

Research on Social Media Promotion Strategies of Macau Tourism Industry

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Abstract

Social media platforms have emerged with the growth of the Internet, establishing a new paradigm for the development of economies in our everyday lives. As an essential part of this will help modern people to obtain knowledge, many companies have started to make use of social media marketing. Meanwhile the tourism industry has steadily been incorporated into the marketing of social media. This study analyzes Macau as a research topic to explore the marketing of social media in tourism applications. Released solutions, such as the incorporation of communication content, the implementation of a social media marketing model and the creation of a customer feedback system, are proposed due to the characteristics of the Macau tourism destination.

Keywords

Social Media; Macau; Travel; Marketing Promotion.

1. Introduction

With the evolution of traditional media, social media has played a crucial role in creating the image and reputation of tourism destinations. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) believed that social media is a new technological reform of the internet. Its design philosophy and the technological characteristics of web applications make it possible to create and share user-generated content. Williams et al. (2011) stated that there are several forms of social media that can emerge through the use of communication technologies, social interactions, text, photographs, video and audio as a means of social interaction. Social media is used as an important marketing tool in the field of tourism destinations (Williams et al., 2011). In the meantime, social media can also boost travel destinations for visitors. Benefits from the economic contribution of tourism to the region, the promotion of urban soft cultural power and the creation of a picture of urban tourism.

How to better promote the tourism destination, the medium of communication and propaganda becomes the main factor that determines success or failure. In the era of information technology innovation, people's awareness of tourist destinations mainly stems from the communication and exchange of information through the internet, which is crucial to the growth of tourism. In order to make Macau more attractive and competitive as a tourist destination, it is important to encourage the growth of social media marketing in Macau.

In view of this paper takes Macau, a tourist destination, as an object of study. Through an overview of the social media marketing environment in Macau, as well as the current situation of the social media operations of the Macau tourism industry, the paper provided suggestions for potential social media promotion of the Macau tourism industry.

2. The Macau Social Media Marketing Environment Analysis

2.1. Macau Basic Situation Overview

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area has an important strategic position in national development in recent years, as well as a new practice of supporting the development of one country, two systems,' with a view to creating a high-quality life-cycle suitable for living, working and traveling. Macau, as one of the urban centers of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, plays an important role in supporting its development. In China's 12th Five-Year Plan, Macau is officially designated as the "World Center for Tourism and Leisure" for its development. With the inclusion of Macau's historic district in the World Heritage List, Macau's tourism is developing in a diversified way and the tourism market has great potential for development.

Tourism is, as everyone knows, a key industry for Macau. Key industries include the gaming industry, the hotel industry and the MICE industry, and it is also the main source of income finance for the government of Macau. In Macau's industrial system, the gaming industry accounts for 50.5 per cent, making an immense contribution to local economy. With the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, the increase in the number of gateways, the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and other factors, the number of visitors is on the rise, which in turn is driving the increase in tourism consumption. As seen in Figure 1, in 2019, 39,406,000 passengers joined Macau, a rise of 10.1 per cent over 2018. Mainland China is the biggest source market, accounting for 70.9 per cent of total inbound visitors, and Macau's tourism industry is indication of the strength momentum.

With the development of numerous family-oriented resorts in the Cotai Strip, Macau has become a more diversification tourist base. The wide variety of activities offered in these resorts, from gaming to non-gaming, has led tourists to visit Macau. The newly opened resorts stimulated demand, particularly tourists from Mainland China, South Korea and Japan, which greatly improved hotel performance at both occupancy and average rates. As far as the source market is concerned, visitors from Greater China should remain the absolute majority of visitors to Macau.

