is interesting to note that researchers, when describing and defining consumer engagement, generally imply positive experience or pleasant feelings. Consumer engagement is often assumed to enhance satisfaction, loyalty, commitment and thus improve companies’ financial performance. However, negative consumer engagement is also possible. For instance, consumers’ negative word-of-mouth or complaining behavior may have damaging

impacts on companies' performance. Among the literature reviewed, the only exceptions are Van Doorn et al.'s (2010) and Libai et al.'s (2010) studies, which argue to consider the valence of consumer engagement.

Although consumer engagement remains a nascent rather than established construct, a number of extant definitions exist (Mollen & Wilson, 2010), which have resulted in the confusion of consumer engagement with other similar constructs, such as involvement, participation, etc. However, inquiry into differentiating consumer engagement from similar relational terms is quite limited (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011). The findings of literature review have implied that they are different constructs and engagement goes beyond other similar relational constructs, including involvement and participation.

Customer participation is defined as "the degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service (Dabholkar, 1990, p. 484). It indicates the active roles consumer can play in the goods and service production process. Customers can participate in the form of either joint production where the customer and employees work together to produce, or customer production where the product is created completely by the customer, without any involvement by companies or employees (Meuter & Bitner, 1998). Customer participation brings positive outcomes for companies, such as cost reduction, economic efficiency and customer satisfaction (Blazevic & Lievens, 2008). Vivek (2009) argues that customer participation focuses on the relationship between customers and companies only at the moment of exchange.

In the context of online communities, consumer participation consists of all the activities that are conducted in the community with the aim of obtaining and sharing information and experience (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalíu, 2007; Tonteri, Kosonen, Ellonen, & Tarkiainen, 2011). It is usually measured by specific behaviors, activities and assignments (Barki & Hartwick,

1994). For instance, Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) define member participation by two dimensions, the amount of time members participate in travel community activities and the extent to which members actively interact with other members in the community. In this way both posting and lurking behaviors are regarded as participation activities in online travel communities. However, consumer online engagement is a broad multidimensional construct which requires an individual's holistic investment in terms of cognitive, emotional and physical energies.

Shao (2009) implies the interactive nature of online community participation by considering participation as computer-mediated user-to-user interaction and user-to-content interaction. The examples of user-to-content interaction include members' rating of the content, sharing with others, posting comments, saving content to their favorites, ect. Members' interactions through email, instant message, chat room, message boards and other Internet venues are examples of user-to-user interaction. Shao (2009) suggests that both types of interaction (participation) are motivated by members' social needs. Similarly, Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) suggest that tourist participation in online travel communities be driven by individuals' functional, social, psychological and hedonic needs. Consumer online engagement is a description of personal experience resulting from online interaction (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011). Since online community participation is related to individuals' online social interactive experience (Shao, 2009), participation can be considered as an antecedent rather than a substitute of online engagement.

Involvement is defined as "perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). Involvement concerns the characteristics of the object and the object's value to an individual (Zaichkowsky, 1986). Motivated by the

involvement in object (e.g., product, ad, purchase decision), consumers search product information, respond to the ad and make careful purchase decision (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986). According to Park and Young (1983), involvement can be cognitive or affective. Cognitive involvement is driven by utilitarian motives, indicating an individual's concern with the cost and benefits of the product or service and interest in the functional performance of the product. Affective involvement is driven by value-expressive motives, suggesting an individual's interest in enhancing self-esteem or self-concept and in projecting his/her desired self-image to the outside world through the use of the product or service (Park & Young, 1983).

Several researchers attempt to distinguish engagement from involvement (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Hollebeek (2011) argues that consumer involvement has a duality of cognitive and emotional components. Compared with engagement, it does not directly incorporate behavioral element, and thus lacks predictive power of consumer behavioral outcomes. In addition, consumer involvement does not require the presence of physical interactions with object (i.e. product, brand, community). By contrast, consumer engagement entails a two-way interaction between engagement subject and object. It is suggested that consumer involvement be viewed as an antecedent to consumer engagement.

In online context, Mollen and Wilson (2010) define consumer brand engagement as “the cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value”. Engagement goes beyond involvement in that the former connotes pursuit of active relationship with a brand whereas the latter represents passive allocation of mental resource (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Moreover, in addition to satisfying instrumental value (i.e., utility and relevance), engagement

requires the fulfillment of experiential value (i.e. emotional congruence with the narrative schema encountered in computer-mediated entities). However, involvement emphasizes the employment of cognitive energies to assist goal-directed behavior. In online environment, consumer engagement and involvement share some commonality describing consumer focused attention or ‘engrossment’ in the website. However, they are distinct constructs.

Consumer Engagement in Travel-related Social Media — A Definition

Based on the findings of literature review and the discussion above, a definition is proposed. Consumer engagement in travel-related social media is defined as *the level of an individual consumer’s cognitive, emotional and behavioral presence arising from interactive experience with travel-related social media*. This definition reflects the common themes observed from previous literature and contextualizes consumer engagement into online travel communities. Moreover, the definition highlights the importance of interactive experience in which consumer engagement is rooted. The interactive experience includes consumer-to-content interactions, and/or consumer-to-computer interactions, and/or consumer-to-consumer interactions. The cognitive dimension refers to the consumer’s level of concentration and/or engrossment in travel-related social media. The emotional dimension refers to the consumer’s sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride in travel-related social media. The behavioral dimension refers to the consumer’s level of energy when using travel-related social media. The interplay between the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions results in various levels and durations of consumer engagement. In addition, the definition focuses on positively valenced expressions of consumer engagement, which is crucial to the development and sustainability of travel-related social media.

In summary, the literature has demonstrated the conceptual foundation and development of consumer engagement, which has deep root in sociology and psychology. Attempts to defining the construct and identifying its dimensions from previous researchers have resulted in a healthy and diverse perspective of consumer engagement. Due to lack of empirical research, particularly in the field of tourism and hospitality, the concept of consumer engagement is still in its early stage of conceptualization. It appears that consumer engagement may vary from consumer to consumer, depending on the specific situational condition. There is a significant need to take into account the highly context specific nature of consumer engagement and provide empirical evidence.

Consumer Experience in Online Environment

As shown previously, the fundamental insight is that consumer engagement emerges from the experience with the engagement object (e.g., brand, product, community). A unique consumer experience can differentiate a company from its competitors and shape the business-consumer relationships (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The concept of consumer experience is well developed in the face-to-face context, ranging across several business situations, such as consumer marketing, service delivery, tourism and retailing (Rose, Hair, & Clark, 2011). Due to the rise of the Internet, consumer experiences are more frequently shaped via computer-mediated technologies (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Interacting through the Internet, consumers conduct various activities of online search, online purchase and online service, which ultimately lead to their online experience. The increasing sales online has demonstrated the significance of online consumer experience (Rose et al., 2011). Therefore, it is suggested that consumers' interactive experience in online environment is as critical as that offline (Nambisan & Baron, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

The Internet can serve as a powerful platform for interactive experience between consumers and companies (Sawhney, Verona, & Prandelli, 2005). Rose et al. (2011) identify four major differences between online and offline consumer experience. The first one is the degree of personal contact. Personal interaction is very low and sometimes nonexistent in the online context. The second difference is the intensity of information provided. The online environment allows rich information to be delivered without significant compromises on physical proximity or personal interaction, whereas information distribution in offline environment takes various forms and requires more physical and cognitive efforts. The third distinction is the interaction time and venue. There is no time or space restriction for online interaction. Unfortunately, consumer-company interactions in offline environment are usually dictated by the companies, who make decisions on where and when to start business. The final difference is the way of brand information presented. Online, brand information is shown mainly through audio-visual devices. In comparison, a group of elements in offline experiment can be used to denote a brand, such as buildings, facilities, uniforms, etc.

Online consumer experience has been investigated from various perspectives, resulting in a variety of close but slightly different expressions of the term, such as “web experience” (Hoffman & Novak, 1996), “Internet experience” (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2004), “online shopping and retail experience” (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008; Overby & Lee, 2006), “online community experience” (Hsu & Tsou, 2011; Nambisan & Watt, 2011). “Web experience” focuses on how various internal consumer components (e.g., perceived control, focused attention, tele-presence) impact the consumers’ experience on the web. Flow is considered as the optimal mental state attained after web interaction. Moreover, it is important to recognize the behavioral distinction in a computer-mediated environment -- goal-directed and experiential (Hoffman & Novak, 1996).

Goal-directed behavior occurs when consumers are involved with a specific task-completion goal. It is characterized by extrinsic motivation, instrumental orientation, direct search and utilitarian benefits. One of the most common goal-directed behaviors shown online is information search (Rose et al., 2011). By contrast, experiential behavior focuses on the enjoyment of the process instead of goal pursuit (Bloch et al., 1986). It is characterized by intrinsic motivation, ritualized orientation, nondirected search and hedonic benefits. The state of flow can be achieved with both types of behaviors (Hoffman & Novak, 1996).

In the online shopping context, two dimensions of consumption experience have been investigated: utilitarian and hedonic. The utilitarian experience is similar to the concept of goal-directed behavior identified by Hoffman and Novak (1996) in the web experience. According to Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994), utilitarian experience results from “some type of conscious pursuit of an intended consequences” (p. 645). For instance, online shoppers may receive instrumental benefits, such as convenience, efficiency, accessibility, selection, availability of information and no requirement for commitment (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008). The hedonic experience is similar to the concept of experiential behavior, resulting from fun and playfulness of the online shopping process. It is more subjective and personal (Babin et al., 1994). Overby and Lee (2006) find that both utilitarian and hedonic experiences are important to consumers’ preference for online retailers and future intention. However, the utilitarian experience plays a stronger role than the hedonic one. The results are consistent with other studies which demonstrate the utilitarian nature of online consumers (e.g. Bridges & Florsheim, 2008; Koufaris, Kambil, & LaBarbera, 2001; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001)

As matter of fact, this dichotomy of online consumer experience has long been noted in the offline context. Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) describe consumers as either “problem

solvers” or seekers of “fun, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, and enjoyment.” Other researchers have called these two dimensions as intrinsic and extrinsic value of experience, or cognitive and affective experience (Nambisan, 2009). No matter how these dimensions are coined, a basic idea is the dual nature of consumption experience. From the utilitarian perspective, “consumers are concerned with purchasing products in an efficient and timely manner to achieve their goals with a minimum of irritation” (Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson, 2002, p. 513). By contrast, the hedonic nature of experience indicates that consumers appreciate the consumption experience for its own sake, apart from the achievement of any pre-determined goal. These dimensions have been validated in both online and offline context (Koufaris, 2002; Nambisan, 2009; Rose et al., 2011).

It should be noted that an online consumer is not only simply a shopper but also an information technology user (Cho & Park, 2001). Online experience is more complicated than physical shopping experience (Constantinides, 2004). Since consumer online interaction is mediated by information technology, the ease of the human-computer interaction also shapes consumers’ overall experience and affects their adoption of online shopping (Davis, 1989; Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003; y Monsuwé, Dellaert, & De Ruyter, 2004). Therefore, in addition to the utilitarian and hedonic dimensions of online experience, it is suggested that usability of the website be viewed as a dimension of consumer online experience (Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008). Usability is an important quality criterion of online experience (Constantinides, 2004), and has been traditionally considered as a key factor for determining a person’s attitude toward a website (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinaliu, 2008; Davis, 1989).

According to Nielsen (1994), usability refers to the ease of learning how to manage the system, efficiency of the system design, ease of memorizing how to use the system, reduction of

errors, and general satisfaction with the system. Nah and Davis (2002) define web usability as “the ability to find one’s way around the web, to locate desired information, to know what to do next, and very importantly, to do so with minimal effort” (p. 99). The central idea of usability is how a system can be used easily and effectively to accomplish individuals’ tasks (Nielson, 2000). Higher level of usability is associated with lower level of difficulty to use a website (Davis, 1989).

There is a significant body of work that focuses on usability in computer-mediated environment (Green & Pearson, 2011). One stream of research looks at components of usability, including the development of measurement instrument. For instance, Agarwal and Venkatesh (2002) design an instrument which operationalizes website usability into five dimensions: ease of use, made-for-the-medium, emotion, content and promotion. Constantinides (2004) suggests that elements enhancing website usability are convenience, site navigation, information architecture, ordering/payment process, search facilities and process, site speed and site findability/accessibility. On the other hand, another stream of research demonstrates their interest in examining relationships between usability and other related constructs, such as site satisfaction, trust and loyalty. For example, Konradt, Wandke, Balazs, & Christophersen (2003) conclude that usability can be used to predict user intention and decision to buy from an online website. Integrating website usability with the electronic commerce acceptance model, Green and Pearson (2011) find that a set of design specific usability attributes plays an important role in the online shopping experience, consisting of design credibility, content, interactivity, navigability and responsiveness. It is recommended that online stores improve transaction likelihood by applying these usability attributes to their websites.

The Internet has not only boomed online shopping but also accelerated new forms of human interactions (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996). The rise of what has been termed “online community” allows millions of diverse people to come together to get and give information or support, to learn or to find company (Preece, 2001). Just like socializing in the physical environment, individuals’ interactions in online communities constitute their social experience (Nambisan & Watt, 2011). In the computer-mediated environment, sociability is used to describe interactions among community members through the supporting technology (Preece, 2001). Compared with usability, which is concerned with users’ interaction with technology (i.e. human-computer interaction), sociability focuses on human-human interaction (Preece, 2001). Sociability indicates that people feel easy and comfortable to engage in interpersonal communication through the technology-enabled space (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Phang, Kankanhalli, & Sabherwal, 2009; Preece, 2001).

Due to the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, the focus of consumer experience has shifted from consumption experience to a community-based experience (Hsu et al., 2012; Mathwick et al., 2008). Online community experience is defined as “the overall experience a customer derives from his/her interactions in an online community” (Nambisan & Watt, 2011). It captures community members’ perceptions based on their visit to an online community. Online community experience can shape consumers’ attitude toward both the company and the product, and thus result in purchase intentions and decisions (Nambisan, 2009). Further, consumers who have positive community experience are more likely to remain engaged in their online communities (Hsu et al., 2012; Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008).

