

Tourism Promotion Using Social Networks: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: Social networks function as a strategy for the promotion and dissemination of tourism destinations. The objective of this systematic review is to determine what is known about the use of social networks as a tool for tourism promotion, in the scientific literature between 2012 and 2022. The Prisma methodology (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta - Analyses) was used, the databases were Science direct, Taylor and Francis, Dialnet, Redalyc and Scielo, with a total of 49 systematized articles, the inclusion criteria were those that are published between 2012 and 2022, are in Spanish, English or Portuguese language, and that have free access. The results obtained determine that, 78 % of the articles are current as of 2017, with a significant decrease during 2020 due to the global health crisis. It is concluded that the use of social networks by tourists allows them to publicize a destination indirectly, and they do so by posting photos and videos, accompanied by texts, either with information about the destination or with inspirational phrases. Finally, it is mentioned that there is a wide variety of social networks that could be used to promote a destination; but, among the most relevant we have Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, which have been observed in most of the articles, regardless of the category, are used as the main social networks for the dissemination and promotion of destinations. Tiktok could also be included as a social network with a lot of diffusion power; however, there are still not many studies that support this information.

Keywords: Social networks, Tourist destinations, Tourism, Promotion, Influencer

1. Introduction

Social networks are places on the Internet that serve as a technological tool for interpersonal communication either sharing personal or professional information. Celaya (2008) and Barreiro (2021) mention that according to the annual report "The Global state of digital in 2019" at least 52% of the world's population uses social networks, and that any company, regardless of its size, by using these media has the opportunity to position itself in the market. Likewise, the use of social networks is no longer only about creating close or personal relationships, but also for the promotion and sale of a service or product. Celaya (2008) states that the internet is revolutionising the way in which companies make sales, taking into account the new consumers who now look for the brand on the web to identify it.

In the tourism field, according to Cruz et al (2007) the promotion of tourism destinations on the web are carried out with the aim of promoting, interacting and providing the necessary support for the operation of tourists, similarly Mendes et al (2013) state that consumers interact with other consumers making use of the social network of the tourism organisation, thus allowing the exchange of opinions and experiences, influencing decision making, which will serve as a promotional strategy for different types of tourism. According to UNWTO estimates, by 2030 there will be 1.8 billion international tourists traveling the world. Within this framework of continuous growth, innovation and technological change are part of the discourse on global tourism to boost the sector (Blanco, 2011).

We can rescue that, at present, marketing strategies in social media and networks is of great importance because the internet is not only a source of information but also an exchange of experiences and opinions, therefore, it is more convenient to focus on social networks (Torres and Alcántar, 2011). Safko & Brake (2010) define it as a tool that allows users to share information and interests with people who connect such as friends, family or colleagues. These can be divided into 3 types according to Celaya (2008) into professional social networks such as LinkedIn, Xing, etc., generalist ones such as MySpace, Facebook, Tuenti, etc. and specialised ones such as Ediciona, Ebuga, CinemaVIP.

The following research is proposed taking into account scientific articles published in the last ten years to specifically solve the following question: What is known about the use of social networks as a promotional tool to promote tourism, in the scientific literature between 2012 and 2022? The objective of the research is to determine what is known about the use of social networks as a promotional tool to promote tourism, in the scientific literature between 2012 and 2022; in order to deepen the general objective we set the following specific objectives, to categorise the scientific evidence regarding the use of social networks by tourists and by the managing entities and to publicise the different social networks that have been used as promotional strategies to promote tourism in tourist destinations.

2. Methodology

In order to carry out the following systematic review of the scientific literature, we used as a basis the methodology Prisma - Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta - Analyses (Urrútia and Bonfill, 2010). The articles found in the Science direct, Taylor and Francis, Dialnet, Redalyc and Scielo databases were included, in Spanish and also in English and Portuguese translated into Spanish. For the selection of the 5 databases, search tests were carried out and those that provided the best results were selected. Among other criteria, the year in which they were published was considered, during the period 2012 to 2022 with free access for the search, in addition the filter was applied in journals related to tourism, marketing and business and finally it was taken into account that all articles have the established methodology.

