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Social media influential factors for the decision of tourist destinations: a systematic review

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Abstract: A systematic review was conducted to investigate the influence of social media (SM) on tourist destination (TD) choices. Forty-one articles indexed in Web of Science were selected. The results highlight five emerging data categories: SM influence factors, Content Endorsers, Information Sources, Context, and User Characteristics. Identified influencing factors include destination features, Quality Content, Usability, and eWOM. Various content endorsers were found, yet no consensus on which wields greater consumer influence. Understanding diverse contexts and user profiles is crucial for formulating effective TD strategies. This research underscores the need for further studies and introduces a graphical model, the 'Social Media Azevedo-Ferreira Model,' visually illustrating the scientific literature on this subject. Market implications suggest the production of authentic content reflecting regional culture to foster connections between users and TD. Future research should explore alternative databases.

Keywords: social media; decision of tourist destination; choice of tourist destinations; tourist destination; tourism.

Factores de influencia de las redes sociales en la elección de destinos turísticos: revisión sistemática

Resumen: Se realizó una revisión sistemática para investigar la influencia de las redes sociales (RS) en la elección de destinos turísticos (DT). Se seleccionaron 41 artículos indexados en Web of Science. Los resultados resaltan cinco categorías emergentes de datos: Factores de influencia de RS, Endosantes de contenido, Fuentes de información, Contexto y Características del usuario. Entre los factores identificados se encuentran características del destino, Contenido de calidad, Usabilidad y eWOM. Se encontraron diversos endosantes de contenido, sin consenso sobre su mayor influencia en el consumidor. Comprender distintos contextos y perfiles de usuario es crucial para formular estrategias efectivas de DT. Esta investigación subraya la necesidad de más estudios y presenta un modelo gráfico, el 'Social Media Azevedo-Ferreira Model', que ilustra visualmente la literatura científica sobre este tema. Las implicaciones de mercado sugieren la producción de contenido auténtico que refleje la cultura regional para fomentar conexiones entre usuarios y DT. Para futuras investigaciones se recomienda explorar otras bases de datos.

Palabras clave: redes sociales; Decisión de destino turístico; elección de destinos turísticos; destino turístico; turismo.

1. Introduction

The use of social media (SM) has become a worldwide phenomenon in terms of popularity and is expanding. Global data shows that in 2013, 1.7 billion users were registered on social media platforms and, 10 years later, in 2023, there were already 4.8 billion users — an increase of approximately 182% compared to 2013 (Kemp, 2023). The projection is that in 2027 this number will exceed 6 billion (Dixon, 2023).

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The average time spent by users daily is also something to be considered. Globally, in 2021, users spent an average of 2 hours and 21 minutes on social media; however, there are regions where this amount exceeded. In the case of users from Brazil, for example, the average time is 3 hours and 46 minutes in the same year (Kemp, 2023).

Given the number of people who use this technology for hours, social media has been used for more than connecting people (Sousa & Rocha, 2023). Studies show that they have been used to influence people in their consumption choices (Utami & Rahyuda, 2019), and even impact electoral processes (Sihombing & Pramono, 2021).

Data from the Global Report 2023, produced by We Are Social in partnership with Meltwater (Kemp, 2023), confirm that there are a variety of purposes for using MS, as indicated by Sousa and Rocha (2023), Utami and Rahyuda (2019) and Sihombing and Pramono (2021).

Among the various purposes for using MS, it can be highlighted that 47.1% of users use it to connect with family and friends; 34% use them to read new stories; 30% to find new content — such as articles and videos; 27.3% seek to find inspiration for things to do; 25.9% are looking for things to buy; 23.4% tend to engage in discussions and exchange opinions with other people, and 20.8% use them to follow celebrities and digital influencers (Kemp, 2023) .

This can also be seen in tourism, in which social media is used by managers to raise awareness of tourist destinations (Shen & Ma, 2022), by social media users to make consumption decisions on site (Chi, 2021; S. Shen et al., 2020), and to find information about these destinations (Cham et al., 2021; Giang, 2022; Gumpo et al., 2020) .

From this phenomenon, the following concern arises: which factors present on social media influence the choice of a tourist destination? In order to answer it, scientific production was analyzed regarding works that deal with the influence of social media (SM) on the choice of tourist destinations (TS).

This manuscript, therefore, aims to provide valuable information for tourism professionals and academics in the field, as it clarifies the factors that contribute to the influence of social media on the choice of tourist destinations, in addition to proposing a graphic model capable of briefly representing the results of this research.