Nambisan and Nambisan (2008) offer a framework of consumer experience in online communities, which is composed of four components: pragmatic experience, hedonic

experience, sociability experience and usability experience. The pragmatic experience reflects the utilitarian and practical aspect of the customers' experience in online communities. Most consumers visit online communities to acquire information, which is either a solution to specific problem or a piece of advice from other community members. Hence, the pragmatic experience constitutes an essential component of online community experience (Nambisan & Watt, 2011). The hedonic experience is defined as "the intrinsic experience of just being in the online community" (Nambisan, 2009, p. 312). It represents the enjoyment and excitement consumers can gain from being in the online community since the community itself is their object of interest. Consumers are happy to be involved in an online community because they have a shared goal, interest, need or activity (Preece, 2000). The sociability experience derives from interpersonal interactions among members in online communities (Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008). The online communities serve as a social space where community members can meet and establish network and relationships (Preece, 2000). The sociability experience reflects the social and relational benefits obtained from interactions among members of online communities (Hsu et al., 2012; Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008). In online communities, consumer experience is mediated by information technology (Preece, 2000). Thus, the quality of the human-computer interactions determines the usability experience (Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008). The usability experience captures consumers' perceptions on "the ease of use and clarity of the technological features of the online community" (Nambisan & Watt, 2011, p. 891). Nambisan and Nambisan's (2008) typology covers not only the experiential aspects leading to the optimal experience, but also the desired benefits that consumers pursue in online communities (Hsu et al., 2012).

Social Identity Theory

It should be noticed that online community is a social space where social identity may evolve as individuals gain experience from frequent interactions (Dholakia et al., 2004; Mathwick et al., 2008). Namely, consumers may categorize themselves as members of the community and develop overtime a sense of belongingness to the online community. It is consistent with Mathwick et al. (2008) that “the passage of time influences the stability and continuity of social structures as well as individual perceptions of the community experience” (p. 836). Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) suggest that the process of “congregating and communicating in mediated environment, together, as a *group*” also constitutes consumers’ experience in online communities (p. 7). During the process, consumers are subjected to the social influence exerted by the community on its members (Dholakia et al., 2004; Postmes, Spears, & Lea, 2000). Therefore, it is considered as group-level experience (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002), compared with the individual-based online community experience proposed by Nambisan and Nambisan (2008).

Social identity theory provides a theoretical background for understanding online community experience at group level (Dholakia et al., 2004; Qu & Lee, 2011). According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories so that they can locate or define themselves in the social environment. An individual’s self-concept is composed of personal identity and social identity. Different from personal identity, social identity is a shared or collective identity (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It is defined as the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to a certain social group (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). People who have stronger social identity are more likely to categorize themselves as members of a

group, conform to in-group norms and distinguish themselves from out-groups (Bhattacharya et al., 1995). Social identity results from an individual's involvement in a social group and indicates the individual's position in the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Identification is the process whereby an individual's social identity is established (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Tajfel (1978) argues that an individual's social identity is developed through self-awareness of one's membership in a group, and the emotional and evaluative significance of this membership. Thus, social identification consists of cognitive, emotional and evaluative components (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999). The cognitive identification involves self-categorization process through which consumers aware their memberships in a social group, perceive similarities with members and dissimilarities with nonmembers, and develop consciousness-of-kind (Algesheimer et al., 2005). The emotional identification implies a sense of emotional involvement with the group, which has been characterized as attachment or affective commitment to the group (Ellemers et al., 1999). It is suggested that emotional identification be used to explain individuals' willingness to maintain committed relationship with online communities (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Dholakia et al., 2004) since it can foster loyalty and citizenship behavior in the group setting (Ellemers et al, 1999). Further, the evaluation identification represents an assessment of positive and negative values attached to the membership (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Ellemers et al, 1999).

Social identity theory has been considered important for understanding online communities (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Blanchard, 2008; Tonteri et al., 2011). Participation in online communities is characterized as voluntary, low setup costs and easy entry. People are free to come and leave online communities (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). Further, there are few social cues in online communities. Many online communities allow anonymous participants (Kozinets,

De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). These features raise the question why people are willing to contribute to online communities since they are not required to do so. Answers to the question are critical to the long-term success of online communities (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; De Valck et al., 2009; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003). According to social identity theory, individuals identify with the group and internalize its norms through community interactions around shared interest. Therefore, they become emotionally attached to the community and exhibit community-like behaviors, such as knowledge sharing and community support (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Blanchard & Markus, 2004; Dholakia et al., 2004; Qu & Lee, 2011).

Social identity theory has been widely applied to different types of online communities, including online chat rooms (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Tonteri et al., 2011), Listservs and Usenet newsgroups (Blanchard, 2008; Blanchard & Markus, 2004), online brand communities (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Carlson, Suter, & Brown, 2008), online game community (Hsu et al., 2012) and online social network (Kwon & Wen, 2010). In online travel communities, identification is found to have a positive impact on members' loyalty to the communities and the company's homepage (Kim et al., 2004), attitude toward participation and intention to participate in the communities (Casaló et al., 2010) and voluntary member behaviors, including active knowledge sharing, community promotion and behavior changes in terms of community value (Qu & Lee, 2011).

A Research Framework for Consumer Engagement in Travel-related Social Media

In this section, the study's conceptual framework is presented. A number of important studies support the proposed conceptual model and subsequent hypotheses about consumer engagement in travel-related social media. The underpinning theories consist of service-

dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), experience marketing (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and marketing in computer-mediated environment (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). It is suggested that consumer engagement in travel-related social media emerges from consumer experience in the virtual environment. Both individual-level and group-level experience act independently to influence consumer engagement. In addition, group-level experience is considered as a beneficial outcome of individual-level experience. The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 2.

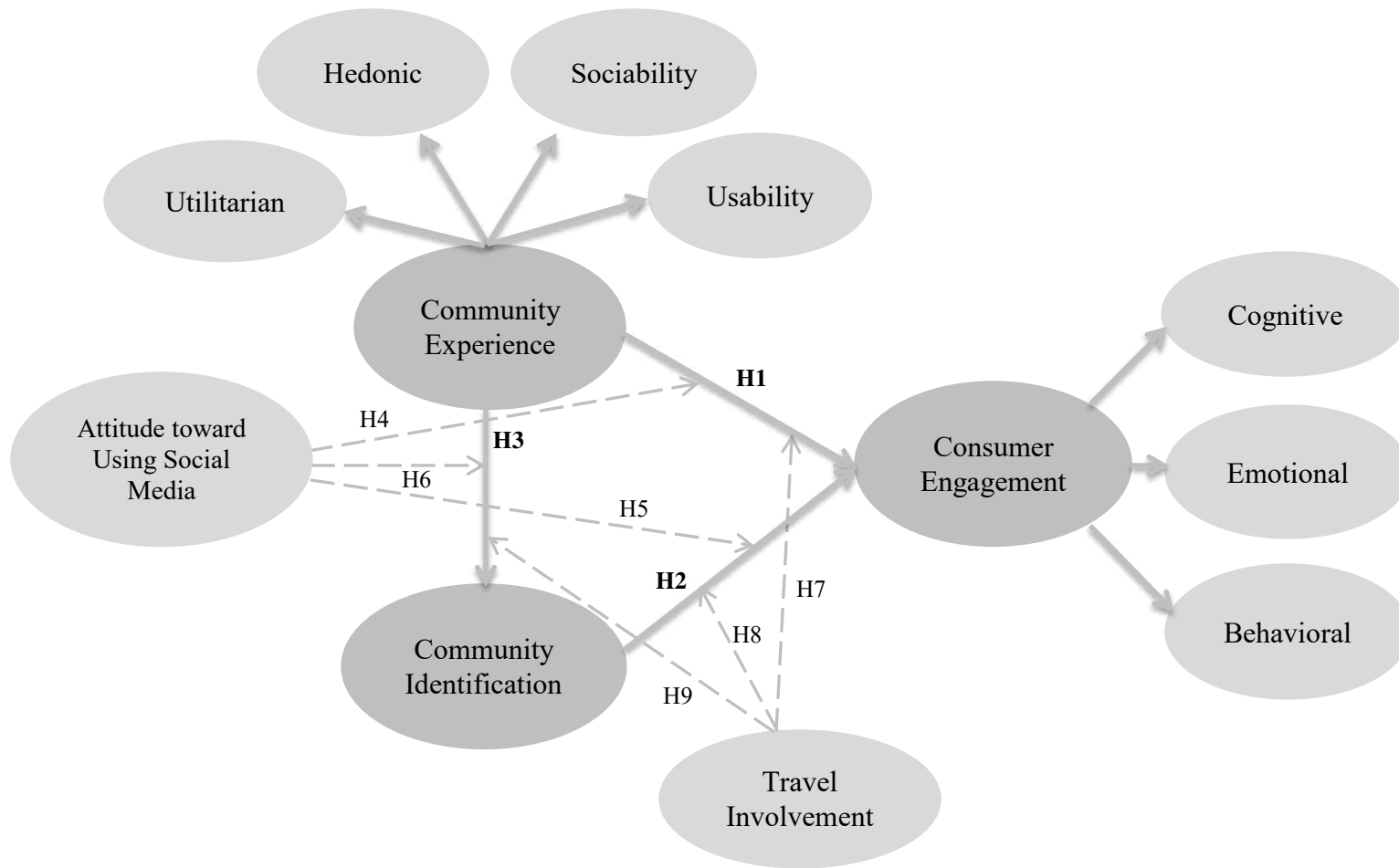


Figure 2 - A Conceptual Model of Consumer Engagement in Travel-related Social Media

To facilitate consumer engagement with travel-related social media, tourism organizations must focus on delivering positive community experience, which usually begins as needs fulfillment (primarily a search for information) and then transforms into relational cohesiveness (Kozinets, 2002; Wang et al., 2002). Based on Nambisan and Watt's (2011) description of online community experience, this study defines community experience as the overall experience a consumer derives from his/her interactions with travel-related social media. The construct reveals a community member's feelings and impressions based on his/her interactions in the online travel community.

Individuals come to online travel communities to satisfy their basic needs (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996; Wang et al., 2002). Some people may want travel information to reduce uncertainty and facilitate decision-making. Others may want to meet new people and have fun. A range of interactions offered by online travel communities create virtual experience, through which desired benefits are delivered. Given that consumers can obtain three types of benefits (i.e. functional, social and hedonic) in online travel communities (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Parra-López et al., 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a), the current study classifies community experience into three categories, namely utilitarian experience, sociability experience and hedonic experience. The utilitarian experience indicates the degree of functional benefits achieved through interactions in online travel communities. According to Wang et al. (2002), the functional benefits relate to the transaction process, including aspects such as rich and useful information, and economic advantages. The expected functional benefits from online travel communities can be a great amount of relevant information needed to plan a trip. Exchange of information in the online environment is more convenient and efficient because online information can be accessed without concerns about time and geographical limits (Wang et al.,

2002). Sociability experience reveals the process through which community members acquire social benefits. The social benefits refer to the relationship building with like-minded people through information sharing in online travel communities. The expected social benefits can be help and support, discussing and exchange ideas, socializing and getting involved with others, and forming relationships (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a). Hedonic experience implies the extent of hedonic benefits community members gain from being in online travel communities. The hedonic benefits involve a state of emotion such as entertainment, enjoyment and playfulness. People join online travel communities not only to obtain functional and social benefits, but also for their own enjoyment and entertainment purposes (Wang et al., 2002). The hedonic perspective views consumers as pleasure seekers engaged in activities which elicit enjoyment, entertainment, amusement and fun. Online travel communities offer people the opportunity to come together and explore a new world of fantasy and entertainment where they can engage in role-playing games where everything seems possible (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a).

In addition, interaction activities occurring in online travel communities are mediated by information technology (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008). Navigating through the online environment and conducting a range of computer-mediated activities rely on the quality of information system, which shapes the usability experience in online travel communities (Casaló et al., 2010). Usability experience represents the ease of use and clarity of technological features community members perceive from online travel communities. Unlike the other three types of community experience, usability experience itself doesn't generate value for community members. However, it facilitates the value-creation process.

Altogether, a total of four components are identified, providing a comprehensive view of consumer experience in online travel communities. They are utilitarian experience, sociability

experience, hedonic experience and usability experience. As discussed previously, consumer engagement derives from the experience with the engagement object (Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011; Calder et al., 2008; Hollebeek, 2011), which is online travel communities in this study. It is believed that the quality of consumer experience will influence how consumers engage with online travel communities. The more value an individual perceives from online community experience, the more engaged he/she will be. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is developed.

Hypothesis 1: Consumers who have better experiences with travel-related social media are more likely to have higher level of engagement.

As consumers gain more experience from interactions with travel-related social media, a sense of belonging is likely to develop (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Qu & Lee, 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a). “Identifying with a virtual community that one has chosen volitionally stem from an understanding that membership entails significant benefits” (Dholakia et al., 2004, p. 245). Through interactions with travel-related social media, individuals’ desired benefits are achieved (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Wang et al., 2002). A positive community experience leads to members’ identification with the community. In current study, community identification refers to the perceived sense of belonging to a particular travel-related social medium.

Individuals’ identification with a group tends to reinforce the feelings that bind members together, improve instruction on shared values and encourage collective behaviors based on group members’ expectation (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006). In the context of online travel community, studies (i.e. Casaló et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2004; Qu & Lee, 2011) indicate that community identification encourages positive member behaviors, such as community

participation, community promotion and community loyalty. The relationship between community identification and consumer engagement is manifested by previous studies (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005; Hsu, et al., 2012). It is implied that community identification foster consumer engagement in online community. Further, Dholakia et al. (2004) view community identification as group-level consumer experience in online communities. As individual-level consumer experience, community identification stimulates consumer engagement. More specifically, if community participants identify with a group, they are likely to increase their engagement with the group. Hence, hypotheses 2 and 3 are proposed.

Hypothesis 2: Consumers who have higher level of community identification are more likely to have higher level of engagement in travel-related social media.

Hypothesis 3: Consumers who have better experiences with travel-related social media are more likely to have higher level of community identification.

Attitude has been recognized as an important variable to understand consumer behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Hsu & Lin, 2008). An individual who has more positive attitude toward a behavior is more likely to develop an intention to conduct the behavior. Attitude is defined as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6). It is included in several behavior-related theoretical models, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

In the online context, the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention has received substantial empirical support (Chen, Chen, & Kinshuk, 2009). For instance, Porter and

Donthu (2006) conduct a survey with real consumers in a major southeastern US metropolitan area to test how attitude affects Internet usage. They find that attitude toward Internet usage is significantly and positively associated with Internet usage. Wu and Chen (2005) extend the Trust and TAM model with TPB to examine the acceptance of online tax service. The results show that attitude has a positive impact on behavioral intention to use online tax service. To identify what motivates people to participate in blog activities, Hsu and Lin (2008) employ the TRA as a framework to develop a model involving technology acceptance, knowledge sharing and social influence. They conclude that attitude toward using blogs, together with social influence factors has an effect on a blog participant's intention to continue to use blogs. Attitude construct is significant to explain online consumer behavior (Casaló et al., 2011b).