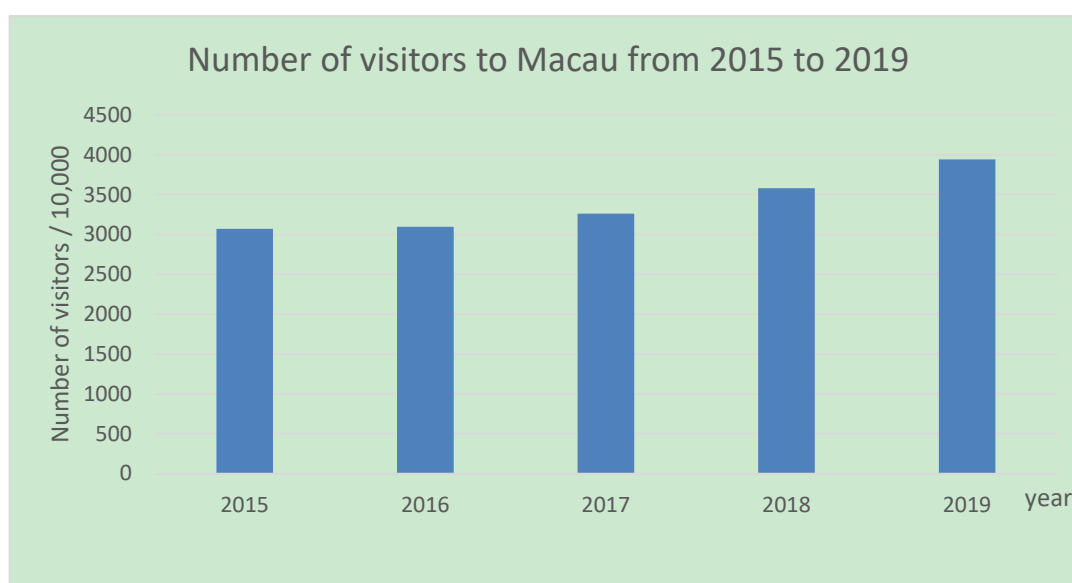


Figure 1. Number of visitors to Macau from 2015 to 2019

Source: Author self-made according to the comprehensive index released by Macau Statistics and Census Bureau

2.2. Application Status of Social Media Marketing in the Tourism Industry

Social media, a product of the information age, are changing the way information is disseminated in society and around the world. This makes information from production to delivery very simple, has a strong interactive impact, which plays a key role in the promotion of tourism destination marketing. Social networking is becoming more and more integrated. There have been different types of social media such as WeChat, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and so on. The public is currently used to post views and exchange information via different social media sites. Social media has therefore become a very powerful advertising outlet. Research by Crofton and Paeker (2012) shows that tourists use social media extensively to search and decide on destination information. The destination will also use social media to connect with tourists, market and promote their image and tourism items.

2.2.1. Destination Marketing on Social Media

The benefit of social media as a multimedia communication is that it incorporates text, photographs, videos, VR (virtual reality) interaction and other forms of communication. With the advancement of communication technologies and the convergence of multimedia technology, digital media art and social media, photographs, music and other types of content can be used to reflect the city image (Sofia & Brian, 2011). Social media are distinct from conventional media, shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Comparison between social media and traditional media

Characteristic	Traditional Media	Social Media
1	One-way output	Multifaceted transmission
2	A static model	The dynamic model
3	Can not comment	Make it easy for people to create important content through network technology.
4	Take a stand	Advertisers do not have to pay other fees (Zarrella, 2009)

Source: Author self-made

2.2.2. Social Media and Requirements

Diversified types of social media can meet different requirements for customers and markets. As far the tourism industry is concerned, both product experience and product marketing play a significant role. The Social Function Platform is becoming the most successful channel and the key market place for tourism destinations. Social networking sites allow Internet users to form a virtual tourism community (VTCs), make it easier for tourists to get information, stay in touch and establish relationships, and finally make tourism-related decisions (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013)

2.2.3. Social Media Marketing for Toursim Destinations

Travelers' plans to buy travel goods and services, as well as their attitudes towards destination marketing, can be expressed by social impact and online word-of-mouth. Online word of mouth can influence the willingness of other tourists to buy, that may be diminished by their comments (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Online word of mouth is more accurate than word of mouth because it is viewed by travelers as equal and induced. The widespread use of the Internet in marketing makes it easier for potential customers to spread word of mouth and knowledge. Word of mouth networks include tourist review sites, forums, blogs and social networking sites. Millions of customers get a lot of feedback (Davis & Khazanchi, 2008). As an online word of mouth platform, social media has a unique role in tourism destination.