The study at hand is organized into six sections. The first is this introduction; the second section is a brief theoretical reference on social media and tourist destination; the third consists of presenting the steps of the methodological procedures adopted; the fourth, fifth and sixth sections contain the results, analyzes and the proposal of a graphic model on the topic, respectively. Finally, in the seventh section, the conclusions, contributions to academia and the tourism market, as well as the limitations of the research.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Social media

Social media is described as internet-based platforms or applications, capable of offering users the possibility of creating, exchanging and sharing their own and third-party content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
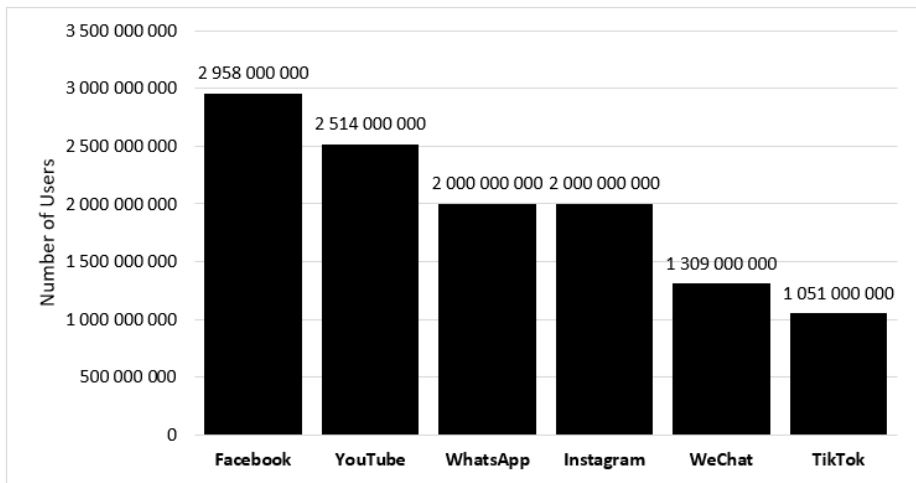
They can encompass billions of users and a single user can access several platforms. From this perspective, only the platforms of the company Meta — which controls Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp — bring together more than 2 billion users each, and the Chinese platforms WeChat and TikTok, which emerged in prominence last year, already have more than 1 billion users individually (Kemp, 2023). Figure 1 shows the number of users on platforms that had more than one million users in 2023.

Among the platforms reported in the scientific literature focused on tourism, we have: TripAdvisor, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram (Werenowska & Rzepka, 2020), TikTok (Zhu et al., 2022) and Weibo (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019).

Social media platforms can be classified as: (1) Blogs; (2) Collaborative Projects; (3) Social Networking Sites; (4) Media Sharing Sites; and (5) Content Aggregator (Osei et al., 2018; Vidić, 2022). Table 1 shows definitions and examples for each type of social media.

Nevertheless, social networking sites are a type of social media (Osei et al., 2018) and differ from Social Network Analysis (SNA) — which is a technique from Graph Theory and it is capable of analyzing the structure of social grups such as, for example, the distance between actors inside a collaborative network (Racuero, 2017). Therefore, SNA alone is not part of the scope of this work.

Figure 1: Number of users per social media platform

Table 1: Classification of types of social media

Type	Definition	Example
Blogs	It is equivalent to a personal website on the Internet, in which the author can describe their experiences. In addition to personal use, organizations also use the format.	Blogger.com
Collaborative Projects	These are internet pages that allow content to be created simultaneously by several people, that is, many users can intervene on the same topic.	Wikipedia
Social Networking Sites	These are profiles of people or organizations that connect with other people or organizations mutually and share their information. They can send instant messages through these profiles, in addition to maintaining dialogue and relationships with people and organizations. The authors consider that games and social virtual worlds (such as Second Life) fall within this category.	Facebook e Linkedin
Media Sharing	These are profiles that share content. This can be photos, videos, music and texts. Does not require mutual connection between users.	Instagram e TikTok
Content Aggregator	These are applications that bring together content and allow easy distribution to users in a personalized way.	GoogleMaps

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Osei et al (2018).

2.2. Tourist Destination

The tourist destination can be understood as a physical space, with or without administrative or analytical delimitation, in which the visitor can stay overnight. It is an environment that brings together services, activities and experiences in the same place, with its own identity and which can influence its competitiveness in the market (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2019).

For Flores and Mendes (2014), the definition of TD is more complex and involves the integration of geographic, economic, sociocultural, psychological and management perspectives. In this way, they describe TD as:

> a system where the tourist will experience their experience, without borders, whose content is co-created, where there must be cooperation and networks of public and private companies, to create an experience of excellence (Flores & Mendes, 2014, p. 234)

Körössy, Holanda and Cordeiro (2022) report that the TD has a complex character and uses attractions, destination image, basic and tourist infrastructure.

Therefore, the definition of TD for this work is at the intersection of the concept pointed out by the authors Flores and Mendes (2014); Körössy, Holanda and Cordeiro (2022); and UNWTO (2019).

Therefore, the TD is considered an environment, delimited or not, in which tourists can take advantage of local attractions, as well as public and private services in order to enjoy unique tourist experiences.

3. Methodological Procedures

To achieve the objective of this work, a systematic review of the literature was carried out. This research has a narrow and specific scope, and it is covered only by a few dozen documents — 37 in total. (Donthu et al., 2021).

Data collection was carried out in the main Web of Science collection, a broad database (Visser et al., 2021) of articles published in multidisciplinary academic journals (Alryalat et al., 2019), with high impact and a larger temporal scope than the SCOPUS database (Granda-Orive; Alonso-Arroyo; Roig-Vázquez, 2011). The search was carried out, as shown in Figure 2, on August 26, 2022.