In an investigation on eight competing models of information technology acceptance, Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003) found that attitude exists in six of the models. However, the predicting power of attitude on behavior intention varies across the models. In some models such as TRA, TPB and the Motivational Model, the attitude construct is the strongest predictor of behavior intention. Nonetheless, in other models the results are not significant due to the inclusion of constructs related to performance and effort expectancies. A further examination suggests that the relationship between attitude and intention is spurious, resulting from the absence of key predictors. Recent studies on guest service indicate a moderating role of attitude. According to Voorhees and Brady (2005), it can be inferred from the attitude theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) that attitude moderates the effects of situational triggers (e.g. an unpleasant experience) on behavioral intentions. de Matos, Rossi, Veiga, and Vieira (2009) provide empirical support for this proposition by examining the

moderating role of attitude toward complaining in the effects of satisfaction on consumer complaining behavior in a service failure context.

In current study, a moderating role is argued for attitude toward using social media (ATUSM). ATUSM refers to an individual's overall affective reaction to using social media. It is believed that consumers with strong and positive ATUSM are more likely to engage in travel-related social media regardless of their online experience. In other words, consumers with higher ATUSM have greater propensity to engage even when their online experience is not very positive. As a result, online experience is not a good predictor of engagement for these high ATUSM consumers, since they are usually engaged with social media irrespective of their online experience. On the other hand, consumers who are not fan of social media will need a very high level of online experience to motivate them to engage in travel-related social media.

Similarly, ATUSM also moderates the effect of online experience on community identification. The higher ATUSM individuals have, they are more receptive to community value and more likely to develop a sense of community. In other words, consumers are more likely to consider themselves as a community member if they have stronger and more positive ATUSM. Hence, the magnitudes of the hypothesized relationship might vary depending on member's ATUSM. Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 are developed.

Hypothesis 4: Attitude toward using social media moderates the relationship between community experience and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.

Hypothesis 5: Attitude toward using social media moderates the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.

Hypothesis 6: *Attitude toward using social media moderates the relationship between community experience and community identification.*

In addition, researchers have suggested that the main purpose for community participation is to learn from other consumers' experience or acquire information (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996; Mathwick et al., 2008), and involvement has been considered a strong motivation for information search (Shang, Chen, & Liao, 2006). The concept of involvement has been widely used in consumer behavior research (Cai, Feng, & Breiter, 2004; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). Among diverse definitions and operationalization, Zaichkowsky (1986) offers a comprehensive framework of involvement. In the advertising domain, involvement is the personal relevance of the receiver to advertisements. The receiver is personally affected and therefore motivated to respond to the advertisement. In the product class domain, involvement is the relevance of the product to the needs and values of the consumers, and therefore their interest in product information. In the purchase decision domain, involvement is the relevance of the decision, which motivates the consumer to make a careful purchase decision. In general, involvement means personal relevance.

It is argued that involvement plays an important role in moderating and explaining variable relationships (Huang, Chou, & Lin, 2010). For instance, Namsian and Baron (2007) conclude that customers' product involvement positively moderate the relationship between customer participation in online communities and perceived learning benefits, personal benefits, and hedonic benefits respectively. Gursoy and McCleary (2004) propose that highly involved tourists would like to spend more time to search travel information and process the information thoroughly, and thus tend to have more expertise with the destination. Sanchez-Franco &

Rondan-Cataluña (2010) suggest that purchase involvement is an important moderator of the relationships between website design variables (i.e. aesthetics and usability) and satisfaction with online travel communities. Highly involved tourists perceive high level of risk of making a bad decision. When searching travel information via online communities, they seek cues related to their purchase and exhibit goal-directed behaviors. Therefore, the impact of perceived usability on satisfaction is strengthened in the high elaboration process. By contrast, low involved tourists don't make extensive search and rarely evaluate travel information in depth before making decisions. They surf and browse online travel communities for the sake of entertainment and curiosity, and tend to use simple cues (e.g. site attractiveness) to process information. Hence, the relationship between aesthetics and satisfaction is weakened in the low elaboration condition.

This study adopts a general view of involvement and defines travel involvement as a person's perceived relevance of travel and tourism based on inherent needs, values, and interests. It is expected that the greater the travel involvement, the higher value community members perceive from online travel communities. Community members who assign more importance to travel and tourism in their daily life will perceive more benefits when interacting in online travel communities. To them, travel information available in the online travel communities is more valuable and meaningful. They are more curious and have more fun in knowing about various destinations and attractions. Moreover, due to the familiarity and expertise they exhibit in travel communities, they are usually considered opinion-leaders and have more followers. As a result, these consumers are more inclined to belong to the community and remain engaged. Thus, the magnitudes of the hypothesized relationship might vary depending on member's travel involvement. Hypotheses 7, 8, and 9 are developed.

Hypothesis 7: *Travel involvement moderates the relationship between community experience and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.*

Hypothesis 8: *Travel involvement moderates the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.*

Hypothesis 9: *Travel involvement moderates the relationship between community experience and community identification in travel-related social media.*

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes methodology used in this study. As mentioned previously, there is lack of empirical studies on consumer engagement, particularly in the context of travel-related social media. Given the importance of engaging consumers in the digital era, this study attempts to identify the antecedents of consumer engagement in travel-related social media and examine their relationships. As such, structural equation modeling is selected to explore and analyze the relationship. This chapter is composed of four sections and provides a detailed discussion regarding target population, instrumentation, data collection procedures and data analysis technique. The first section discusses the population and sampling. The instrument design section includes the scales utilized to measure both independent and dependent variables. The data collection procedures introduce all sequential steps of data collection. The data analysis section includes justification for the use of structural equation modeling and the technique for testing the research hypotheses.

Target Population

To empirically examine the relationships between the constructs in the research model, a quantitative study is conducted by means of an online survey. Currently, a number of travel-related social media sites are available, such as travel-related Facebook page, travel-related Twitter page, TripAdvisor.com, VirtualTourist.com, etc. The target population of the study consists of consumers who have ever visited any travel-related social media websites. A web-based survey is used to collect data from consumer respondents. Since this study focuses on consumer experience in an online context, the use of a web-based survey for data collection is

considered appropriate. Moreover, compared with paper surveys, online surveys have the advantage of being easier and cheaper to set up and administer (Dillman, 2007). An online survey will be published and hosted with Qualtrics, an online survey tool at www.qualtrics.com.

Instrument Development

The survey instrument consists of three sections: (1) travel-related social media usage, including membership, duration of membership, average hour spent per week, access to social media website, etc. The purpose of these questions is to set up the survey context and bring respondents' memories to their favorite travel-related social media sites; (2) construct questions. All questions in this section are to measure the constructs proposed in the conceptual model; and (3) demographic information, including gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, education and annual household income. Prior to starting the first section of the survey, participants are asked whether they have ever used any travel-related social media websites. Only those who provide a positive answer to the screening question are eligible to complete the survey.

The construct measures are developed from an extensive literature review, which ensures the inclusion of an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concepts of "consumer engagement" and "online community experience". Existing scales are used where possible. Employing existing validated scales not only simplifies instrument development but also brings more rigor to the study's results (Straub, 1989). Moreover, some measures are adapted to fit the specific context of the study. Then a panel of experts is asked to examine the appropriateness of the generated items in each scale, the length of the instrument, and the format of the scales. Based on their feedback, some changes are made to the survey instrument.

A total of 98 individual items is included in the survey instrument, which takes about 16 minutes to complete. Given the length of the survey and estimated completion time, it is

suggested to use only positively-worded statements in the instrument. This procedure may result in an increasing systematic response bias caused by respondents' yea-saying and nay-saying tendencies (Churchill Jr., 1979). However, positively-worded statements help reduce comprehension errors from questionnaire-fatigue and avoid data quality problem (Buttle, 1996). Therefore, it is finally decided to employ only positively-worded statements.

Multi-item scales are developed for each of the following constructs: consumer engagement, community experience, community identification, attitude toward using social media and travel involvement. Most items are measured by utilizing a seven-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

Measure for Consumer Engagement

As discussed in Chapter 2, consumer engagement is defined as the level of an individual consumer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral presence arising from interactive experience with travel-related social media. Consumer engagement is a second-order construct, consisting of three first-order constructs: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement. The measure of consumer engagement is adopted from Schaufeli et al. (2002) and Rich et al. (2011). For the purpose of this study, wording changes are made to adapt these measures more to the context of travel-related social media. For instance, the item of "at work, my mind is focused on my job" is adapted to "my mind is focused when I use this travel-related social media". The adapted scale is composed of cognitive, emotional and behavior engagement.

Cognitive engagement is defined as consumer's level of concentration and/or engrossment in travel-related social media. It is assessed by Schaufeli et al.'s measure of absorption and Rich et al.'s measure of cognitive engagement. Respondents are asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), the extent of their agreement

with the statements presented in Table 5. Prior research has validated this measure with a reliability coefficient of between .72 and .73 indicating good reliability (Cohen, 1960; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Table 5 - Scale Items of Consumer Engagement in Travel-related Social Media

Constructs	Items	Sources
Cognitive engagement	My mind is focused when I use this travel-related social media website. (egmc1)	Rich et al., 2010
	I pay a lot of attention to this travel-related social media website. (egmc2)	Rich et al., 2010
	Time flies when I am using this travel-related social media website. (egmc3)	Schaufeli et al., 2002
	Using this travel-related social media website is so absorbing that I forget everything else around me. (egmc4)	Schaufeli et al., 2002; Rich et al., 2010;
	I am rarely distracted when using this travel-related social media website. (egmc5)	Schaufeli et al., 2002;
	I am immersed in this travel-related social media website. (egmc6)	Schaufeli et al., 2002
Emotional engagement	I am enthusiastic about this travel-related social media website. (egme1)	Schaufeli et al., 2002; Rich et al., 2010;
	This travel-related social media website inspires me. (egme2)	Schaufeli et al., 2002
	I am interested in this travel-related social media website. (egme3)	Rich et al., 2010
	I am proud of using this travel-related social media website. (egme4)	Schaufeli et al., 2002
	I am excited when I use this travel-related social media website. (egme5)	Rich et al., 2010
	I find this travel-related social media website full of meaning and purpose. (egme6)	Schaufeli et al., 2002
Behavioral engagement	I exert my full effort to this travel-related social media website. (egmb1)	Rich et al., 2010
	I devote a lot of energy to this travel-related social media website. (egmb2)	Rich et al., 2010
	I try my best to perform well on this travel-related social media website. (egmb3)	Rich et al., 2010
	In this travel-related social media website, I always persevere even when things do not go well. (egmb4)	Schaufeli et al., 2002
	I exert a lot of energy on this travel-related social media website. (egmb5)	Rich et al., 2010
	I can continue using this travel-related social media website for a very long period of time. (egmb6)	Schaufeli et al., 2002

Emotional engagement is defined as consumer's sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride in travel-related social media. It is assessed by Schaufeli et al.'s measure of dedication and Rich et al.'s measure of emotional engagement. Respondents are asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), the extent of their agreement with the statements presented in Table 5. Prior research has reported a reliability coefficient of between .79 and .89 indicating good reliability (Cohen, 1960; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Behavioral engagement is defined as consumer's level of energy when using travel-related social media. The items are adopted from Schaufeli et al.'s measure of vigor and Rich et al.'s measure of physical engagement. Respondents are asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), the extent of their agreement with the statements presented in Table 5. Prior research has validated this measure with a reliability coefficient of between .78 and .84 indicating adequate reliability (Cohen, 1960; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Measure for Community Experience

Community experience is defined as the overall experience a customer derives from his/her interactions with travel-related social media. It is a second-order construct composed of utilitarian dimension, hedonic dimension, sociability dimension and usability dimension.

Community experience is measured by a multi-item 7-point Likert scale adopted from previous studies (Casalo et al., 2010; Hsu et al., 2012; Kwon & Wen, 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2009).

The first dimension, utilitarian experience, is defined as the pragmatic or utilitarian value the consumer experiences from the interactions in the online community. The measure is adopted from Kwon & Wen's (2010) and Casalo et al.'s (2010) scale of perceived usefulness.

Respondents describe on a 7-point Likert scale their perception on utilitarian experience using the items listed in Table 6. Prior research has validated this measure with a reliability coefficient of between .89 and .96 indicating good reliability (Casalo et al., 2010; Cohen, 1960; Kwon & Wen, 2010).

The second dimension, sociability experience, is defined as the social experience consumers derive from the interactions in the online community. It is measured using Hsu et al.'s (2012) scale of social experience. Respondents describe on a 7-point Likert scale their perception on sociability experience using the items listed in Table 6. Prior research has validated this measure with a reliability coefficient of .86 indicating good reliability (Cohen, 1960; Hsu et al., 2012).

The third dimension, hedonic experience, is defined as the intrinsic value the consumer derives from the interactions in the online community. It is measured using Nambisan and Baron's (2009) scale of hedonic experience. Respondents describe on a 7-point Likert scale their perception on hedonic experience using the items listed in Table 6. Prior research has reported a reliability coefficient of .83 indicating good reliability (Cohen, 1960; Nambisan & Baron, 2009).

The fourth dimension, usability experience, is defined as the consumers' experience in navigating and using the online community environment. It is measured using Casalo et al.'s (2010) scale of perceived ease of use. Respondents describe on a 7-point Likert scale their perception on usability experience using the items listed in Table 6. Prior research has reported a reliability coefficient of .94 indicating good reliability (Casalo et al., 2010; Cohen, 1960).

Table 6 - Scale Items of Community Experience

Constructs	Items	Sources
Utilitarian experience	Using this travel-related social media website enables me to acquire more information. (expu1)	Kwon & Wen, 2010
	Using this travel-related social media website improves my efficiency in sharing information. (expu2)	Kwon & Wen, 2010
	Using this travel-related social media website helps me reduce uncertainty when I make travel plans. (expu3)	Casalo et al., 2010
	Using this travel-related social media website helps me organize my travels in a more efficient way. (expu4)	Casalo et al., 2010
	In general, this travel-related social media website is useful. (expu5)	Casalo et al., 2010
Sociability experience	I make a lot of friends in this travel-related social media website. (exps1)	Hsu et al., 2012
	I get personal support from others in this travel-related social media website. (exps2)	Hsu et al., 2012
	This travel-related social media website is an excellent medium for interacting with others. (exps3)	Hsu et al., 2012
Hedonic experience	I have an enjoyable and relaxing time using this travel-related social media website. (exph1)	Nambisan & Baron, 2009
	Using this travel-related social media website is fun. (exph2)	Nambisan & Baron, 2009
	Using this travel-related social media website entertains and stimulates my mind. (exph3)	Nambisan & Baron, 2009
	Using this travel-related social media website makes problem-solving enjoyable. (exph4)	Nambisan & Baron, 2009
Usability experience	This travel-related social media website is simple to use, even when using it for the first time. (expuse1)	Casalo et al., 2010
	In this travel-related social media website everything is easy to find. (expuse2)	Casalo et al., 2010
	The structure and contents of this travel-related social media website are easy to understand. (expuse3)	Casalo et al., 2010
	It is easy to navigate within this travel-related social media website. (expuse4)	Casalo et al., 2010

Measure for Community Identification

Community identification is defined as the perceived sense of belonging to a particular online travel community. A number of items are revealed in literature that have traditionally been used to measure an individual's perceived membership to an organization (e.g. Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Ellemers et al., 1999). This study adopts measures from Qu and Lee (2011). Respondents are asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), the degree to which they see themselves as part of the online travel community by using the four statements presented in Table 7. The scale has a reported reliability coefficient of .87 (Cohen, 1960; Qu & Lee, 2011).