2.3. Number and Source of Macau Visitors

The overall number of arrivals and arrivals in Macau hit a new high in 2019. There were 194 million port crossings, up about 9 percent from 179 million in 2018. There were more than 39.4 million inbound passengers, up about 10% from 35.8 million in 2018. More than 39.4 million tourists reached Macau in 2019, up about 10% from 35.8 million visitors in 2018.

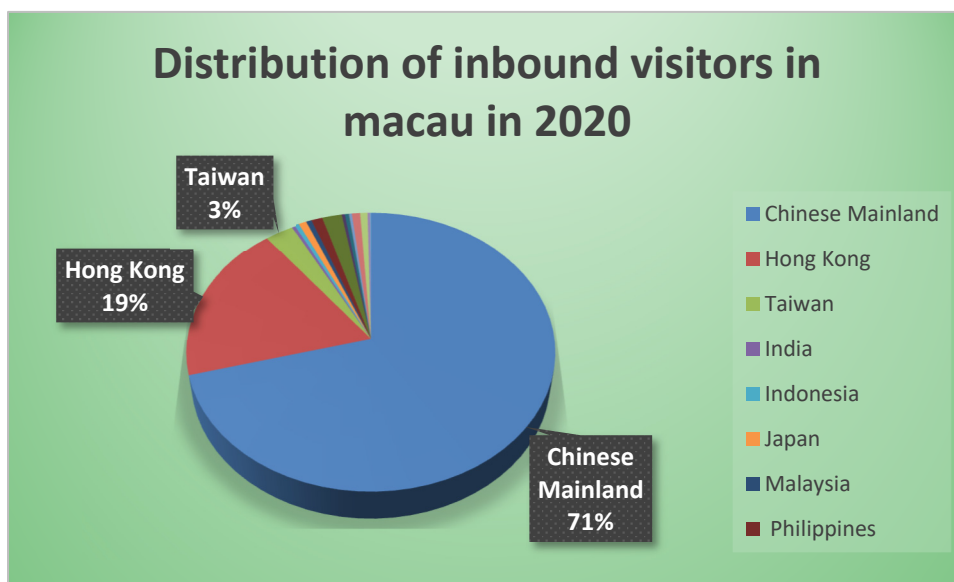


Figure 2. Distribution of inbound visitors in macau in 2020

Source: Author self-made according to the comprehensive index released by Macau Statistics and Census Bureau

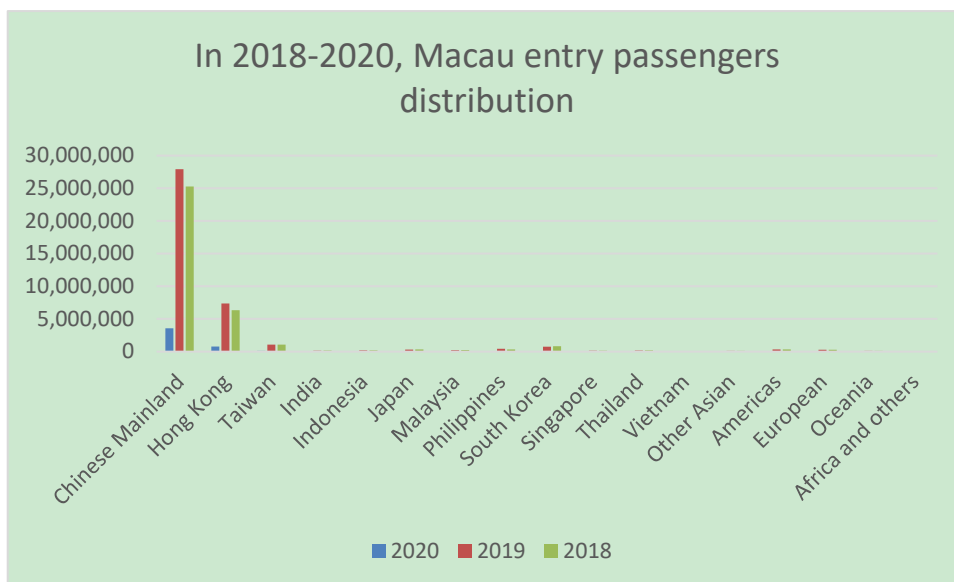


Figure 3. In 2018-2020, Macau entry passengers distribution

Source: Author self-made according to the comprehensive index released by Macau Statistics and Census Bureau

As shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3, In terms of source market, visitors from greater China will remain the absolute majority of visitors to Macau, accounting for 71% of the total in 2020. Besides, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea also the major visitor markets.