Figure 2: Search Strategy

Database	Web of Science Core Collection
Search Terms	(“Social Media” *OR* “Social Network*”) *AND* (“Tourist* Destination*”) Search fields: Title, Abstract, Keywords
Delimitation	No delimitation period

Source: Organized by the authors.

In the search process, the expressions “Social Media”, “Social Network*” and “Tourist* Destination*” were used in quotation marks to find the terms, together and in sequence, in the titles, abstracts and keywords. The asterisk symbol (*) included in the search terms aimed to find variations of words, such as the plural. No dates were set for the research, as the aim was to retrieve all the literature on the topic. In this way, 637 documents were initially found between the years 2010 and August 2022.

Of the total of these 637 documents, articles from events, conferences, book chapters, letters and all other types of documents that were not articles published in journals were disregarded. Next, the summary of each document was read to choose the articles that would make up the database for this article. Therefore, articles that were not part of the scope of this work were eliminated from the analyses, such as those that use the SNA technique (as explained in section 2.1 of this work) and did not deal with the subject of 'social media'.

Articles that only used social media as a source for data collection without analyzing its influences on user behavior were also disregarded. At the end of this selection, 134 articles remained.

From that point on, adapted content analysis procedures were carried out (Bardin, 2011). A pre-analysis of the 134 articles was then organized. The articles were located online and read in their entirety for the final selection that makes up the research. Then, articles that did not specifically address the subject “the influence of social media on choosing tourist destinations” were discarded, leaving 37 eligible articles on the topic for this study.

In November 2023 this work was updated so that all publications from the year 2022 were considered. The update followed the same process mentioned above, in addition to incorporating four more articles in this analysis, all referring to the year 2022. Therefore, the scope of this systematic review included 41 articles. Publications from the year 2023 were not considered, as the year in question was still ongoing at the time of the new search.

Subsequently, the research corpus was constituted through the selection of excerpts from each of the 41 articles that were aligned with the objective of this research. They were then categorized. This step was developed with the help of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

The categories were created inductively which, according to Creswell (2009) and Bengtsson (2016), emerge from the research corpus itself as the documents are analyzed. In this way, the categories of this work were created as subjects of interest emerged in the analyzed content. They are expressed in Table 2.

Finally, a qualitative interpretation of the data was carried out in order to identify patterns, trends and information relevant to the objective of this study. Therefore, the findings from the previous stages were related to each other, in order to create a dialogue between the authors found and an overview of

the state of literature on the topic, as indicated by Bengtsson (2016).

In addition to the aforementioned procedure, it was also possible to identify a quantitative overview containing: (1) the temporal evolution of the topic; (2) what types of studies are the most carried out; (3) which social media platforms are most covered; and (4) the nationalities of the users in the studies. All these results are expressed in the next section.

Table 2: Content analysis categories from emerging data

| Category	Meaning
Factors influencing SM	It was identified which factors in the SM, in their contents, contribute to the influence of SM in the choice of tourist destinations.
Content endorsers	The producers of content about tourist destinations were identified.
Information sources	We sought to identify which type of information source published by endorsers most influences the SM user when choosing a tourist destination.
Context	Refers to the environment in which social SM is used and where the user is located.
SM User Characteristics	We investigated the characteristics of SM users that make them susceptible to the influence of SM when choosing tourist destinations.

Source: Organized by the authors.

4. Results

The results were divided into two parts. The first presents the quantitative overview; the second, content analysis and qualitative overview.

4.1. Quantitative overview

The 41 articles considered for this research were published annually, as shown in Figure 3 below. It is observed that the theme researched in this work began in 2013, with only one publication. The continuous annual publications, however, only began in 2017. The final years (2020, 2021 and 2022) were the years with the greatest number of publications, and comprise around 83% of the total — an equivalent of 34 articles.

**Figure 3: Temporal evolution of publications.**
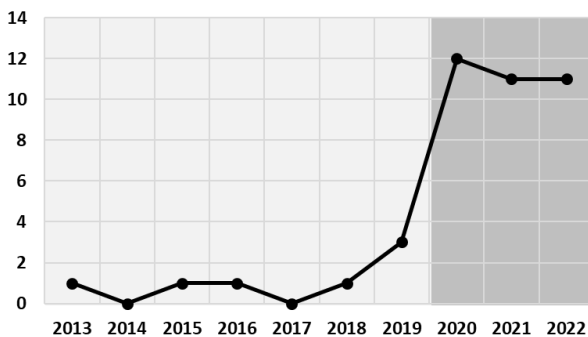
Source: Organized by the authors.

Regarding the methods used in the studies, it was identified that 63% of the studies have a purely quantitative approach, 12% only a qualitative approach and 10% a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative, simultaneously). This proportion can be seen in Figure 4.

As for social media platforms, 18 studies that identified them were found. It is noteworthy that Facebook — with six occurrences — is the most studied platform, with almost one study per year since 2016, and two studies in 2022. Instagram and TikTok are in second place, with five occurrences each; however, most of the studies are concentrated in more recent years (2020 and 2022). Figure 5 shows all MS platforms found in the studies, as well as their years and number of publications.