For the search, fourteen articles were found in Science Direct with the following keywords: "Social networks" and "Tourist destinations" and "Strategies, Social media and destination", seven articles were found in Taylor & Francis with the following keywords: "Social networks or Social Media" and "Tourist destinations", in Dialnet seventeen articles were found with the following keywords : "Social networks" and "Tourist destinations" and "Social Media" and "Destination" and finally in Redalyc eleven articles were found and in Scielo, only one article, with the following keywords: "Social networks "and "Promotion "and "Tourist destination". At the end of the research, 49 articles were collected, which refer to the use of social networks as a promotional strategy (See figure 1).

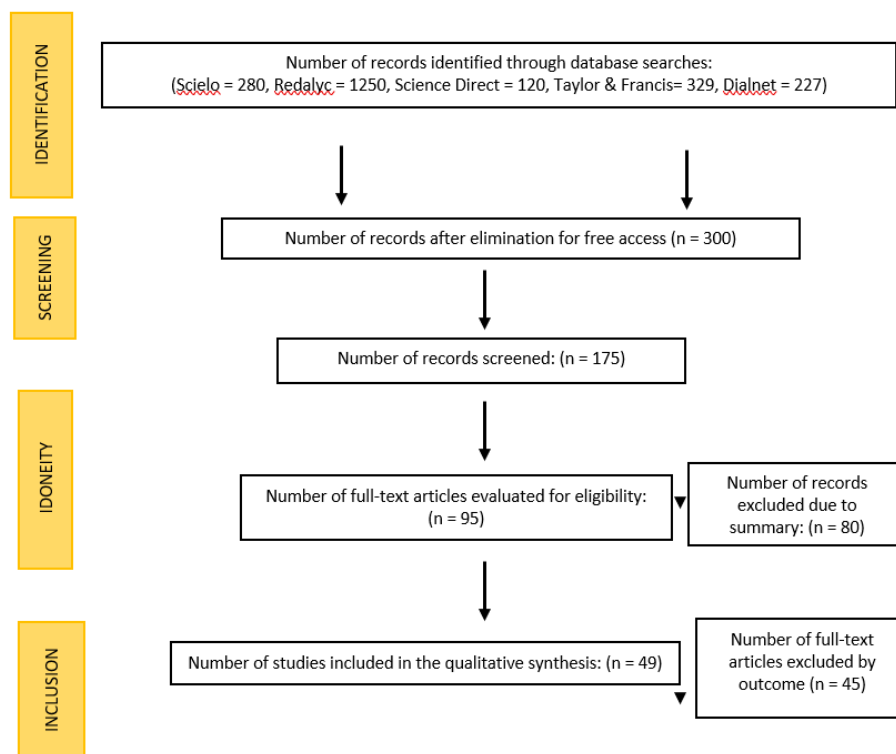


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 – Flow Diagram

3. Data Collection

Table 1: Data Base

Nº	Data base	Título	Year	Country
1	Redalyc	El uso de las redes sociales para posicionar un destino turístico: El caso de la ciudad de Guararema y sus visitantes del día (Feitosa et al, 2019).	2019	Brazil
2	Redalyc	La imagen de los países sudamericanos como destinos turísticos a través de su red social de Facebook oficial (Sanchez et al, 2019).	2019	South America
3	SciELO	Innovación en la promoción turística en medios y redes sociales (Mendes et al, 2013).	2013	Brazil
4	Redalyc	Análisis de la actividad y presencia en Facebook y otras redes sociales de los portales turísticos de las comunidades autónomas españolas (Giraldo and Martínez, 2017).	2017	Spain
5	Redalyc	Promoción y difusión turística de los países Iberoamérica a través de los medios sociales (Altamirano and Lopez (2016).	2016	Iberoamerica
6	Dialnet	Estrategias de promoción turística a través de Facebook (Martínez – Valerio, 2012).	2012	Spain
7	Dialnet	Propuesta de difusión turística mediante herramientas web y estrategias de marketing digital. Caso de estudio Canton Loja, Ecuador (Sotomayor, 2019).	2019	Ecuador
8	Dialnet	El paradigma relacional en las estrategias en las organizaciones de marketing de destinos. Interactividad y función social en las webs turísticas oficiales (Martínez et al, 2017).	2017	Spain
9	Science Direct	Destination's social media communication and emotions: An investigation of visit intentions, word-of-mouth and travelers' facially expressed emotions (Schoner et al, 2021).	2021	Not specific
10	Science Direct	Aesthetic perception analysis of destination pictures using #beautifuldestinations on Instagram (Hauser et al. 2022).	2022	Not specific
11	Taylor & Francis	Analyzing cultural tourism promotion on Instagram: a cross-cultural perspective (Mele et al, 2021).	2021	Chile, the United States, the Netherlands and Portugal
12	Redalyc	Representaciones visuales de los destinos turísticos a través de Internet: el caso de Valladolid (México) (Alvarado et al, 2017).	2017	Mexico
13	Taylor & Francis	Destination image in Uzbekistan – heritage of the Silk Road and nature experience as the core of an evolving Post Soviet identity (Fayzullaev et al, 2018).	2018	Uzbekistan
14	Redalyc	La cooperación pública privada en el ámbito de la promoción de los destinos. El análisis de redes sociales como propuesta metodológica (Muñoz and Fuentes, 2012).	2012	Spain
15	Redalyc	A imagem de Blumenau no Instagram: um estudo sobre destino turístico em redes sociais usando equações estruturais (Amaral et al, 2016)	2016	Brazil