The effects of the diversification of Macau tourism from a gaming center to a family resort destination seemed to be well received by travellers. As more resorts are being added in the Cotai region, such as the Parisian Macau, Studio City and MGM Cotai, these resorts increasingly target non-gambling customers. Good news for the city is that the family-oriented resort model is especially appealing to Chinese visitors, as their spending habits are changing from shopping to intangible experiences such as dining, entertainment and cultural activities.

3. Social Media Promotion Proposal

3.1. Diversified Push Modes

3.1.1. Matrix Social Media Layout

On the basis of the positioning theory, it is important for tourist destinations to create a distinctive image in the minds of customers. Macau should play a role in the placement of social media and set up a fair strategy for the use of marketing-related social media. After analyzing the target audience, recognize the use of their social media. It is difficult for people to market on a single social media site. Select multiple social media networks to create a social media matrix to work together and increase the marketing impact.

3.1.2. Different Strategies are Used in Different Regions

Various target audiences in various regions have different social media habits. Global WebIndex, an Internet data consultancy that studied markets in 45 countries, found that in 2012 people spent an average of 90 minutes a day on social media, rising to 143 minutes in the first three months of 2019. The Social Media Era for Understanding Diversity, released in 2018, illustrates the effects of social media and reflects the current developments in the Chinese social media industry: diversified users, diversified channels and diverse market demands. It can be categorized into the following categories of social media: WeChat, Weibo, online forums, social functions of video or live streaming sites, contact and social functions, social functions of news apps, O2O apps and social functions of life service apps. The average time spent on social media in China was 139 minutes per person per day in 2019, up from 19 minutes in 2018.

In addition to ads on official WeChat pages, other forms of social media should also be checked for audiences in China's inland regions. How to use TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Quora, etc. for other areas. When an effective social media platform is in place people will actively follow and respond to it. They're going to penetrate it from different perspectives and discover each other. Make full use of the quick engagement and networking aspect of social media, so that users can participate in timely and rapid marketing whenever they share their experience at any time. In the pursuit of real-time speed, consistency is also very critical, which decides the effect of post-dissemination, so that all kinds of information must be reviewed and monitored strictly before it is published.

3.1.3. Marketing Promotion According to Tourism Market Segments

Consumers have different criteria for tourism goods for different purposes. Market segments were divided into various participation groups: holiday travel, business travel, conference travel, visiting relatives and friends, shopping, working holiday travel, etc. For example, holiday tourists need higher service content, time and advice when making decisions, and price comparisons are made on an ongoing basis. Typically the holiday lasts longer and the season is affected. Information on featured scenic spots should also be presented in order to meet the needs of holiday visitors. Some goods and services are especially appropriate for special occasions, such as May Day, National Day, Spring Festival, Winter and Summer Holidays, etc. Take purchasing time as a subdivision index and more importantly, plan and deliver tourism services to the particular needs of a specific time. Business travelers, on the other hand, make fast decisions with short notice time, short travel time, more times, low price sensitivity and

not seasonally affected. What they need is tempo, ease, versatility and full documentation. As a result, for business visitors, the Macau region can include a full range of business strategies for their direct option.

3.2. Integrate the Communication Content

Integration is not just a simple summary of events, but a greater use of the tools available for release. Optimize information and use optimized information to draw and better represent target audiences. Social networking can accomplish a number of modes of communication, such as live broadcast, video compilation, news push, etc. In the early stages of events and activities, information on past events may be incorporated in advance, such as exclusive interviews with prominent opinion leaders, short original news videos, and other ways to attract and direct users. Targeted activity launch, content focus, to carry out an "exclusive personalized" push. In view of the current homogenization of social media content, attention should be paid to the innovation of original content and reporting methods. Macau is committed to being a "World Center for Tourism and Leisure" and its market positioning is marked by "diversification" and "internationalization."