Figure 4: Proportion of methodological approach
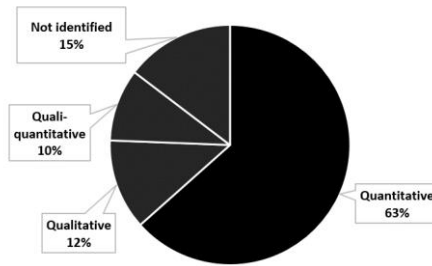

Source: Organized by the authors.

Figure 5: Social media platforms covered in the study
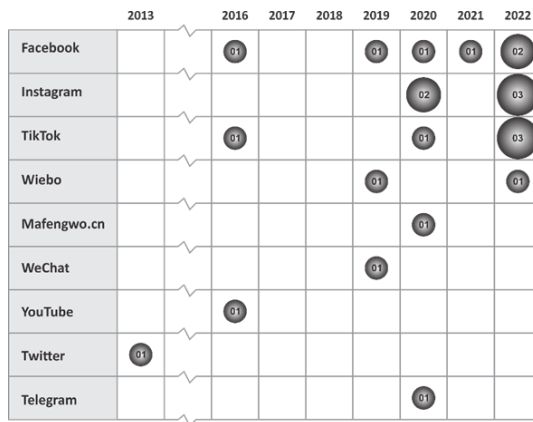
Source: Organized by the authors.

Regarding the most studied nationalities by the authors of the articles, only 26 studies explicitly declare them. Considering only these studies, 16 nationalities were found. The Chinese are present in 47.83% (11) of these studies; Americans, Romanians, Vietnamese and Indians each appear in 8.7% (2) of the studies. The other nationalities are only included in one study (4.35%) each. These proportions can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Studies with declared nationalities of SM users
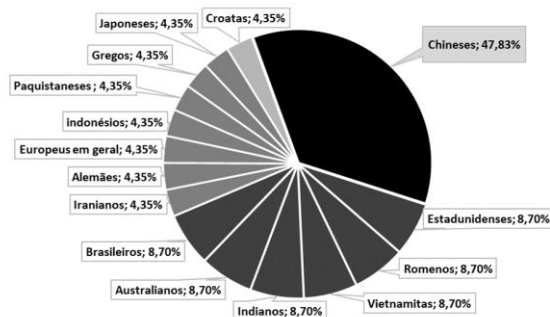
Source: Prepared by the authors.

It should be mentioned that the same article can cover more than one nationality, more than one resource and more than one SM platform — which is why the values add up to more than 100%.

4.2. Qualitative overview

In this subsection, the analyzes of each category are presented: Factors of influence on SM; Content endorsers; Information sources; Context; SM User Characteristics.

Factors influencing SM

Giang (2022), through a quantitative study that used 60 samples, sought to systematize and select the factors that influence North Americans to choose the Vietnamese city Ho Chi Minh (also known as Saigon) as a tourist destination. Among the factors analyzed, the author discovered that SM is one of the factors that directly affect the intention to visit the destination. It is, however, the weakest of them.

For the same author, the strongest factor is Image of the destination; however, a research by Koo et al. (2016), Ebrahimi, Hajmohammadi and Khajeheian (2020), Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2022) and Vidić (2022) shows that SM helps in building the image of the tourist destination in the mind of the social media user (SMU). This reinforces that SM is a fundamental factor in choosing a tourist destination, as it plays a dual role by directly influencing the choice of TD (Giang, 2022) and the formation of the image of TD in a cognitive and affective way in the mind of the SMU (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022; Vidić, 2022).

Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2022) evaluated the perception of 187 Iranian followers about the quality of the content of publications on the Instagram profile of an Iranian company. They identified that tourists use SM to learn about other people's travel experiences and idealize the image of the destination in their minds, so that they can choose where they will travel.

In this way, the quality of information published on social media is one of the factors that contribute to choosing a tourist destination (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022; Lian & Yu, 2019) because, with quality content, consumers have better experiences and feel safer when choosing a tourist destination (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022).

Sotiriadis, Van Zyl (2013) and Zheng, Luo and Shang (2022) specify that content published live on social media by TD endorsers must be attractive and trustworthy, and the endorser must demonstrate subject matter expertise so that the SM can positively influence the attitude and intention to visit the destination.

In the same sense, Tham, Mair, Croy (2020) , Prisgunanto (2020) and Wang et al. (2022) reinforce the need for credibility and trust in the information, so that SM can influence the user. Furthermore, the content must also use well-presented resources, such as beautiful images and well-structured texts (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019).

The study by Xu et al. (2021) on Gulangyu (China) showed that a resource of positive influence for TD choices and purchasing behavior on social media are reviews or comments from tourists in SM. In the same sense, Guo and Pesonen (2022) also identified, together with the Chinese community, that reviews on social media platforms about Santa Claus Village in Finland positively reinforced the image of the tourist destination, influencing tourists' desire to visit the place. This, however, will only occur if the SM user finds the comment useful (Tapanainen et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021), real (Lian & Yu, 2019; Liu et al., 2020) and well structured (Lian & Yu, 2019).

Moreover, the content of the news or comment must have a positive meaning (Nazir et al., 2022), and the endorser must demonstrate positive emotions (Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021), since negative content about the destination creates resistance to visiting it (Lian & Yu, 2019; Nazir et al., 2022).