Table 7 - Scale Items of Community Identification

Construct	Items	Sources
Community identification	I feel strong ties to other members. (ci1)	Qu & Lee, 2011
	I find it easy to form a bond with other members. (ci2)	Qu & Lee, 2011
	I feel a sense of community with other members. (ci3)	Qu & Lee, 2011
	A strong feeling of camaraderie exists between me and other members. (ci4)	Qu & Lee, 2011

Measure for Attitude toward Using Social Media

Attitude toward using social media is defined as an individual's overall affective reaction to using social media. Previous literature shows a number of items that have been traditionally used to measure consumer attitude toward an object. In this study, four items adopted from Bhattacharjee & Premkumar (2004) and Hong, Thong, Moon, & Tam (2008) are employed to measure consumer attitude toward using social media. Respondents are asked to reveal on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), their attitude toward social media by using the four statements presented in Table 8. Prior studies employing these measurement items

have reported Cronbach α 's ranging from .90 to .97 indicating adequate reliability (Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004; Cohen, 1960; Hong et al., 2008)

Table 8 - Scale Items of Attitude toward Using Social Media

Construct	Items	Sources
Attitude toward using social media	All things considered, using social media is a good idea. (attd1)	Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004; Hong et al., 2008
	All things considered, using social media is a wise move. (attd2)	Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004; Hong et al., 2008
	All things considered, using social media is a positive step. (attd3)	Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004; Hong et al., 2008
	My attitude toward social media use is favorable. (attd4)	Bhattacharjee & Premkumar, 2004; Hong et al., 2008

Measure for Travel Involvement

Travel involvement is defined as a person's perceived relevance of travel and tourism based on inherent needs, values, and interests. The literature shows a number of items that traditionally has been used to measure an individual's level of involvement toward an object. In the study, Cho's (2003) five-item scale is adopted to measure people's involvement with travel. Items that are tailored to different product categories have been modified to fit a travel setting by altering the contextual nature of the selected items. Respondents are asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), how they consider travel to be relevant and important to themselves by using the five statements presented in Table 9. Prior studies using these measurement items have reported Cronbach α 's ranging from .84 to .94 indicating adequate reliability (Cho, 2003; Cohen, 1960; Lee, 2005).

Table 9 - Scale Items of Travel Involvement

Construct	Items	Sources
Travel involvement	I am interested in travel in general. (invol1)	Cho, 2003
	Travel is important to me. (invol2)	Cho, 2003
	I get involved with travel. (invol3)	Cho, 2003
	Travel is relevant to me. (invol4)	Cho, 2003
	I am going to travel in the next six months. (invol5)	Cho, 2003

Data Collection

Before implementing the final survey, a pilot study is recommended to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument (Dillman, 2007; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Participants are undergraduate and graduate students from a large southeastern university in the U.S. A survey invitation email is sent out to students who registered in an academic advising email list. A web-link to the survey is included in the email. Students who choose to participate in the survey on a voluntary and anonymous basis can simply click the web-link provided and respond to the survey questions online.

Student sample is considered as appropriate at this stage for several reasons. Previous studies indicate that young adults between the ages of 18 and 27 are the ideal group for investigating social media engagement behavior (Li & Bernoff, 2008). A recent survey conducted by Pew Research Center shows that young adult Internet users tend to use social media of any kind as of 2012 (Brenner, 2013). Particularly, those aged between 18 and 29 are the most likely demographic group. Therefore, undergraduate and graduate students are appropriate subjects for the pilot study. Moreover, the purpose of a pilot study is to solicit feedback and improve the quality of the survey instrument. With student sample, communication between researchers and survey participants becomes convenient and speedy. Upon completing the online survey, students are encouraged to provide their comments regarding any problems with

the design of the questionnaire, such as wording of the questions, length of the questionnaire, and clarity of the questions, and implementation procedures. Based on the suggestions, the questionnaire is revised accordingly.

In addition, a pre-result of scale reliability and construct validity can be obtained from the pilot study (Dillman, 2007; Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's α is computed to determine whether the item should be maintained. Construct validity indicates whether the factor structure is adequate. When the instrument exhibits high reliability and validity, it is ready for the final survey.

The main survey data were collected from April 12 to April 22, 2013 with assistance from Qualtrics.com, an online data collection and analysis company. Its online sample is recruited from participants in online communities, social networks and website of all kinds. The participants have to go through rigorous quality control questions before being included in any sample. Before data collection, a survey link is provided by the researcher. Qualtrics sends invitation letters to their online sample. Once they complete the survey, their responses are automatically stored in the database created by this study.

Of the 1,678 respondents who are invited to participate, there are 1,183 that attempt the survey, giving a response rate of 70%. A total of 241 qualified responses (consumers who are willing to participate and have experience with travel-related social media) are obtained and used for analysis.

Data Analysis

To examine the hypotheses, a SEM is estimated with AMOS 20. SEM is a statistical technique for testing and estimating causal relationships based on statistical data and qualitative causal assumptions (Hoyle, 1995). It has recently become a popular statistical technique to test

theory in a number of academic disciplines (Hair et al., 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). SEM offers a number of advantages over other multivariate techniques. First, SEM allows researchers to investigate relationships among multiple independent and dependent constructs in a single, systematic and comprehensive analysis. A complete picture of the research model is presented and tested through a series of regression equations (Hoyle, 1995). Secondly, SEM recognizes the imperfect nature of measurement and allows errors to be correlated or uncorrelated. Thirdly, SEM is highly flexible, allowing for modeling based on latent (unobservable) variables, manifest (observable) variables, and second-order factors. Finally, SEM is a powerful method for effectively dealing with the multicollinearity problem (Hair et al., 2010).

The application of SEM technique to the tourism discipline is growing. For instance, Chi and Qu (2008) use SEM to examine the causal relationships among destination image, tourist attributes, overall satisfaction and destination loyalty. Qu and Lee (2011) investigate the relationship between travelers' social identification and positive member behaviors using SEM. Recognizing the growth and development of SEM in tourism academia, Nusair and Hua (2010) compare SEM and multiple regression analysis by testing a model of commitment in an E-commerce travel context. It is concluded that SEM is preferred when a study intends to address relationships between latent variables.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the causal relationships between online community experience (at both individual and group level) and consumer engagement. SEM is chosen for this study mainly due to its ability to assess a set of interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously and incorporate second-order latent constructs. The SEM analysis is conducted using a two phase approach. First, a confirmatory factor analysis is used to measure

the adequacy of the measurement model. Construct validity and reliability are tested in this stage. Then a covariance structure model is used to examine the relationships between the exogenous variables and endogenous variables.

Measurement Model

The measurement model specifies relations between observed and latent variables and describes their measurement properties (reliability and validity) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The overall measurement quality is examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1992). A reliability test is performed to purify the measurement scale for each construct. Reliability indicates the degree to which the measurement items yields consistent and identical results over repeated measures (Hair et al., 2010). Reliability is examined at two levels: item reliability and construct reliability. Item reliability refers to the amount of variance in an item due to underlying construct other than measurement error. It can be obtained by squaring the factor loadings (Hair et al., 2010). To demonstrate reliability, the standardized loading for each item should be greater than .70. However, a value of .50 is considered acceptable (Chin, 1998). Construct reliability refers to the degree to which an observed instrument reflects an underlying factor (Hair et al., 2010). A value of at least .70 is expected for a reliable construct. Items that rate below the recommended value may be removed in order to improve the scale's reliability. After ensuring the reliability of the scale meets the requirement, the next step is to check the validity of the scale. Validity indicates the extent to which a measure or a set of measures correctly represent the concept of interest (Hair et al., 2010). Convergent validity refers to the degree to which measures of constructs that should be related to each other are to be related to each other. High correlations indicate that the scale is measuring its intended construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that the average variance extracted (AVE) be used

to assess convergent validity. Higher values of AVE signify that the indicators are truly representative of the latent construct. Discriminant validity is defined as the degree to which measures of different concepts are distinct. Thus, the measures of theoretically different constructs should have low correlations with each other (Hair et al., 2010). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is checked through comparison of the AVE values for the latent constructs and the squared correlation between the corresponding constructs. To ensure discriminant validity, the AVE for each construct should be greater than the squared correlation between the construct and all other constructs in the model.

Structural Model

The next step involved testing the proposed framework and analyzing the data through SEM. Combining CFA and path analysis, SEM has been referred to as a hybrid analysis tool to depict both latent and observed relationships among variables and provide a quantitative test for a theoretical model hypothesized by a research (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Three criteria are used to judge the statistical significance and substantive meaning of a theoretical model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The first criterion is the overall model fit, which evaluates the correspondence of the actual or observed input to the matrix predicted from the proposed model. An array of indices is available for measuring model fit, such as Chi-square ratio, goodness-of-fit index, and root-mean-square error of approximation, etc. The second criterion is the statistical significance of individual parameter estimates for the paths in the model, which are critical values computed by dividing the parameter estimates by their respective standard errors. This is referred to as a *t* value or a critical value and is typically compared to a tabled *t* value of 1.96 at a .05 level of significance. The third criterion is the magnitude and direction of the parameter estimates, particularly concerning whether a positive or a negative coefficient makes sense for

the parameter estimate. For example, a theoretically significant coefficient may not be practically meaningful.

There are generally three types of model fit indices: absolute, incremental, and parsimony fit indices. Absolute indices indicate how well the theoretical model fits the sample data with no adjustment for the degree of over-fitting that might occur (Hair et al., 2010). Examples include χ^2 statistic, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and root mean square residual (RMR). Incremental fit indices assess how well the proposed model fits relative to some alternative baseline model (Hair et al., 2010). Common examples include normed fit index (NFI), Tucker Lewis index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI). Last, parsimony fit indices help the researcher make side-by-side comparisons of models in order to select the best model (Hair et al., 2010). These typically include adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and parsimony normed fit index (PNFI).

A variety of commonly-used indices are suggested by Hair et al. (2010) and Schumacker & Lomax (2004), including χ^2 statistic, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA, SRMR, NFI, TLI and CFI. The Chi-square goodness of fit statistic tests the difference between the observed covariance matrix and the population covariance matrix. The difference should be zero for a perfect model fit. A value that is significant, relative to the degrees of freedom, indicates that observed and implied variance-covariance matrices differ. A non-significant χ^2 value indicates that the two matrices are similar and that the implied theoretical model significantly reproduces the sample variance-covariance relationships in the matrix (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Since the Chi-square statistic is quite sensitive to sample size, researchers are suggested to complement this measure with other measures of it.

The GFI measures the proportion of variance and covariance that can be explained by the proposed model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The AGFI is adjusted for a model's degrees of freedom, relative to its number of variables. Both GFI and AGFI are a non-statistical measure ranging from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). For a well-fitted model, the GFI should be larger than .90 and the AGFI should be bigger than .80 (Hair et al., 2010).

The RMSEA attempts to correct for the tendency of the Chi-square statistic to reject any specified model with a sufficiently large sample. It measures how well a model would fit the population covariance with optimal parameter values. A value less than .05 or .08 indicates a good model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Recently the cutpoint for RMSEA has been elaborated, with values from .08 and .10 indicating mediocre fit and those greater than .10 indicating poor fit (Byrne, 2010).

The RMR reflect the average amount of variances and covariance not accounted for by the model. The closer the value is to zero the better the fit is. The RMR makes more sense when measures are standardized, for they have a common metric and their residuals have parallel meaning. A standardized RMR (SRMR) value over .1 suggests a problem with fit (Hair et al., 2010).

The NFI rescales Chi-square statistic into a range that extends from 0.0 (no fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit) (Hair et al., 2010). The NFI is used to measure the normed difference between the null model and the hypothesized model. NFI values that are close to .95 reflect good model fits (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The TLI measure, also known as non-normed fit index, not only compares models but also includes information from the expected value of the models under a central chi-square distribution (Hu & Bentler, 1999). It is much more consistent across sample size. The CFI is also an incremental fit index which tends to be insensitive to model complexity.

The values of TLI and CFI range from 0 to 1, with higher values above .90 representing a good model fit (Hair et al., 2010).

Multi-group comparisons

SEM can be used for cross-group comparisons when researchers are interested in comparing structural models in different populations (Hair et al., 2010). The multi-group approach is one of the most useful procedures for testing the latent variable interaction effects, under the widest set of circumstances (Rigdon, Schumacker, & Wothke, 1998). Namely, multi-group approach is traditionally used if one or both of the effect variables in a model is discrete or categorical (Rigdon et al., 1998). The sample is first divided into two groups (i.e. low involved vs. high involved and weak attitude vs. strong attitude in current study). Only the hypothesized structural paths are allowed to vary across the subgroups and the fit of this model is compared within which the structural paths are constrained to be equal across the two subgroups (Rigdon et al., 1998). The χ^2 difference between the baseline model and the constrained model is performed in order to test moderation effect.

In summary, this chapter provided a description of the research methodology used in this study, including the instrumentation, the population and sample, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques. The purpose of the research design is to test four research hypotheses. The scale developed to measure the four latent constructs have been determined. The sample size has been calculated based on suggestions from previous researchers. The justification for the use of SEM and the criteria to judge the model fit are provided as well. The next chapter reports all the details of data analysis and presents final results.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of data analysis described in chapter 3. It starts with the results of pilot study and then descriptive statistics, including frequency of demographics, mean and standard deviation of each measured item. The chapter also examines the measure model and hypotheses through two-step structural equation modeling. Finally, two moderating effects are reported as results of multi-group analysis.

Pilot Study Results

As mentioned previously, the purpose of a pilot study is to test the survey instrument before implementing the main survey. A total of 114 responses are received for the pilot study. Since the sample is drawn from college students, approximately 70% of respondents are between 18 and 24 years old. The majority of them are single (73%), has some college (65.1%), and make annual income less than \$30,000. Females account for about 83% of the respondents, which is consistent with the gender characteristics of the school where the survey participants are recruited.

To examine the construct dimensionality, common factor analysis with promax rotation is employed. “Common factor analysis is appropriate when the primary objective is to identify the latent dimensions or constructs represented in the original variables, and the researcher has little knowledge about the amount of specific and error variance and therefore wishes to eliminate this variance” (Hair et al., 2010, p.107). Since the primary objective of this analysis is consistent with these two criteria, common factor analysis is used. Promax rotation is chosen because it is assumed in this study that the underlying constructs are correlated. This oblique method allows more flexibility in determining the extent to which the factors are correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2010). According to Hair et al. (2010), factor loadings of +/- .30 are considered

minimally acceptable given the sample size. If the factor loadings are greater than +/- .50, they are considered practically significant. This study uses .50 as factor loading threshold. Items not meeting the criterion are removed from further analysis.