16	Redalyc	Destination image in virtual social networks (Durieux et al, 2018).	2018	Brazil
17	Redalyc	Redes sociais na internet: estratégia para divulgação das potencialidades turísticas do piauí-brasil (Da cruz et al, 2012).	2012	Brazil

Nº	Data base	Title	Year	Country
18	Dialnet	Las redes sociales de las organizaciones de marketing de destinos turísticos como posible fuente de eWOM (Martinez et al, 2018).	2018	Spain
19	Dialnet	Instagram como red de promoción e hipermediación del turismo rural. El caso de Aldeias Históricas (Martinez et al, 2019).	2019	Portugal
20	Redalyc	El escenario Smart y sus derivadas en la estrategia de marketing online de los destinos turísticos. El caso de la Comunitat Valenciana (Celdrán and Giner, 2021).	2021	Spain
21	Dialnet	El contenido en los medios sociales de los destinos turísticos y la búsqueda de la información de los usuarios (Paniagua and Huertas, 2018).	2018	Spain
22	Dialnet	Instagram como herramienta de marketing de destinos: funcionalidades y utilidades (Doval and Snachez, 2021).	2021	Not specific
23	Dialnet	Instagram: inspiración, reconocimiento social y motivación en la elección del destino turístico. (Angaramo & Perez. (2021)	2021	Spain
24	Dialnet	Análisis del retorno de la inversión (ROI) de la actividad en las redes sociales de las provincias andaluzas como destino turístico (Sanchez, 2018).	2018	Spain
25	Dialnet	Avaliação da imagem de um destino turístico no Instagram (De Lima et al, 2018).	2018	Brazil
26	Science Direct	A machine learning approach to cluster destination image on Instagram (Arefiava et al, 2021).	2021	Austria
27	Science Direct	Is nothing like before? COVID-19–evoked changes to tourism destination social media communication (Pachucki et al, 2022).	2022	Austria
28	Science Direct	#Visitspain. Breaking down affective and cognitive attributes in the social media construction of the tourist destination image (Garay, 2019).	2019	Spain
29	Science Direct	Aspects Regarding the Romanian Social Network User's Profile and its Implications in Marketing Destination Pages (Ditoui and Platon, 2012).	2012	Rumania
30	Science Direct	The TikTok effect on destination development: Famous overnight, now what? (Wengel et al, 2022).	2022	China
31	Science Direct	The influence of communication in destination imagery during COVID-19 (Cambra et al, 2022).	2022	Spain
32	Taylor & Francis	Trust and Involvement in Tourism Social Media and Web-Based Travel Information Sources. (Munar and Steene, 2013).	2013	Spain
33	Taylor & Francis	Building a model-based personalised recommendation approach for tourist attractions from geotagged social media data (Sun et al, 2019).	2019	China
34	Taylor & Francis	Tourism communities and social ties: the role of online and offline tourist social networks in building social capital and sustainable practice (Dickinson et al, 2017).	2017	United Kingdom
35	Taylor & Francis	Understanding the influence of user-generated content on tourist loyalty behavior in a cultural World Heritage Site (Xu et al, 2021).	2021	China
36	Science Direct	Instagram travel influencers in #quarantine: Communicative practices and roles during COVID-19 (Femenia et al, 2022).	2022	Spain
37	Science Direct	The clustering of city images on Instagram: A comparison between projected and perceived image (Daniel Paul i Agusti, 2021).	2021	Spain