Following the same idea of publishing content that involves positive emotions (Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021), authors Li et al. (2020) demonstrate, through analysis of short videos related to gastronomy from Chinese users on TikTok, that posts with emotional characteristics belonging to the tourist region in which they want to stimulate tourism, influence the perception of the place and contribute to the SM user to feel motivated to travel to the TD in question.

Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2022) and Zheng, Luo and Shang (2022) agree on the influence of content quality on the choice of TD. Filieri et al. (2021), however, conclude the opposite in their study with the Indonesian population.

In this way, quality content is considered to be content that has the following characteristics: attractive/engaging (Cham et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2022); reliable and credible (Cham et al., 2021; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020; Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013; Wang et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2022); if expresses the endorser's experience (Zheng et al., 2022); if is considered useful (Tapanainen et al., 2021); if it does not present purely commercial, but real aspects of TD (Cham et al., 2021; Lian & Yu, 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020); if it has a positive meaning (Lian & Yu, 2019;

Nazir et al., 2022); if expresses feelings and demonstrates real connections between the endorser and the TD (Li et al., 2020; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020) and, finally, if it presents well-organized texts and beautiful images (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019; Borrajo-Millán et al., 2021).

Variables of factors directly related to the tourist destination also influence the user's decision in relation to the TD. The literature includes: TD Health Security (Țuclea et al., 2020); climatic conditions (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020); travel costs (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019) and iconic architecture of the location (Vidić, 2022).

Climatic conditions generate a positive attitude among Australian MS users towards choosing TD, even when these conditions are not favorable to tourism. The content, however, must have credibility and express the reality of the region disclosed in the SM (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020).

Regarding the iconic architecture of the destination, Vidić (2022), when carrying out a quasi-experiment with 508 Croatians, realized that images that contained the unique architecture of the destination, and which were published on social media, aroused more intention to visit the place compared to images of landscapes or images of everyday life that did not make it possible to clearly identify which destination they belonged to. Therefore, it is understood that the images must explain the most exclusive attractions of the tourist destination.

Factors related to the characteristics of the social media platform are also capable of influencing the choice of tourist destination. The usability of the SM, for example, is a factor that positively influences the attitude of the SM user and the choice of TD. The characteristics that most favor the choice of TD are: usefulness, ease of use, interactivity and entertainment (Weng, 2021).

In addition to usability and interactivity, Wang et al. (2022) also mention informativeness as the ability of social media to inform about what is sought. Therefore, SM that capture users' attention, in order to increase their frequency and intensity of use, tend to influence the user more in choosing the TD (Stojanovic et al., 2018).

Table 3: Factors and variables influencing MS

Factors	Variables	Studies
Features of the destination	Image of the destination	(Giang, 2022); (Ebrahimi et al., 2020); (Koo et al., 2016).
	Climate conditions	(Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020).
	Travel costs	(Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019).
	Health security	(Țuclea et al., 2020).
	Exclusive architecture of the destination	(Vidić, 2022).
Quality Content (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022); (Lian & Yu, 2019)	Attractive / engaging	(Zheng et al., 2022); (Cham et al., 2021).
	Reliable / credibility	(Zheng et al., 2022); (Cham et al., 2021); (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020); (Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013); (Wang et al., 2022).
	Endorser experience	(Zheng et al., 2022).
	Content usefulness	(Tapanainen et al., 2021); (Xu et al., 2021).
	Non-commercial / real content	(Cham et al., 2021); (Liu et al., 2020); (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020); (Lian & Yu, 2019).
	Positive content	(Nazir et al., 2022); (Lian & Yu, 2019).
	Content with feelings and emotional connection	(Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021); (Li et al., 2020).
	Beautiful words and Images	(Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019).
Usability	Utility of SM	(Weng, 2021); (Wang et al., 2022).
	SM ease of use	(Weng, 2021).
	MS interactivity	(Weng, 2021); (Wang et al., 2022).
	MS entertainment	(Weng, 2021).
	Frequency and intensity of use	(Stojanovic et al., 2018).
	Informativeness	(Wang et al., 2022).
electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)	-	(Tapanainen et al., 2021); (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2022); (Gómez & Pérez, 2022).

Source: Prepared by the authors..

Tapanainen, Dao and Nguyen (2021) , Villacé-Molinero et al. (2022) and Arasli; Abdullahi; Gunay (2021) found that publishing and sharing content on social media causes the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) effect, which is capable of influencing the choice of a tourist destination. The first study, carried out with Vietnamese people, identified that depending on the user's personality, eWOM can be more or less effective.

Villacé-Molinero et al. (2022), when carrying out a study on the intention to visit Spain, discovered that Europeans (non-Spanish) feel more influenced by the eWOM present in SM when choosing Spain as a tourist destination. For Arasli et al. (2021), in turn, they were able to intervene in the intention of tourists using SM to visit and revisit a Nigerian festival such as TD.

For the authors Gómez and Pérez (2022), social media, through eWOM, also has the ability to reinforce the loyalty brand of the tourist destination, making tourists intend to visit it. Finally, Table 3 summarizes the factors and variables, as well as the studies that address them.