Reliability represents the consistency of the survey instrument in measuring constructs across multiple instances. The internal consistency reflects the ability for multiple items to measure the same underlying construct. The reliability of a scale indicates how free it is from random error (Pallant, 2005). Cronbach's α is used to provide an indication of the average correlation among all of the items in the measurement instrument. Alpha value ranges from 0 to 1, with a higher value indicating greater reliability (Pallant, 2005). In current study, construct reliability is assessed with Cronbach's α , using the generally agreed upon lower limit of .70 (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 10 shows the results of factor analysis and reliability test. Community experience is conceptualized as a second-order construct consisting of four factors: utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience, and usability experience. They are measured using five, three, four and four items respectively. Factor analysis of these sixteen items results in one item being dropped from utilitarian experience. The remaining items demonstrate loadings higher than the .50 threshold, ranging from .515 to .990. Community identification is measured with four items. The results of factor analysis suggest no items be dropped. All four items demonstrate loadings higher than the .50 threshold (.927, .945, .978, and .959). Consumer engagement is conceptualized as a second-order construct consisting of three factors: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement. They are all measured using six items. Factor analysis of the eighteen items results in five items being dropped. Among the five items, three are from cognitive experience and one from emotional engagement and behavioral

engagement respectively. The remaining items demonstrate loadings higher than the .50 threshold, varying from .611 to .911. Attitude toward using social media is measured with four items. The results of factor analysis suggest no items be dropped. All four items exhibit loadings higher than the .50 threshold (.891, .924, .929, and .954). Travel involvement is measured with five items. The results of factor analysis suggest no items be dropped. All five items display loadings higher than the .50 threshold (.573, .801, .842, .925, and .950).

Reliability for each construct is also calculated. The results show that all constructs meet the .70 threshold, with Cronbach's α ranging from .818 for cognitive engagement to .975 for community identification. Based on the results shown in Table 10, a total of six items are removed from the questionnaire. The final version of the questionnaire consists of 15 items for community experience, 4 items for community identification, 13 items for consumer engagement, 4 items for attitude toward using social media and 5 items for travel involvement.

Table 10 - Construct Factor Loadings and Cronbach's α in Pilot Study (N = 114)

Constructs Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α
Utilitarian Experience		.866
Enables me to acquire more information	.699	
Improves my efficiency in sharing information	dropped	
Helps me reduce uncertainty when I make travel plans	.917	
Helps me organize my travels in a more efficient way	.768	
This travel-related social media website is useful	.722	
Sociability Experience		.924
I make a lot of friends	.990	
I get personal support from others	.935	
It is an excellent medium for interacting with others	.739	
Hedonic Experience		.875
I have an enjoyable and relaxing time	.756	
Using this website is fun	.919	
This website entertains and stimulates my mind	.952	
This website offers me enjoyment from problem solving	.515	
Usability Experience		.929
It is simple to use, even when using it for the first time	.893	
In this website everything is easy to find	.860	
The structure and contents of this website are easy to understand	.984	
It is easy to navigate within this website	.717	

Constructs Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α
Community Identification		.975
I feel strong ties to other members	.927	
I find it easy to form a bond with other members	.945	
I feel a sense of community with other members	.978	
A strong feeling of camaraderie exists between me and others	.959	
Cognitive Engagement		.818
My mind is focused when I use this website	.776	
I pay a lot of attention to this website	.797	
Time flies when I am using this website	.611	
Using this website is so absorbing that I forget everything	dropped	
I am rarely distracted when using this website	dropped	
I am immersed in this website	dropped	
Emotional Engagement		.906
I am enthusiastic about this website	.699	
This website inspires me	.701	
I am interested in this website	.624	
I am proud of using this website	.903	
I am excited when I use this website	.860	
I find this website full of meaning and purpose	dropped	
Behavioral Engagement		.937
I exert my full effort to this website	.744	
I devote a lot of energy to this website	.911	
I try my best to perform well on this website	.879	
I always persevere on this website even when things do not go well	.668	
I exert a lot of energy on this website	.965	
I can continue using this website for a very long period of time	dropped	
Attitude toward Using Social Media		.958
All things considered, using social media is a good idea	.929	
All things considered, using social media is a wise move	.924	
All things considered, using social media is a positive step	.954	
My attitude toward social media use is favorable	.891	
Travel Involvement		.894
I am interested in travel in general	.801	
Travel is important to me	.950	
I get involved with travel	.842	
Travel is relevant to me	.925	
I am going to travel in the next six months	.573	

Main Data Profiles

Two hundred and forty-one completed responses are collected during the data collection process. Additional procedures are taken to control response bias. For instance, three cases are

removed because of their extreme answers. A final sample of 238 responses is accepted for further analysis.

Individual Characteristics

As exhibited in Table 11, participants are closely divided between females (52.1%) and males (47.9%). The majority of respondents are more than 45 years old (54.2%), Caucasian (76.1%) and married (48.7%). About 36% of the respondents graduate from college; 32% have some college education; 18% complete graduate school education; and 15% receive high school or less education. Nearly 58% of the respondents earn an annual household income between \$30,000 and \$99,999. One fourth of the respondents report that their annual household income is less than \$30,000.

Table 11 - Individual Characteristics (N = 238)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	114	47.9
Female	124	52.1
Age		
18-24	20	8.4
25-34	41	17.2
35-44	48	20.2
45-54	39	16.4
55-64	57	23.9
65 and older	33	13.9
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	181	76.1
Asian/Island Pacific	16	6.7
African American	23	9.7
Native American	3	1.3
Hispanic	12	5.0
Other	3	1.3
Marital Status		
Single	61	25.6
Unmarried couple living together	16	6.7
Married	116	48.7
Divorced/Separated	39	16.4
Widowed	6	2.5
Education		
High school or less	35	14.7
Some college	75	31.5
College graduate	85	35.7
Master's degree	37	15.5
PhD, MD, etc	6	2.5
Annual Household Income		
Less than \$30,000	60	25.2
\$30,000-\$54,999	61	25.6
\$55,000-\$74,999	42	17.6
\$75,000-\$99,999	34	14.3
\$100,000-\$149,999	28	11.8
\$150,000-\$199,999	7	2.9
\$200,000 and over	6	2.5

Travel-related Social Media Website Usage Statistics

Several usage questions are asked to understand how respondents use travel-related social media websites (Table 12). Approximately 40% of the respondents have been a member of a travel-related social media website. Two thirds of them maintain the membership for more than

one year. The majority of respondents spend (60.5%) less than one hour on travel-related social media websites per week. Most respondents (70.2%) access to the websites through computers. Practical travel information about destinations are the most wanted information on travel-related social media websites, followed by warnings and tips for others, general destination facts, personal travel experience of other members, and evaluations of travel-related services.

Table 12 - Travel-related Social Media Usage Characteristics (N = 238)

Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Membership		
Yes	94	39.5
No	144	60.5
Duration of Membership (N=94)		
Less than 6 months	8	8.5
7-12 months	23	24.5
1-2 years	25	26.6
3-4 years	17	18.1
5-6 years	13	13.8
7 years or more	8	8.5
Average Hour Spent Per Week		
Less than 1 hour	144	60.5
1-2 hours	64	26.9
3-4 hours	21	8.8
5-9 hours	6	2.5
10 hours or more	3	1.3
Access to the Website		
Mobile devices	28	11.8
Computers	167	70.2
Both mobile devices and computers	43	18.1
Type of Information Interested on the Website*		
Practical travel information about destinations	169	/
Warnings and tips for others	159	/
General destination facts	147	/
Personal travel experience of other members	136	/
Evaluations of travel-related services	136	/
Local people, food and culture	131	/
People met while traveling	24	/

*This question allows more than one answer

Descriptive Statistics for Measures

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis for all the measured items are presented in Table 13. These statistics are used to demonstrate the tendency and variation of each item for the constructs proposed in the conceptual model. The constructs are community experience, community identification, consumer engagement, attitude toward using social media and travel involvement. Among them, community experience and consumer engagement are conceptualized as second-order constructs. Community experience consists of four first-order constructs, namely utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience and usability experience. Moreover, consumer engagement contains three first-order constructs. They are cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement.

Table 13 - Descriptive Statistics for All Measured Items

Constructs/Items	Mean	SD
Utilitarian Experience		
Enables me to acquire more information (expu1)	5.82	1.036
Helps me reduce uncertainty when I make travel plans (expu2)	5.60	1.050
Helps me organize my travels in a more efficient way (expu3)	5.42	1.166
This travel-related social media website is useful (expu4)	5.73	1.065
Sociability Experience		
I make a lot of friends (exps1)	3.14	1.748
I get personal support from others (exps2)	3.70	1.752
It is an excellent medium for interacting with others (exps3)	4.28	1.628
Hedonic Experience		
I have an enjoyable and relaxing time (exph1)	5.01	1.356
Using this website is fun (exph2)	5.05	1.363
This website entertains and stimulates my mind (exph3)	4.72	1.438
This website offers me enjoyment from problem solving (exph4)	4.47	1.434
Usability Experience		
It is simple to use, even when using it for the first time (expuse1)	5.52	1.150
In this website everything is easy to find (expuse2)	5.32	1.183
The structure and contents of this website are easy to understand (expuse3)	5.51	1.109
It is easy to navigate within this website (expuse4)	5.52	1.150
Community Identification		
I feel strong ties to other members (ci1)	3.55	1.725
I find it easy to form a bond with other members (ci2)	3.60	1.718
I feel a sense of community with other members (ci3)	3.80	1.659
A strong feeling of camaraderie exists between me and others (ci4)	3.66	1.757

Constructs/Items	Mean	SD
Cognitive Engagement		
My mind is focused when I use this website (egmc1)	5.22	1.237
I pay a lot of attention to this website (egmc2)	4.84	1.516
Time flies when I am using this website (egmc3)	4.81	1.600
Emotional Engagement		
I am enthusiastic about this website (egme1)	4.66	1.531
This website inspires me (egme2)	4.49	1.609
I am interested in this website (egme3)	5.03	1.353
I am proud of using this website (egme4)	4.59	1.475
I am excited when I use this website (egme5)	4.46	1.500
Behavioral Engagement		
I exert my full effort to this website (egmb1)	4.14	1.636
I devote a lot of energy to this website (egmb2)	3.75	1.726
I try my best to perform well on this website (egmb3)	4.24	1.679
I always persevere on this website even when things do not go well (egmb4)	4.13	1.578
I exert a lot of energy on this website (egmb5)	3.58	1.733
Attitude toward Social Media		
All things considered, using social media is a good idea (attd1)	5.41	1.207
All things considered, using social media is a wise move (attd2)	5.18	1.233
All things considered, using social media is a positive step (attd3)	5.30	1.253
My attitude toward social media use is favorable (attd4)	5.40	1.258
Travel Involvement		
I am interested in travel in general (invol1)	6.16	1.042
Travel is important to me (invol2)	5.81	1.258
I get involved with travel (invol3)	5.68	1.260
Travel is relevant to me (invol4)	5.74	1.390
I am going to travel in the next six months (invol5)	5.79	1.517

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmative factor analysis (CFA) is used to assess the relationship between a construct and its measures. In particular, CFA is used to identify unidimensionality of each construct or find evidence that a single trait or construct underlies a set of unique measures (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Based on theory, CFA allows researchers to specify the number of existing factors and which factor each variable will load on before results can be computed (Hair et al., 2010). The current study uses CFA to test the validity, unidimensionality, and reliability of the measured variables in the measurement model. Three major constructs: community experience, community identification and consumer engagement are specified in the measurement model.

Both community experience and consumer engagement are second-order constructs, composed of four and three first-order constructs, respectively. Maximum Likelihood method is used to for estimation because the collected sample size is sufficient and there was no missing value. This method has been most commonly used in SEM studies due to its robustness even if the normal distribution of observed variables is violated (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Measurement Model Fit Statistics

CFA is run on the data (N = 238) using AMOS version 20. It is suggested that confirmatory measurement models should be assessed and re-specified before measurement and structural equation models are examined simultaneously (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Therefore, each construct in the model is evaluated separately before testing the overall measurement model.

Community experience

Community experience is a second-order construct. Four first-order constructs act as indicators of the second-order construct. They are utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience and usability experience. A total of 15 items are employed to measure the first-order constructs.

The results of the measurement model are first examined for offending estimates, which are coefficients exceeding acceptable limits (Hair et al., 2010). Common examples of offending estimates are (1) negative error variances or non-significant error variance for any construct; (2) standardized coefficients very close to or exceeding 1.0; (3) very large standard errors associated with any estimated coefficients. These offending estimates must be corrected before evaluating the model results. In current study, a negative error variance is identified for the first-order construct of hedonic experience. The problem is fixed by assigning a very small positive value

(.005) to the offending error variances, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Although this solution meets the practical requirement of the estimation process, the problem shouldn't be neglected when interpreting the results (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, it is observed that the standardized coefficient for hedonic experience is equal to 1.0. To resolve the problem, two items with the lowest factor loadings are deleted from the construct of hedonic experience, though their factor loadings are above the cut-point and acceptable. The two items are exp3 and exp4, which have the same factor loading value of .70.

Then the second-order measurement model of community experience is evaluated to determine good model fit. The goodness-of-fit statistics are acceptable ($\chi^2= 168.604$, $df= 62$, $p=.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.719$, $CFI= .947$, $TLI= .934$, $RMSEA= .085$). It should be noted that χ^2 be used as a guide rather than an absolute index of fit due to its sensitivity to sample size. Accordingly, the value of χ^2/df is used for this study instead of χ^2 value. A value of χ^2/df ranging from 1 to 5 indicates good model fit.

Community identification

Community identification is a first-order construct, assessed by four single item measures. The same CFA procedure is followed. Offending estimates are examined at first and no violation is found in the estimates for the measurement model of community identification. Then the measurement model is evaluated. The results demonstrate adequate model fit indices ($\chi^2= 6.006$, $df= 2$, $p=.050$, $\chi^2/df = 3.003$, $CFI= .998$, $TLI= .993$, $RMSEA= .073$). Therefore, it is concluded that the four-item model represents an adequate description of community identification.

Consumer engagement

Consumer engagement is a second-order construct. Three first-order constructs perform as indicators of the second-order construct. They are cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement. A total of 13 items are used to measure the first-order constructs. The same CFA procedure is employed and no offending estimates are identified. Then the second-order measurement model of consumer engagement is evaluated to determine good model fit. The goodness-of-fit statistics are acceptable ($\chi^2= 163.809$, $df= 62$, $p=.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.642$, $CFI= .965$, $TLI= .957$, $RMSEA= .083$).