N°	Data base	Title	Year	Country
38	Dialnet	Instagram: la red social con la mayor interacción para promover los destinos turísticos ecuatorianos (Avila and Ugalde, (2020).	2020	Ecuador
39	Dialnet	Uso de las Redes Sociales en la Promoción de los Destinos Turísticos de Muisne, Esmeraldas (Maldonado- Román and Segura- Quiñonez, 2018).	2018	Ecuador
40	Dialnet	La comunicación de los destinos turísticos internacionales en Facebook y Twitter durante la pandemia de COVID-19 (Paniagua.Rojano & Pastor-Marín, 2021).	2021	Not specific
41	Redalyc	Promoção Digital e Turismo: A Experiência do Destino Salvador com o Facebook (De Miranda and De Andrade, 2017).	2017	Brazil
42	Dialnet	El enfoque de redes aplicado a los destinos turísticos (Melgarejo et al. 2020)	2020	Not specific
43	Dialnet	Cambio de paradigma en el marketing de destinos turísticos (Del Mar et al. 2013).	2013	Not specific
44	Dialnet	La imagen turística de Barcelona en la comunidad de Flickr (Donaire and Gali, 2021).	2021	Spain
45	Dialnet	El uso de Facebook para el desarrollo de marcas de destinos turísticos argentinos (Plos, 2016).	2016	Argentina
46	Science Direct	Instagramming nature-based tourism experiences: a netnographic study of online photography and value creation (Conti and Lexhagen, 2020).	2020	Sweden
47	Taylor & Francis	Distribution of tourists within urban heritage destinations: a hot spot/cold spot analysis of TripAdvisor data as support for destination management (Van der Zee et al, 2020).	2020	Belgium
48	Science Direct	Identification and analysis of the criteria for change in the tourist distribution system and the intensive use of information and communication technologies (Berné et al, 2013).	2013	Spain
49	Redalyc	E-branding de destinos e imagen afectiva Un estudio sobre la percepción de los consumidores a partir de las redes sociales oficiales de Porto de Galinhas (PE – Brasil).(Calvacanti and Falcao, 2019).	2019	Brazil

Table 1 shows in detail the database, the name of the article, the year and country of publication; on the other hand, the most used sources were found in the databases Dialnet and Science Direct, the years of greatest publication were between 2020 and 2022, and the countries were Spain and Brazil.

4. Results and Discussion

The research is based on two main categories, the first one is about the use and analysis of social networks used by users to share their experiences or get information about a destination, and the second one is about the use that the managing entities give to social networks for the promotion of their destination. It can also be seen that we subclassified the information by the types of social networks to which the study has been carried out.