Endorser

Yang et al. (2022) aimed to identify the characteristics of celebrity endorsers of a tourist destination on social media and the factors that influence the effectiveness of the endorsement when it uses short travel videos in the SM. The endorser, in this specific study by Yang et al. (2022), is the celebrity Ding Zhen, a Chinese-Tibetan singer with a presence on the media-sharing app TikTok (also known in China by the names Douyin and Musical.ly). The quali-quanti study showed that celebrities have a different and prominent role in relation to ordinary users on social media. This gives credibility to the celebrity and positively affects the endorsement or recommendation of the tourist destination in the SM. Another point in evidence is the emotional connection between the celebrity and the destination, a fundamental factor that affects the endorsement of the destination, that is, when the celebrity demonstrates some emotional involvement with the place on social media, SM users who watch it tend to create connections with the destination and consider it as a potential to be visited.

The experiment by Zhu et al. (2022) also addressed the use of celebrities as endorsers of tourist destinations in China through short videos on the social media TikTok. The authors identified that associating the image of a celebrity with a tourist destination, using SM, has the capacity to generate a feeling of presence and telepresence in the celebrity's fans, even if they have never been to the Chinese city indicated in the SM. According to the same authors, these feelings increase followers' pleasure and identification with the endorsed destination, influencing their intention to choose the tourist destination recommended by the celebrity in SM.

Another study that addresses celebrity endorsement of tourist destinations in SM is that by Zheng, Luo and Shang (2022). In it, the authors examine the parasocial relationship (lasting and illusory intimacy), mediated by SM, between fan and celebrity. They discovered that a famous person, when endorsing or recommending a tourist destination in a SM, can positively influence the consumer's attitude towards the intention to visit the endorsed place, that is, it makes the consumer to judge whether choosing or visiting the tourist destination from endorsement in the SM.

The authors (Pop et al., 2022) examined the effect of digital influencer trust on the SM users when endorsing a tourist destination at each stage of the journey of 162 Romanian traveling customers, consisting of: (1) desire; (2) information search; (3) evaluation of alternatives; (4) purchasing decisions; and (5) satisfaction and sharing of experiences.

The results indicate that there is a positive and direct relationship at each stage between trust in the digital influencer, the desire to travel and the consumer's information search behavior. In this way, the study showed that the SM had the ability to persuade its users' trust and decision to choose a tourist destination, as it was able to influence the stage of desire and search for tourist destinations. Another point to be highlighted is the fact that the trust that the consumer has in the digital influencer was the key factor in the influence of the SM throughout the planning of their trip (Pop et al., 2022) .

The government, destination page managers (DMO) (Cham et al., 2021; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020; Vidić, 2022), companies (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022; Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021) and ordinary users, or unknown people (Cham et al., 2021; Nur'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020), can also be seen as endorsers of tourist destinations, since they advertise in their social media information about their TD, in an attempt to attract tourists, as was the case in Malaysia (Cham et al., 2021) and Barcelona (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019), which promoted tourism to the Chinese.

Other endorsers present on social media are family, friends and other users close to the MS user (Latif et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Nur'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021). Instagram posts from this group of endorsers more strongly stimulated the decision to travel of Indonesian Millennial users — those born after the early 1980s until the end of the century — than ordinary unknown users (Nur 'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021).

Furthermore, the trigger for this desire to travel and choice of the exactly the same TD as a friend or loved one is related to the expression "Benign Envy" — one in which the spectator is inspired to achieve a similar result, without taking away the achievements of others. This desire is also related to the feeling of belonging to a group and the construction of an online social identity, similar to the group to which one belongs — that is, wanting to do what the group of friends does (Latif et al., 2020) .

The study by Schoner-Schatz, Hofmann, Stokburger-Sauer (2021) can contribute to the way in which celebrities and other endorsers of tourist destinations act on social media, since the authors report that MS users feel more interested in endorsers who demonstrate positive emotions and express joy through "smiling" posts. In this way, it can be highlighted that the endorsers of tourist destinations are those presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Types of tourist destination endorsers

Types of Endorsers	Studies
Celebrities	(Yang et al., 2022); (Zhu et al., 2022).
Digital influencer	(Pop et al., 2022).
Company or Social Media Profile Managers (SMPM)	(Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022); (Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021); (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020).
Government	(Cham et al., 2021); (Vidić, 2022).
Distant common user (unknown people)	(Cham et al., 2021); (Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021); (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020); (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019); (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015).
Nearby common user (family, friends and acquaintances)	(Nur'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021); (Latif et al., 2020).

Source: Organized by the authors.

Source of information

Pop et al. (2022) and Schoner-Schatz, Hofmann and Stokburger-Sauer (2021) agree that content generated by ordinary users is less interesting and influences less the choice of tourist destination. Schoner-Schatz, Hofmann and Stokburger-Sauer (2021) also add that people who seek information about TD in SM consider the destination's official profiles and pages to be safer and more credible.

In the opposite direction, Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) and Scholl-Grissemann, Peters and Teichmann, (2020) reported that content generated by users has greater credibility and induces SM users to behave in favor of TD.

Cham et al. (2021) also identified that tourists in the health segment prefer content generated by common users, since content generated by the supplier (in this case, the Malaysian government) has a commercial aspect, aimed at sales and is not very engaging and little personalized.