Composite model fit statistics

Composite measurement model is composed of two second-order constructs: consumer engagement and community experience, and eight first-order constructs: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, behavioral engagement, utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience, usability experience and community identification. Model fit for the composite measurement model is not satisfactory ($\chi^2= 1067.570$, $df= 396$, $p=.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.696$, $CFI= .900$, $TLI= .890$, $RMSEA= .085$), indicating a revised model is needed.

Some approaches are suggested to identify model modification. The first one is to check the estimated loadings (i.e. the path estimated linking constructs to indicator variables). The rule of thumb is that loadings should be at least .50 and ideally .70 or higher. Low loadings are subjected to deletion from the model. However, the decision should be made based on theoretical grounds (Hair et al., 2010). No item is deleted in this study since all loadings are above the cut-off value of .50.

Another indication of possible model re-specification is modification indices. Modification indices are calculated for each non-estimated relationship. They can indicate how

much the overall model chi-square statistic would be reduced by freeing that single path. Based on the modification indices, the model would achieve a better fit if highly correlated items are adjusted (Hair et al., 2010). In this study, the modification indices suggest correlations between the error terms associated with egme4 and egme5 ($\Delta\chi^2= 16.060$), egmc1 and egmc2 ($\Delta\chi^2= 12.687$), and egmb2 and egmb5 ($\Delta\chi^2= 12.492$) since these pairs have comparatively large MI value. A high degree of overlap in item content can trigger error covariance (Byrne, 2010). In some cases, two items might ask the same question. Although they are worded differently, redundancy occurs. For instance, Egmb2 asks whether “I devote a lot of energy to this travel-related social media website”, while egmb5 asks whether “I exert a lot of energy on this travel-related social media website”. Given the obvious content overlap of the two items, an error covariance parameter is incorporated into the model. A revised measurement model of consumer engagement is formulated. The confirmatory factor analysis reveals improved statistics of the revised model ($\chi^2= 1019.989$, $df= 393$, $p=.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.595$, CFI= .907, TLI= .897, RMSEA= .082).

Assessing Measurement Model Validity and Reliability

After achieving adequate model fit, the overall measurement model is further examined for its unidimensionality, reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The purpose of a unidimensionality check is to confirm that one underlying construct can explain a set of measured variables or indicators (Hair et al., 2010). The item loadings obtained from the CFA confirm the unidimensionality of all the eight first-order constructs because all 30 items are loaded highly on their respective latent constructs and their loadings are significant at the .05 level (Table 14).

In addition, the average variance-extracted (AVE) for each construct is calculated and shown in Table 14. The AVE reflects the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct (Hair et al., 2010). A commonly used acceptable cut-off point is .50. The AVE values range from .571 to .823, suggesting that the indicators are representative of the latent constructs. At this point, convergent validity for the measurement is established. Convergent reliability refers to the extent to which items of a specific construct should converge or share a high proportion of variance in common (Hair et al., 2010). It is assessed using three methods, including factor loadings, CR and AVE.

Table 14 - Results for Measurement Model

Constructs/Items	Std. Loadings	SMC	CR	AVE
Exogenous: Community Experience			.965	.682
<i>Utilitarian Experience</i>			.840	.571
Enables me to acquire more information (expu1)	.737	.543		
Helps me reduce uncertainty when I make travel plans (expu2)	.807	.651		
Helps me organize my travels in a more efficient way (expu3)	.611	.373		
This travel-related social media website is useful (expu4)	.847	.717		
<i>Sociability Experience</i>			.870	.690
I make a lot of friends (exp1)	.809	.654		
I get personal support from others (exp2)	.874	.764		
It is an excellent medium for interacting with others (exp3)	.807	.651		
<i>Hedonic Experience</i>			.868	.767
I have an enjoyable and relaxing time (exp1)	.883	.780		
Using this website is fun (exp2)	.869	.755		
<i>Usability Experience</i>			.921	.745
It is simple to use, even when using it for the first time (expuse1)	.816	.666		
In this website everything is easy to find (expuse2)	.863	.745		
The structure and contents of this website are easy to understand (expuse3)	.895	.801		
It is easy to navigate within this website (expuse4)	.876	.767		
Endogenous: Community Identification			.949	.823
I feel strong ties to other members (ci1)	.876	.767		
I find it easy to form a bond with other members (ci2)	.912	.832		
I feel a sense of community with other members (ci3)	.928	.861		
A strong feeling of camaraderie exists between me and others (ci4)	.911	.830		
Endogenous: Consumer Engagement			.970	.715
<i>Cognitive Engagement</i>			.819	.604
My mind is focused when I use this website (egmc1)	.656	.430		
I pay a lot of attention to this website (egmc2)	.784	.615		
Time flies when I am using this website (egmc3)	.876	.767		
<i>Emotional Engagement</i>			.941	.763
I am enthusiastic about this website (egme1)	.917	.841		
This website inspires me (egme2)	.899	.808		

Constructs/Items	Std. Loadings	SMC	CR	AVE
I am interested in this website (egme3)	.842	.709		
I am proud of using this website (egme4)	.835	.697		
I am excited when I use this website (egme5)	.872	.760		
<i>Behavioral Engagement</i>			.932	.734
I exert my full effort to this website (egmb1)	.903	.815		
I devote a lot of energy to this website (egmb2)	.880	.774		
I try my best to perform well on this website (egmb3)	.842	.709		
I always persevere on this website even when things do not go well (egmb4)	.808	.653		
I exert a lot of energy on this website (egmb5)	.847	.717		

Discriminant validity is the degree to which each construct is truly distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2010). It can be scrutinized by checking whether the AVE for each construct is greater than the squared correlations between the constructs and all other constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results show acceptable levels of discriminant validity for the constructs of consumer engagement and community identification, respectively. However, an exception occurs to the construct of community experience, since its AVE value is lower than the squared correlation between community experience and consumer engagement. As a result, the discriminant validity is tested by checking that correlations among constructs differ significantly at the .05 level from 1 (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991). As shown in Table 15, all correlations among the three latent constructs are significantly less than 1.0 ($p < .001$), which satisfy the additional criterion. Moreover, sample size plays a vital role in discriminant validity problems. AVE can be always improved by reducing the number of cases (Ping, 2009). Discriminant analysis is quite sensitive to the ratio of sample size to the number of predictor variables. A minimum ratio is at least five respondents per independent variable (Hair et al., 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). For this study, there are a total of eight observations per variable (238 sample size / 30 variables = 7.93 observations), which is higher than the minimum recommended ratio. Therefore, taken together, it is concluded that the measurement model is appropriate for further analysis.

Table 15 - Correlation between Exogenous and Endogenous Constructs

	Community Experience	Community Identification	Consumer Engagement
Community Experience	1.000		
Community Identification	.599	1.000	
Consumer Engagement	.847	.704	1.000

Structural Equation Modeling

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is performed using the AMOS 20 statistical program on the 30 items represented by three constructs of community experience, community identification and consumer engagement. The community experience second-order construct is composed of utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience and usability experience. The consumer engagement second-order construct is composed of cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of the consumer engagement. Maximum likelihood estimation is used to estimate the model. The structural model specifies the community experience as the exogenous construct, which is reflected by the four first-order exogenous constructs (utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience and usability experience). The community identification and consumer engagement are the endogenous constructs. The consumer engagement is represented by three exogenous constructs (cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement). It is hypothesized that the latent second-order construct of community experience is believed to predict the latent dependent constructs of community identification and consumer engagement. Moreover, community identification is hypothesized to predict consumer engagement.

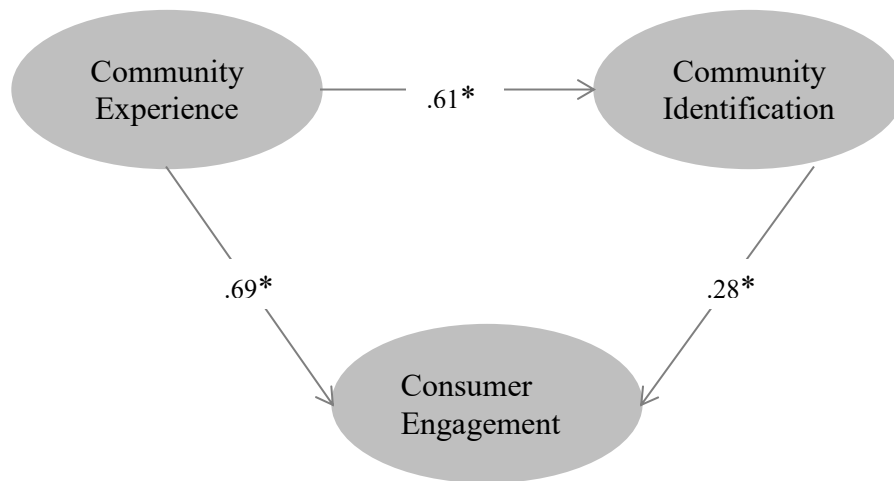
Goodness-of-fit statistics are analyzed to determine the overall acceptability of the structural model. The results indicate that the proposed model has an acceptable fit based on sample size, degrees of error and model complexity ($\chi^2= 1019.989$, $df= 393$, $p=.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.595$, $CFI= .907$, $TLI= .897$, $RMSEA= .082$). As hypothesized, all structural path estimates are significant ($p < .001$) and in the expected positive direction (Figure 3). The predictor accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in two endogenous constructs. About 37% of the variance of community identification can be explained by community experience. Together with

community identification, community experience explains 79% of the variance associated with consumer engagement.

Hypothesis 1 postulates the positive relationship between community experience and consumer engagement. The results show that community experience has a significant effect on consumer engagement ($\gamma = .69, p < .001$). Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2 posits the positive relationship between community experience and community identification. The results demonstrate that the effect of community experience on community identification is positive and significant ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3 proposes the positive relationship between community identification and consumer engagement. The results show that community identification has a significant impact on consumer engagement ($\gamma = .28, p < .001$). Hence, hypothesis 3 is supported.



*Note: *all paths are significant at the .001 level*

Figure 3 - Standardized Coefficients for Paths in the Conceptual Model

Moderation Tests

It is proposed in this study that the structural paths in the consumer engagement model differ based on consumers' attitude toward using social media (hypotheses 4, 5, and 6) and their travel involvement (hypotheses 7, 8, and 9). To test these hypotheses, two multi-group analyses are conducted respectively to assess the potential differences between weak attitude and strong attitude consumers, and between low travel involvement and high travel involvement, concerning the relationship of community experience, community identification and consumer engagement. Specially, the two analyses examine whether the three structural paths in the consumer engagement model are similar across different groups.

The moderating effects are examined through two procedures. First, a chi-square difference test is conducted between an unconstrained and a constrained model. The unconstrained model allows all the hypothesized structural paths to vary across the moderating groups whereas the constrained model sets all the hypothesized structural paths to be equal. Next, the constrained model is re-estimated by releasing the restricted equal path estimates for one specific path. This model (less constrained model) is compared with the unconstrained model. If the change in χ^2 between the two models for one degree of freedom is higher than 3.84 ($p < .05$), the two models are significantly different, and therefore a moderating effect exists (Byrne, 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The moderating effects of both attitude toward using social media and travel involvement are tested by following the two steps.

Testing Moderation Effects of Attitude toward Using Social Media

At first, a summated scale is created and used as a manifest variable for the latent construct of attitude toward using social media. The sample is then split at the median of the composite variable (Median = 5.50) to form two subgroups that represent weak and strong

attitude groups. This gives 126 cases in the weak attitude group and 112 cases in the strong attitude group. Then the two subgroup models are tested and compared. The results are reported in Table 16 and Figure 4.

Hypothesis 4 posits that the effect of community experience on consumer engagement would be greater for the strong attitude group than for the weak attitude group. It is supported because the χ^2 difference between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2 = 1586.80$, $df = 786$) and the constrained model ($\chi^2 = 1596.08$, $df = 787$) is significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 9.28$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) (see Table 16). As expected, the strong attitude group displays a greater positive relationship between community experience and consumer engagement ($\beta = .71$, $p < .001$) than does the weak attitude group ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 4).

Table 16 - Results of Chi-square Tests for Moderation Effects of Attitude toward Using Social Media

Hypotheses	Two Model Difference	Conclusion
H4	$\Delta\chi^2 = 9.28$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$	Supported
H5	$\Delta\chi^2 = .22$, $df = 1$, n.s.	Rejected
H6	$\Delta\chi^2 = 6.29$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$	Supported

Hypothesis 5 postulates that the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement would be greater for the strong attitude group than for the weak attitude group. However, the χ^2 difference is not significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = .22$, $df = 1$, n.s.) between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2 = 1586.80$, $df = 786$) and the constrained model ($\chi^2 = 1587.02$, $df = 787$). Therefore, hypothesis 5 is rejected.

Hypothesis 6 proposes that the effect of community experience on community identification would be greater for the strong attitude group than for the weak attitude group. The χ^2 difference is significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6.29$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$), indicating the influence of community

experience on community identification varies across the two groups. Moreover, the result indicates that the strong attitude group is more likely to have a sense of identification ($\beta = .61, p < .001$) than the weak attitude group ($\beta = .47, p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 6 is supported.

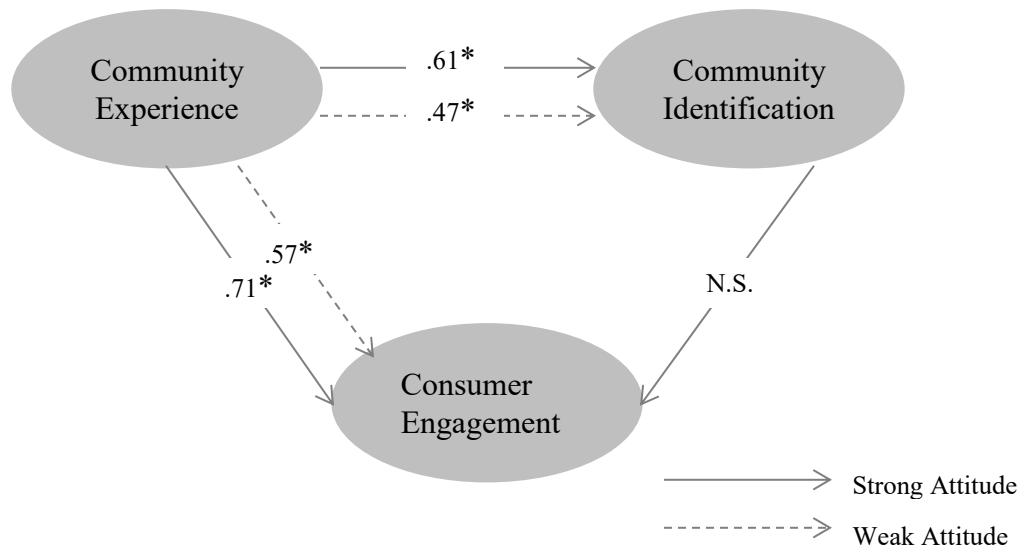


Figure 4 - Standardized Coefficients for Strong and Weak Attitude Groups

Testing Moderation Effects of Travel Involvement

The moderating effects of travel involvement are examined with the same procedure. A composite variable is created to represent the latent construct of travel involvement. Then the sample is split at the median of the composite variable (Median = 6.0) to develop two subgroups that stand for low and high travel involvement groups. The low and high involvement group consists of 132 and 106 respondents, respectively. The results are reported in Table 17 and Figure 5.