The tourist's experience and use of social networks

First, we can observe that Instagram is one of the social networks most used by tourists to share their experiences and information about a destination, generating great interaction among other users and encouraging them to visit the destination (Fayzullaev et al, 2018). Likewise, the authors of different researches agree that Instagram is a very useful social network that serves for the promotion of destinations, this because it has a friendly and attractively visual interface that allows to observe photos and video of the destination, so points out Avila & Ugalde (2020) We can also say that this social network has different tools to use them in the promotion, such is the case of the researches of Amaral et al (2016) and Hauser et al (2022), since both were based on the use of hashtags to discover the preferences and perceive the image of a destination by tourists,

this tool is used to tag destinations and then group them into a single category, which can be very helpful to know and learn more about a destination.

On the other hand, we also have influencers who use Instagram as a means to communicate and inform people about any event or own experiences, this can serve as a strategy to promote a destination through them (Angaramo & Pérez 2021), since they have the ability to create and transmit messages with informative and entertaining content at the same time, inspiring and encouraging other users to choose their next destination (Femenia et al, 2022).

Secondly, we have social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr, which serve for tourists to share information about different destinations. Facebook for a percentage of people in Romania serves as a means to choose their vacation destination and 71% percent consider positively the use of social networks of a destination, as long as they are constantly updated with information and detailed content accompanied by eye-catching and creative illustrations (Ditoiu & Platon 2012). Flickr like Instagram, has a tool to group content with something in common in this case the location (geotags), which serves to recognize the preferences of tourists or users of a destination (Sun et al, 2019). Twitter, in Spain, is the social network where information about a destination is most highlighted by bloggers, photographers and influencers, so the author concludes that these people should be considered when promoting the destination (Garay 2019).

Thirdly, we have Tiktok, which is a social network with much recognition in recent years to report any event; but in turn it is a social network with so much power of arrival that could cause a problem of tourist congestion, as happened in China, when a destination went viral and as a result generated problems to meet so many tourists, which brought as evidence the deficiency and mismanagement of the destination (Wengel et al, 2022).

The use of social networks by destination management entities

Different authors agree that most destinations use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram as a marketing and communication strategy and consider it as the main social networks to promote the destination. As mentioned by the author (Sanchez, 2018) they work as diffusion for the destination, because it allows greater interaction between users through their travel experiences, in addition to showing the opinions of other tourists which influences the decision making for their next travel destination. In the case of the social network Instagram the authors Martínez et al (2019) and Doval & Sánchez (2021) consider it as a very interactive social network to know the user's interests through hashtags, publications and geotags, which allows promoting and informing about the destinations of their preference. In addition, it is possible to recognize the most visited places and to spread the word about the destination. On the other hand, although Facebook is a social network in constant growth that could be used to disseminate the tourist destination through publications with photos and videos, there are still deficiencies in the use of social networks by those in charge of official networks (Martinez – Valerio, 2012). As a result of what has been observed, it can be concluded that the management of destinations for their promotion is not making content of interest to tourists which as a consequence is not generating interaction among users (Martinez et al, 2018). Therefore, it is recommended that DMOs should invest more in promotion through their official accounts and show eye-catching videos and images, to encourage tourists to visit the destination (Cambra et al, 2022).

5. Conclusion

To conclude the research we can determine that, according to the amount of percentage of articles found, most are current, with 78% of articles from 2017 to the present year 2022, with a relevant difference during the year 2020 in which the global health crisis began, with a drop of 6% to the previous year, which gives as indications that tourism and research had significant drops during that period.

With the information obtained it has been possible to categorize according to the person involved in the use of social networks to promote a destination either directly or indirectly, concluding that tourists use their social networks to publicize a destination indirectly, since they are not specifically responsible for promoting it, however they do it and in large masses, making publications with photos and videos accompanied by texts either with information about the destination or inspirational phrases. Their shared experiences encourage other people to visit the place and generate interest in learning more about the destination.

Finally, we conclude that there is a wide variety of social networks that could be used to promote a destination; but, among the most relevant we have Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, which have been observed in most of the articles, regardless of the category, are used as the main social networks for the dissemination and

promotion of destinations. We could also include Tiktok as a social network with a lot of diffusion power; however, there are still not many studies that support this information.

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