Although there are studies that indicate that content generated by users is more influential, and others that indicate that content generated by other sources are considered better, there is also a study that reports that both are able to influence the SM user (Alonso- Almeida et al., 2019), as well as those who conclude that the source is not relevant to the choice of TD, as they all influence the same intensity (Lian & Yu, 2019; Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013).

Context

Villacé-Molinero et al. (2022), when seeking to propose an expanded model of the Theory of Planned Behavior — originally proposed by Ajzen (1985; 1991) to predict the intention to choose Spain as a tourist destination — identified that each cultural context in which the participant lives was influenced by different variables and intensities.

The variables attitude, subjective norms, perception of control, loyalty and perceived risk and eWOM in SM influence Germans' intention to travel. The British, in turn, are more likely to intend to travel through the traditional variables of the original model, which are: attitude, perception of control and subjective norms. For Europeans, except Spaniards, in addition to the three traditional variables in the model, the intention to visit a destination was also influenced by loyalty and eWOM on social media (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2022).

It is worth noting that, despite having nationalities being influenced by the same variable — as in the case of eWOM in SM for Germans and Europeans —, the media influences in different intensities. For Europeans, eWOM was the biggest influencer on travel intention, while for Germans, it was the weakest (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2022).

Koo et al. (2016) also highlighted that people in different sociocultural contexts and speakers of different languages interested in traveling to South Korea are influenced by SM to different intensities. They demonstrated that, (1) compared to the influence of social media, the English-speaking group is more influenceable than the Chinese and Japanese groups, and (2) Chinese-speaking people are more influenced by social media than their counterparts (people who speak Japanese).

Another study (Lima et al., 2020) involving the context, but from an emerging country — in this case, Brazil —, SM has the ability to directly influence the decision to choose a tourist destination, since Brazilians seek decisions based on information and images published in SM, in order to minimize their risk when choosing the TD. The SM, however, will not influence the formation of the TD's image in the user's mind.

The degree of influence of SM was also studied by Katsikari et al. (2020) and Tham, Mair and Croy (2020). Katsikari et al. (2020) identified that, depending on the context in which the SM user finds themselves, they will be impacted by different content published on the SM. For example, users in the "knowledge/intellectual" segment appear to consider SM content related to the culture and history of a destination as more attractive, and may be more influenced by it, than a user who is immersed in the "sun and beach" segment.

Tham, Mair and Croy (2020) concluded that the context affects the SM user. In the case of users highly influenced by SM, three fundamental conditions must exist in the context of the SM user. They are: (1) user with high social media engagement/involvement; (2) need to seek new destinations and experiences in MS; and (3) trips with a high level of planning complexity associated with choosing the destination. In this last condition, SM increased the confidence and practicality of accessing the destination.

It is worth noting that the more engaged or involved the SM user is with their travel planning, the greater the influence of SM on their decision to choose the TD (Țuclea et al., 2020).

When research participants felt in more comfortable travel decision contexts — for example, on a low complexity trip, short trips or trips to visit friends and/or family, or even in places when not much expense is involved — , SM exerted low influence (Tham et al., 2020).

In the social context among SM users, it is observed that users choose certain tourist destinations not only because they have consumed their content in SM, but also so that they can generate content that will be accepted and legitimized by their online relationship network. Therefore, they opt for a TD that their online relationship network approves of. This means that the choice of tourist destination depends on the context of the relationship network in the SM (Brito & Freitas, 2019).

Contexts such as the COVID-19 pandemic, in which people are more likely to consume content on SM (Rather, 2021) and high engagement (Tham et al., 2020) reinforce the incentive to revisit a tourist destination (Rather, 2021; Tham et al., 2020).

Social Media User Characteristics

The characteristics of SM users are important key factors in understanding the influence of SM on the choice of tourist destinations. Depending on the user's characteristics, they will be more or less affected (Tapanainen et al., 2021).

The research by Tapanainen, Dao and Nguyen (2021) concluded that people with characteristics of extroversion, agreeableness and imagination are more susceptible to using information in SM and being influenced by it. Conscientious and neurotic people were not influenced.

For Koo et al. (2016), Villacé-Molinero et al. (2022), the user's nationality and age group induce the result of the SM influence (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015; Nur'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021; Pop et al., 2022).

Studies show that SM is the main influence on the travel decision of Generation Y (or Millennials), (Nur'afifah & Prihantoro, 2021; Werenowska & Rzepka, 2020) and Generation Z (those born between the end of the 1990s and 2010). According to Nur'afifah and Prihantoro (2021), both generations seek, collect and disseminate information and experiences on their travels. However, Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) highlight that the younger the social media user is, the more influenced by travel content they will be.

A second characteristic highlighted by Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) is education. The authors concluded that the less educated the user is, the more influenced by social media they will be when choosing a tourist destination.

The physical condition of the SM user is also a characteristic that makes them more or less susceptible to social media interference, since there is a greater correlation between the use of SM and the impact on the choice of TD by tourists with disabilities or reduced mobility (PwDMr) than by

tourists without disabilities, which demonstrates the difference in profile of the PwDMr tourist segment (Ferst et al., 2020).