Both articles and activities ought to follow this formula as a whole. Although maintaining their own publicity and news, they should recognize the characteristics of "leisure" and "internationalization" in content and complement and encourage each other's activities. Pay attention to the quality of advertising material, with content to attract users, increase the number of user groups. Tourists may differentiate between the consumer segments according to the needs they produce and the timing of their purchase or consumption of goods and services. Increase public loyalty and loyalty, increase public exposure to the different events and competitions conducted in Macau, and encourage the opening-up of social media relevant to Macau tourism in order to achieve the marketing and promotional objectives. In the course of promoting tourism, the Macau region will make a great deal of effort to carry out the activities. When advertisement is introduced, it can direct visitors to travel by incorporating prize-giving, all kinds of voting, random drawing and preferential activities.

3.3. Establish Customer Feedback Mechanism

When promoting and marketing a destination, there should be not only "output" but also "input". Timely monitoring of visitors and gathering their feedback is the key to maintain a good two-way relationship with tourists. Compared with traditional marketing methods, social media marketing has inherent customer feedback advantages. Through communication, receive feedback and make improvement in time.

Not only does it increase visitor satisfaction, but it also has the opportunity to bring in potential visitors, which in turn improves the quality of the marketing campaign. Compared with traditional media, the feedback process of social media users is much more convenient. It can be easily obtained by collecting private messages or messages on various platforms, and timely extract effective information from customer feedback. Through these ways, Macau can understand the needs of customers, listen to their opinions, and then rectify some shortcomings in the process of various tourism activities. When there are special needs, it can provide personalized services. Answering questions timely through social media platforms. Special rewards will be offered to users who raise and respond to questions, such as souvenirs with Macau characteristics, coupons, etc. Let users have the motivation to give positive feedback, improve customer loyalty cooperation. (Attachment: specific feedback mechanism refinement plan table.)

Table 2: Feedback mechanism refinement scheme

Measures	Scheme 1
Follow the comments section on social media	Both positive and negative comments reflect the real needs of tourists. Data monitoring, sorting and reflection should be conducted to form written reports. It is used for organizing and guiding tourist activities.
Online questionnaire	Award questionnaires will be distributed on different social media to make comments on all aspects of the tour and to fill out simple evaluation forms. Actively invite visitors to fill in the questionnaire in order to improve the objectivity and accuracy of the questionnaire.

It should give full play to the interaction of social media and increase the sense of participation of target users. Let tourists and potential tourists have a sense of participation, identity. Visitors can be visited by selecting the first group of respondents to develop a sense of participation in a small scope, and user-based interactive content generated themes into events that tourists voluntarily participate in and forward, to form word-of-mouth communication and allow more industries and users to participate. At the same time, the sense of accomplishment of participating users can be amplified to form a spiraling effect of participation. With the diversification of social media platforms and users, kols (also known as big Vs or opinion leaders) on different platforms have also been differentiated. The opinions of opinion leaders directly affect their high level of interaction with fans. Use the positive emotions of opinion leaders to drive tourists and conduct word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth marketing has strong credibility, and very wide influence. This not only affects the willingness of tourists to revisit, but also affects the success and failure of word-of-mouth marketing to some extent.

4. Conclusion

The advantages of social media lie in increasing exposure, increasing traffic, and generating potential customers by developing followers. At the same time, improve the reputation of tourist destination brands, reduce marketing costs. As Frank Hsu, Lightspeed's managing director for Greater China, says: "No matter what kind of social media platform it is, ultimately it is a means of communication. The most important thing for brands is to understand their consumers, especially how social media, a particular channel of communication, affects people's lives. Only in this way can brands continue to use social media to deliver products or services that appeal to consumers." For regions and events that need marketing, social media is an important part of the overall marketing promotion strategy. What is important is not only the use of social media to release information, but also the continuous development of social media marketing.

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