Hypothesis 7 posits that the effect of community experience on consumer engagement would be stronger for the high travel involvement group than for the low involvement group. It is supported because the χ^2 difference between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2 = 1480.17, df = 786$)

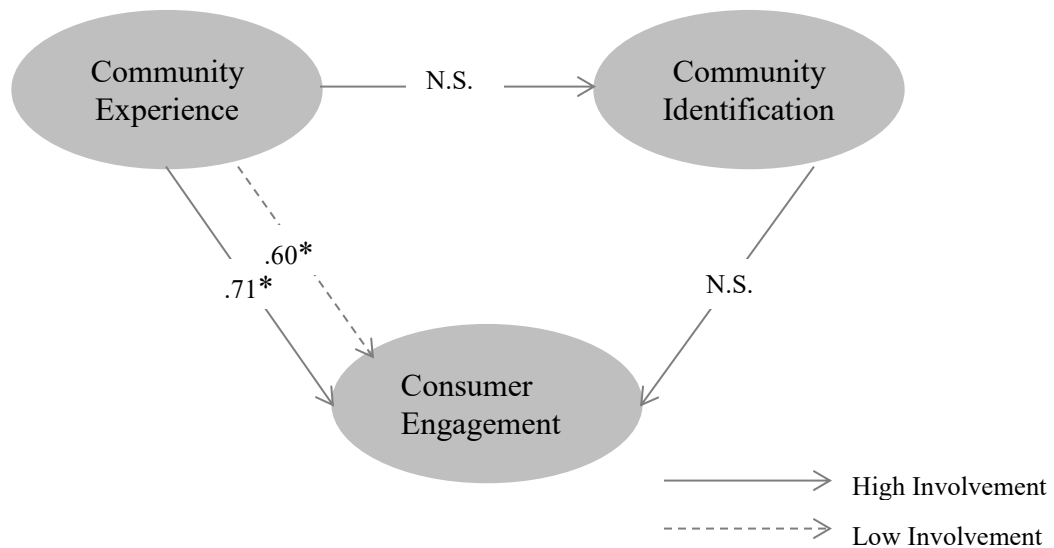
and the constrained model ($\chi^2 = 1484.32$, $df = 787$) is significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.16$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) (see Table 17). As suggested, the high travel involvement group displays a stronger positive relationship between community experience and consumer engagement ($\beta = .71$, $p < 0.001$) than does the low travel involvement group ($\beta = .60$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 5).

Table 17 - Results of Chi-square Difference Tests for Moderation Effects of Travel Involvement

Hypotheses	Two Model Difference	Conclusion
H7	$\Delta\chi^2 = 4.16$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$	Supported
H8	$\Delta\chi^2 = .50$, $df = 1$, n.s.	Rejected
H9	$\Delta\chi^2 = 13.32$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$	Rejected

Hypothesis 8 postulates that the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement would be stronger for the high travel involvement group than for the low travel involvement group. However, the χ^2 difference is not significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = .50$, $df = 1$, n.s.) between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2 = 1480.17$, $df = 786$) and the constrained model ($\chi^2 = 1480.67$, $df = 787$). Therefore, hypothesis 8 is rejected.

Hypothesis 9 posits that the effect of community experience on community identification would be stronger for the high travel involvement group than for the low involvement group. The χ^2 difference is significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 13.32$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2 = 1480.17$, $df = 786$) and the constrained model ($\chi^2 = 1493.49$, $df = 787$). However, the finding is contradictory to the proposed hypothesis, indicating the low travel involvement group is more likely to be attached to an online travel community. Hence, hypothesis 9 is not supported.



*Note: *all paths are significant at the .001 level*

Figure 5 - Standardized Coefficients for High and Low Involvement Groups

Summary

This chapter presents the results of a series of data analyses, including pilot study, descriptive statistics, CFA, SEM and multi-group comparisons. Both community experience and consumer engagement are second-order constructs, reflected by four and three first-order constructs respectively. Significant relationships are found between consumer engagement and consumer experience with travel-related social media at both individual-level (community experience) and group-level (community identification). Moreover, community experience is a statistically significant predictor of community identification. In addition, the two moderating variables (i.e. attitude toward using social media and travel involvement) influence the magnitudes of the hypothesized relationship between community experience and consumer engagement. However, they do not moderate the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement. The effect of community experience on community identification

varies across the two attitude groups rather than the involvement groups. Altogether the results have indicated a support of the following hypotheses: H1, H2, H3, H4, H6, and H7. However, H5, H8 and H9 are not supported (Table 18).

Table 18 - Summary of Hypotheses Tests

Hypotheses	Conclusions
H1: Consumers who have better experiences with travel-related social media are more likely to have higher level of engagement.	Supported
H2: Consumers who have higher level of community identification are more likely to have higher level of engagement in travel-related social media.	Supported
H3: Consumers who have better experiences with travel-related social media are more likely to have higher level of community identification.	Supported
H4: Attitude toward using social media moderates the relationship between community experience and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.	Supported
H5: Attitude toward using social media moderates the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.	<i>Rejected</i>
H6: Attitude toward using social media moderates the relationship between community experience and community identification.	Supported
H7: Travel involvement moderates the relationship between community experience and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.	Supported
H8: Travel involvement moderates the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement in travel-related social media.	<i>Rejected</i>
H9: Travel involvement moderates the relationship between community experience and community identification in travel-related social media.	<i>Rejected</i>

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter reviews the dissertation study and discusses the key findings. A summary of the results is followed by implications of the study. Both theoretical and managerial implications are provided. Finally, limitations and future research directions are outlined.

Review of Findings

Consumer engagement is believed to create, build and enhance consumer relationships, which benefits brand growth and development. Social media change the way consumers communicate and interact, and provide a valuable opportunity for hospitality and tourism organizations to engage their consumers. Building upon the concept of S-D logic, experiential marketing and social identity theory, this study aims to define consumer engagement in online context and identify factors that influence consumer engagement via travel-related social media.

The study begins with an exploration of the concept of engagement in various disciplines and industry practices, particularly in the online environment. Based on the literature review, a multidimensional concept of consumer engagement is proposed. Consumer engagement in travel-related social media refers to the level of an individual consumer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral presence arising from interactive experience with travel-related social media. The definition highlights the relationship between interactive experience and consumer engagement in the online environment. Specifically, consumer engagement in travel-related social media originates from consumer online experience with the media. Two types of consumer online experience are recognized through literature review: community experience and community identification. At individual level, consumer overall experience with travel-related social media is defined as community experience. It is created through a range of interactions where desired benefits are delivered. Community identification, defined as the perceived sense of belonging to

a particular travel-related social medium is considered as consumer online experience at group-level. It is postulated that both individual-level and group-level experience act independently to influence consumer engagement. Moreover, group-level experience is regarded as a beneficial outcome of individual-level experience.

To examine the hypotheses derived from theory, an online survey is designed and data are collected with assistance from an online research company. Empirical support is generally obtained from data analysis. As expected, consumer engagement is a three-dimensional construct: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement. All three constructs are statistically significant and contribute to the second-order construct of consumer engagement. This finding is consistent with previous researchers who agree upon a multidimensional view of consumer engagement (Brodie, Hollebeek, et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek, 2009). Moreover, the results confirm the second-order structure for the construct of community experience, which is rooted in previous literature in computer-mediated communication, human-computer interaction and online communities (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996; Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008; Preece, 2000; Wang et al., 2002). Community experience consists of utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience and usability experience. The first three types of experience represent various benefits that consumer obtain in online travel communities. Usability experience doesn't generate value for community members. However, it indicates the quality of information system, upon which the other three kinds of experience are built.

Community experience has been found to successfully predict consumer engagement. People come to travel-related social media websites to satisfy their needs. As they gain valuable and reliable experience from travel-related social media websites, they are more likely to engage

in the websites. This result supports previous research which indicates that the main reason for using social media is the benefits (i.e. functional, social-psychological and hedonic benefits) that people perceive (Parra-López et al., 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a). Interestingly, the findings of this study show that the relationship between consumer engagement and community experience varies depending on consumers' attitude toward using social media and their travel involvement, respectively. The stronger attitude consumers have, the greater the positive relationship between community experience and consumer engagement. In other words, consumers are more likely to engage if they have stronger and more positive attitude toward using social media. This finding reinforces the notion that attitude is a significant construct to explain online consumer behavior (Casaló et al., 2011b). Moreover, in line with previous studies on the moderating role of involvement (Huang et al., 2010; Namsian & Baron, 2007), the results demonstrate that there is significant difference between high travel-involved people and low travel-involved people with respect to engagement in travel-related social media websites. High involved people are more likely to be engaged since travel is considered more important in their daily life.

Community identification is another significant predictor of consumer engagement. In current study, community identification is interpreted as group-level community experience, which implies a certain level of shared understanding between community members. Social identity can drive decisions to engage with travel-related social media websites. In other words, people are more inclined to engage when they become psychologically attached to a certain travel-related social media website. This result agrees with the existing literature on the impact of community identification on consumers' participation in online communities (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Hsu, et al., 2012; Qu & Lee, 2011). However, the

anticipated moderating roles of attitude toward using social media and travel involvement are not supported in the relationship between community identification and consumer engagement.

People with various levels of attitude toward using social media or travel involvement do not exhibit different degrees of engagement when they develop a sense of attachment to a certain travel-related social media website. One potential explanation is that strong community identification enables members to accept the community values and act as an agent of the community (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). Therefore, engagement in travel-related social media is considered as an ongoing agreement to joint actions in a group no matter what pre-conditions are, such as attitude toward using social media and travel involvement in current study.

The results reveal that community identification can be shaped by the interactive experience in travel-related social media websites. A sense of identification is developed when people fulfill needs and perceive value from their interactions with travel-related social media. Previous studies indicate that online travel communities can deliver various benefits which influence members' sense of identification (Qu & Lee, 2011; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a). Functional benefits provide individuals with travel information and help travel decision making. Social benefits facilitate relationship building and satisfy people's needs for social support and approval. Hedonic benefits can meet individuals' needs for enjoyment, entertainment and escapism. Therefore, a virtual experience plays a significant role in driving members to identify and integrate themselves into an online travel community. Moreover, the findings of this study support the moderating role of attitude toward using social media in the relationship between community experience and community identification. That is, consumers with stronger attitude toward using social media tend to develop a sense of belonging to travel-related social media than those having weak attitude. People who favor social media are more willing to expose

themselves to various types of social media and can easily understand and perceive value from these websites. Thus, they tend to construe themselves as a community member. However, contrary to expectation, travel involvement is not found to strengthen the relationship between community experience and community identification. Low travel involvement group is more likely to develop a sense of community. Due to lack of travel information, low travel-involved people tend to gather information and meet functional needs when participating in travel-related social media. They can be easily satisfied if they are able to access to sufficient relevant information for their trips. Whereas, high travel-involved people are more interested in communicating with like-minded people and pursue social and psychological benefits in travel-related social media websites. Previous research have indicated that the interaction mode in online communities evolves from informational to relational and recreational, and eventually transformational (Kozinets, 1999). Therefore, compared with satisfaction of functional needs, fulfillment of social and psychological needs is more sophisticated and takes more time. As a result, high travel-involved people may require more time and efforts to develop a sense of community.

Implications

The conceptual model and study findings hold several important implications for both managerial practices and future research.

Theoretical Implications

This study makes several contributions to theoretical and empirical research in the emerging area of consumer engagement. First, the study has reviewed literature on engagement across a range of disciplines. The findings help better understand the phenomenon of engagement and provide a foundation for future exploration. Different from other literature

review on engagement, this study pays special attention to consumer engagement in online environment and highlights its interactive and experiential nature. Moreover, the review recognizes the multi-dimensional aspect of consumer engagement, consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. Accordingly, a working definition of consumer engagement in travel-related social media is proposed: The level of an individual consumer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral presence arising from interactive experience with travel-related social media.

Second, on the basis of the definition, this study introduces a conceptual model of consumer engagement in travel-related social media, aiming to illustrate the relationship between consumer engagement and its antecedents. According to the definition, consumer experience with travel-related social media influences the level of engagement. It is argued that consumers would be more engaged when they believe the experience is of value to them. Again this model addresses the experiential and interactive feature of consumer engagement.

Unlike prior research in this area, this study goes beyond describing characteristics and components of consumer engagement or conceptualizing the construct into a framework. Instead, it provides empirical support for the proposed conceptual model. The positive relationship between consumer engagement and its antecedents is validated. Moreover, the study identifies forces that strengthen the positive relationship. The findings may provoke further scholarly inquiry by concentrating on other aspects of consumer engagement (e.g. its consequences).

In addition, this study provides an outline for understanding consumer experience with travel-related social media, which could potentially influence future research on online consumer behavior. Consumer experience with travel-related social media is categorized into two types: community experience at individual level and community identification at group level. The

individual-level experience is driven by values perceived from interactions with travel-related social media. Community experience indicates online participants' perceptions of their membership in a certain travel-related social media website. Individuals' self-categorization stems from their understanding that group membership brings benefits. Therefore, community identification is derived from community experience, which fulfills important needs of members.

Overall, this study responds to calls to inquire the concept of consumer engagement. The major contribution is the development and examination of a conceptual model of consumer engagement in travel-related social media. The findings serve as a basis for further investigation into consumer engagement.

Managerial Implications

There is a growing interest in the term of consumer engagement. It is believed that consumer engagement plays a key role in creating, building and enhancing consumer relationships. As more and more social media websites emerge, they are becoming a popular platform for engagement. However, tourism organizations are challenged to understand and utilize social media to engage their consumers. Moreover, travel-related social media face intense competition since consumers today are bombarded with different types of online media. This study defines consumer engagement in travel-related social media and introduces a conceptual framework incorporating consumer engagement and its antecedents. The proposed model can serve as a tool for tourism organizations and travel-related social media companies to create strategies for consumer engagement.

First, the study finds community experience is a significant predictor of consumer engagement and community identification. Hence, maximizing community experience is a crucial aspect of business strategy. Companies need to understand how to deliver positive

experiences for consumers. In current study, community experience is conceptualized as a second-order construct, consisting of utilitarian experience, sociability experience, hedonic experience and usability experience. The first three types of experience derive from perceived benefits provided by tourism organizations through their social media websites. These benefits can be related to information on tourism products and services, convenience, discussing and exchanging ideas, forming relationships, gaining help and support, seeking pleasure and fun, etc. (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004a). On the one hand, tourism organizations need to understand what benefits their clients are seeking in the social media so that they can respond actively, create and promote such benefits. On potential way of doing that is to listen to your clients. Tourism organizations may keep track of consumer-generated content in the social media and react instantly to questions and suggestions. On the other hand, tourism organizations should view themselves as facilitators rather than controllers of the social media, and allow consumers to take a central role during the interactive process. It should be remembered that being successful in social media depends on fans and customers. Therefore, tourists' efforts in the social media (e.g. posting, discussing, answering questions, etc.) should be encouraged and recognized. The more content consumers generate, the more useful the social media are. Accordingly, consumers' perceptions of utilitarian benefits will increase. Moreover, rich content may stimulate individuals' interest in online discussion and interaction, which can enhance their perceptions of social benefits. It is also important to identify and reward active participants since the recognition delivers psychological and hedonic benefits (Parra-López et al., 2011).

Usability experience is another component of community experience. It doesn't generate benefits by itself. However, the usability level impacts how other community experience is delivered since it determines the structure and complexity of the online environment. The greater

the usability experience, the better the utilitarian experience. So does the sociability experience and hedonic experience (Casaló et al., 2010). To foster consumer engagement, tourism organizations should carefully design and operate their social media websites so that all four types of community experience are successfully delivered. Web design factors should be taken into consideration at the beginning to support and enhance online interactions. As consumers' expectation on functionalities of the social media websites increases, the system needs to be evaluated and modified accordingly.

Secondly, community identification is found to have a significant positive impact on consumer engagement. To evoke a sense of shared identity with community members, tourism organizations should create opportunities for group communications and activities. For instance, tourism companies can organize an online discussion among community members regarding companies' products and services. The process not only allows community members to identify like-minded consumers who prefer similar products and services, but also helps community members recognize shared values and commit to the collective (Casaló et al., 2010; Qu & Lee, 2011). Moreover, tourism organizations should be able to identify individuals with similar interests and facilitate formation of sub-groups. Besides online activities, face-to-face meeting in physical environment is also recommended to promote group cohesion and build a sense of community identification. In addition, tourism organizations can help members express personal identities by creating detailed profiles and share them with others in an easy and secure manner. According to Nambisan (2009), such measure helps building community identification since more individual information is disclosed.

Next, this study identifies two moderating variables, which can strengthen the positive relationship between community experience and consumer engagement. They are attitude toward

using social media and travel involvement. Previous research indicates enjoyment is an important and influential factor in determining consumers' attitude toward using social media (Hsu & Lin, 2008). To enhance consumers' attitude toward using social media, tourism organizations should develop online tools so as to increase playfulness and enjoyment of their social media. For instance, the home page of the site may contain game-like activities. Tourism organizations should also promote playful interactions in the social media by posting interesting texts or videos. Further, it is critical for tourism organizations to identify and encourage highly involved tourists to participate in their social media websites. Highly involved tourists are usually more experienced and have more expertise with destinations. The content generated by them in the social media is more valuable and meaningful, which boosts the perceived benefits of the websites, and thereby fosters the level of engagement. As matter of fact, some destinations have already invited highly involved tourists to their social media sites as travel experts and create a column for them.

In addition, there has been an attempt to evaluate the level of consumer engagement in social media among tourism marketers. However, to the researcher's knowledge, no solution has yet been provided. In current study, a scale of engagement is developed to measure consumer engagement in travel-related social media. Although the scale is adopted from previous education and employee studies, it is modified and validated in this study. Hence, tourism organizations can utilize the scale to assess their consumer engagement.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite of managerial and theoretical contributions, this study contains several limitations which should be addressed for future research. First, the use of online panel data might have biased the results. The individuals who complete the survey do not necessarily

represent the study's target population since response is voluntary. Participants may possess similar attributes, causing self-selection bias. Moreover, the sample may consist of professional survey takers, who complete surveys for the sake of paid incentives. However, online survey is still widely used because of its convenience and efficiency (Dillman, 2007). Considering the nature of the study, the researcher decides to conduct an online survey. To ensure data quality, several measures have been taken prior to data collection. For instance, one screening question is asked at the beginning and two attention filter questions are inserted randomly in the survey. Therefore, the researcher is certain of the validity of the results.

Secondly, the data are collected from a single survey in the U.S. Hence, the interpretation of the findings to other population should be careful. It is suggested to replicate the study in multiple geographic locations including those outside the U.S. In addition, a cross-cultural comparison would be useful and reveal potential differences in the driving factors of consumer engagement across geographic locations. Such investigation may help hospitality and tourism companies, especially those whose clients are from all over the world, understand consumer behavior online and deliver unique online experience efficiently.

Thirdly, the study attempts to provide greater generalizability for its results. Therefore, the researcher distinguishes neither various types of travel-related social media (e.g. travel blog, travel-related Facebook page) nor different sectors of tourism industry (e.g. destination, hotel, restaurants). However, the results of the study indicate that the majority of respondents fill out the survey based on their experience with a single website (i.e. TripAdvisor.com). Although TripAdvisor.com is regarded as a typical example of travel-related social media website, the results of the study is limited to similar websites of review and ratings. Moreover, recent studies show that different sectors of tourism industry should treat their social media strategies

separately even though they have many common issues (McCarthy, Stock, & Verma, 2010). Therefore, future studies should test the model by focusing on certain industry sector or specific type of travel-related social media. In different context, it might be necessary to adjust the model to best fit the sector/website characteristics.

The fourth limitation of this study comes from multicollinearity problem occurring during data analysis. It is evidenced by barely-achieved discriminant validity for the construct of community experience. The use of structural equation modeling helps deal with the problem. However, multicollinearity can produce imprecise estimation and lead to misleading results. It is suggested that future studies refine the scales of community experience employed in current study and further validate the conceptual model.

In current study, the antecedents of consumer engagement (i.e. community experience and community identification) are identified through conceptualizing the term of consumer engagement in travel-related social media. There might be other factors influencing consumer engagement. Future researchers are recommended to investigate additional antecedents of consumer engagement. Moreover, the unsupported moderating role of travel involvement on the relationship between community experience and community identification generates some interesting topics for future studies. For instance, is there any difference between high and low travel-involved groups in motivation to participate in travel-related social media? Does travel involvement affect consumer experience with travel-related social media? Do high and low travel-involved groups exhibit different level of community identification in travel-related social media websites? Answers to these questions may help better understand behavioral difference in online travel communities.

An additional direction for future research is to assess the consequences of consumer engagement in travel-related social media. This study sheds light on the antecedents of consumer engagement in travel-related social media. It would be interesting to include consequences in the conceptual model and test them empirically. Based on the existing literature, several consequences of consumer engagement are suggested, such as satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and empowerment (Bowden, 2009; Brodie, Ilic, et al., 2011).

Summary

The service-dominant logic for marketing highlights the customer-business relationship through interaction and co-creation. Today, the market is considered as a venue where organizations and consumers can work together to create value rather than dealing with transactions. Consumer engagement has become a key term, addressed by both academia and practitioners in diverse industries. Due to interactive features, social media have been widely employed by organizations, particularly tourism and hospitality organizations to engage consumers in various ways.

This research concentrates on the interactive and experiential nature of consumer engagement, and examines the relationship between consumer engagement in travel-related social media and its two antecedents: community experience and community identification. The findings of the study reinforce and expand previous research on online consumer behavior, and contribute to a better understanding of consumer engagement in online context. The knowledge generated from this study can help tourism and hospitality marketers to manage their social media tools and achieve engagement goals.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Xu Li**

Date: **December 17, 2012**

Dear Researcher:

On 12/17/2012, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN TRAVEL-RELATED
SOCIAL MEDIA
Investigator: Xu Li
IRB Number: SBE-12-09017
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 12/17/2012 09:20:59 AM EST

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Dear consumers,

My name is Xu Li, and I am a PhD candidate in the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida (UCF). I am asking for your participation in a survey designed to understand your experience and engagement with travel-related social media (e.g. TripAdvisor.com, virtualtourist.com, travelblog.org, travel-related Facebook page, travel-related Twitter page, etc.).

This study is designed solely for research purposes and no one except me will have access to your responses. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and I sincerely appreciate your time and effort.

Your participation is voluntary. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not wish to answer. Please be advised that you may choose not to participate in this survey, and you are free to withdraw from it at any time. There is no financial benefit from participating in the survey.

The survey is anonymous. Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, the UCF Institutional Review Board and its staff, and other individuals, acting on behalf of the UCF, may inspect the records from this research project. The results of this study may be published. However, the published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at (407) 903-8218 (Xu.Li@ucf.edu) or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Youcheng Wang at (407) 903-8039 (Youcheng.Wang@ucf.edu). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. Their telephone numbers are (407) 823-2901 and (407) 882-2276.

---- I agree to participate

---- I don't agree to participate



This study aims to investigate your experience with travel-related social media (e.g. TripAdvisor.com, virtualtourist.com, lonelyplanet.com, travel-related Facebook page, travel-related Twitter page, etc.). Therefore, if you never visit any travel-related social media website, you do not need to fill out the survey.

Have you ever visited any travel-related social media website?

- Yes
- No (Thank you for your interest. However, you do not need to proceed with the survey).

1. Which one of the following social media websites do you use the most? Please check ONLY one.

- Travel-related Facebook page
- Travel-related Twitter page
- Travel-related YouTube page
- Travel-related Flickr page
- Travel-related Google+ page
- TripAdvisor
- HotelChatter
- LonelyPlanet
- VirtualTourist
- CouchSurfing
- Other, please specify _____

2. Are you a member of this travel-related social media website?

- Yes
- No

3. If yes, how long have you been a member of this travel-related social media website?

- Less than 6 months
- 7 – 12 months
- 1 - 2 years
- 3 - 4 years
- 5 - 6 years
- 7 years or more

4. The following statements relate to your perceptions about the importance of various benefits in participating in this travel-related social media website. Please indicate the level of importance of each potential benefit using the scale where 1 = not at all important, and 7 = extremely important.

1. Obtain up-to-date travel information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Conveniently communicate with others online.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Efficiently communicate online.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Establish and maintain trust in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Establish and maintain relationships with other members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Communicate with other members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Get involved with other members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Seek a sense of affiliation in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Seek a sense of belonging.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Seek self-identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Be amused by other members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Have fun.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Seek enjoyment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Be entertained.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



5. What kind of activities do you undertake in this travel-related social media website? Please check ALL that apply.

- Retrieve information only Supply information only Engage in discussion

6. What type of information interests you in this travel-related social media website? Please check ALL that apply.

- Personal travel experience of other members Practical travel information about destinations
 Local people, food and culture General destination facts
 People met while traveling Warnings and tips for others
 Evaluations of travel-related services Other, please specify _____

7. How many hours on average do you participate in this travel-related social media website PER WEEK?

- Less than 1 hour 1 – 2 hours 3 – 4 hours
 5 - 9 hours 10 – 19 hours 20 hours or more

8. How do you usually access your account in this travel-related social media website?

- Mobile device (e.g. smartphone, tablet) Computers
 Both mobile devices and computers Others, please specify _____

9. The following statements relate to your experience with this travel-related social media website. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. Using this travel-related social media website enables me to acquire more information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Using this travel-related social media website helps me reduce uncertainty when I make travel plans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Using this travel-related social media website helps me organize my travels in a more efficient way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. In general, this travel-related social media website is useful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I make a lot of friends in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I get personal support from others in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. This travel-related social media website is an excellent medium for interacting with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I have an enjoyable and relaxing time using this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Using this travel-related social media website is fun.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Using this travel-related social media website entertains and stimulates my mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Using this travel-related social media website offers me enjoyment from problem solving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. This travel-related social media website is simple to use, even when using it for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Consumer Engagement in Travel-related Social Media

13. In this travel-related social media website everything is easy to find.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. The structure and contents of this travel-related social media website are easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. It is easy to navigate within this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. When I visit this travel-related social media website, I feel strong ties to other members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I find it easy to form a bond with other members when I visit this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I feel a sense of community with other members when I visit this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. A strong feeling of camaraderie exists between me and other members when I visit this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. The following statements relate to your engagement with this travel-related social media website. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. My mind is focused when I use this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I pay a lot of attention to this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Time flies when I am using this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I am enthusiastic about this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. This travel-related social media website inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I am interested in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I am proud of using this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am excited when I use this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I exert my full effort to this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I devote a lot of energy to this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I try my best to perform well on this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. In this travel-related social media website, I always persevere even when things do not go well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I exert a lot of energy on this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. The following statements relate to the level of satisfaction you have with this travel-related social media website. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. I think that I made the correct decision to use this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The experience that I have had with this travel-related social media website has been satisfactory.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. In general terms, I am satisfied with the way that this travel-related social media website has carried out transactions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. In general, I am satisfied with the service I have received from this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



12. The following statements relate to the level of trust you have in this travel-related social media website. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. This travel-related social media website appears to be more trustworthy than other sites I have visited.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. This travel-related social media website represents companies or organizations that deliver on promises made.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I believe the information on this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I feel very confident in the recommendations on this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Overall, I trust this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. The following statements relate to your future behavior with this travel-related social media website. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. I would say positive things about this travel-related social media website to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would recommend this travel-related social media website to someone who seeks my advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I would feel comfortable behaving according to the advice I obtain in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would not hesitate to take into account the comments and suggestions made by others in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I would feel secure in following the suggestions made by others in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I would rely on the recommendations made by others in this travel-related social media website.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. The following statements relate to your attitude toward using social media in general. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. All things considered, using social media is a good idea.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. All things considered, using social media is a wise move.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. All things considered, using social media is a positive step.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My attitude toward social media use is favorable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. The following statements relate to your involvement with travel. Please indicate your level of agreement where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

1. I am interested in travel in general.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Travel is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I get involved with travel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Travel is relevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I am going to travel in the next six months.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



16. For the following questions, please tell us about yourself.

Your gender: Female Male

Your age group: 18 - 24 years old 25 - 34 years old 35 - 44 years old
 45 - 54 years old 55 - 64 years old 65 and older

Ethnicity: Caucasian Asian/Island Pacific African American
 Native American Hispanic Other

Marital status: Single Unmarried couple living together Married
 Divorced/separated Widowed

Education: High school or less Some college College graduate
 Master's degree PhD, MD, etc.

Annual household income: Less than \$30,000 \$30,001 - \$54,999 \$55,000 - \$74,999
 \$75,000 - \$99,999 \$100,000 - \$149,999
 \$150,000 - \$199,999 \$200,000 and over

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