The psychological conditions of the SM user will also influence them in choosing a tourist destination, as the SM user not only uses the media to seek information about destinations and influence themselves, but also uses it to seek approval from their network of relationships around the world, by publishing content in the destination that their network would approve (Brito & Freitas, 2019) .

According to the authors Koo et al. (2016), Stojanovic, Andreu and Curras-Perez (2018), users prone to a high intensity use of SM are more susceptible to being influenced by TD content. The authors also emphasize that the greater the frequency and intensity of SM use, the more influenced the user may be.

The frequency and intensity of SM use leads to changing the cognitive image of the destination (which is only related to knowledge about the destination) in the SM user's mind and can change the affective image of the destination (internalized and which has meaning to the own SM user). The MS user will only consider recommending this destination to third parties if the affective image created in their mind is positive. Therefore, the study indicates that social media can influence the choice and recommendations of TD (Stojanovic et al., 2018).

5. Analysis of results

5.1. Analysis of quantitative results

The topic addressed here is relatively new, and began in the last 10 years. It is, however, a field that has aroused the interest of researchers in the last three years, as more than 80% of publications are between 2021 and 2023. The studies are predominantly quantitative and the most studied nationality is Chinese.

The number of studies shows a possible increase in the area as a reflection of the popularization of social media. These have expanded their base of new users annually, as demonstrated in the report by Kemp (2023) .

The most studied social media platform over the years has been Facebook; however, Instagram and TikTok appear with more recent studies. The absence of platforms mentioned in the documents studied in this research focused on tourism, such as, for example, TripAdvisor. This may also be a social reflection, since the most studied SM platforms are those that contain the most users, as shown by Kemp (2023).

It is expected that users will use more general platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok) to choose tourist destinations, and specialized platforms (TripAdvisor) to decide what to do and where to consume at the destination.

5.2. Analysis of qualitative results

From the qualitative results found, it is observed that the characteristics of the place to be promoted are a stimulus for choosing the TD. According to studies, the content that most attracts the user's attention and is decisive for choosing the TD are: disclosure about the health safety of the TD (Ţuclea et al., 2020); climatic conditions (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2020); travel costs (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019); iconic architecture of the destination (Vidić, 2022) and the image of the destination. Thus, these contents can be understood as general characteristics that will help the user form their opinion about the region (Ebrahimi et al., 2020; Giang, 2022; Koo et al., 2016) .

Regarding the "content quality" factor, it can be seen that there is a divergence between the authors. While Filieri et al. (2021) report that the quality of content published in the SM does not influence the choice of TD. Other works reinforce the need for quality content (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022; Lian & Yu, 2019) and provide, also, guidelines to achieve this quality, such as, for example, creating attractive content and other factors expressed in Table 3.

Regarding endorsers, they are sources of information and carriers of content that will be delivered to users. The way they manifest themselves in SM is capable of stimulating or inhibiting the consumption of tourist destinations. However, there is still no consensus on which of these endorsers are capable of more strongly encouraging the consumption of tourist destinations in SM, as seen in the works of Alonso-Almeida, Borrajo-Millán and Yi (2019), Cham et al. (2021), Lian and Yu (2019), Lima, Mainardes and Rodeigues (2020), Marchiori and Cantoni (2015), Pop et al. (2022), Scholl-Griessemann, Peters and Teichmann (2020) and Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013). What is suggested by the literature is that endorsers act in a positive, smiling way and demonstrate emotional connections with the destination (Schoner-Schatz et al., 2021).

These differences in conclusions regarding the quality and sources of information may have occurred due to the different contexts used in each research, as according to the literature (Katsikari et al., 2020; Koo et al., 2016; Lima et al., 2020 ; Rather, 2021; Tham et al., 2020; Țuclea et al., 2020; Villacé-Molinero et al., 2022), different contexts impact social media stimulation in consumer decision-making. The following contexts were found in the literature: sociocultural, health, tourist segment and context focused on the characteristics of the trip.

Just as context modulates the degree of influence of SM, user characteristics do as well. For example, the culture that is part of the user is a characteristic of the user that can be considered as a predictor of the degree of influence of the SM in choosing the TD. People from different countries can be influenced by different factors, as demonstrated in the study by Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2022), Zheng, Luo and Shang (2022) and Filieri et al. (2021). The characteristics of users found in the literature were: sociocultural, personality, psychological, physical, generational and education.

Another factor to consider as an influence is the usability of the social media platform. It is essential that those responsible for the tourist destination choose SM platforms that offer technology capable of providing the user with utility, ease of use, interactivity and entertainment, as these have direct effects on the tourist's willingness to choose the tourist destination (Weng, 2021).

In addition, eWOM can be considered as one of the factors influencing SM when choosing a TD; however, it will only exist if the content is considered to be of quality and if messages are shared by users.

6. Proposition

Based on the results and analysis, a visual graphic model called "Social Media Azevedo-Ferreira Model" is proposed and represented in Figure 7. The model aims to bring together all the characteristics of social media and the actors found in the scientific literature present in this work. It is worth noting that none of the works analyzed proposed or cited graphic models regarding social media and tourist destinations.

Figure 7: "Social Media Azevedo-Ferreira Model"
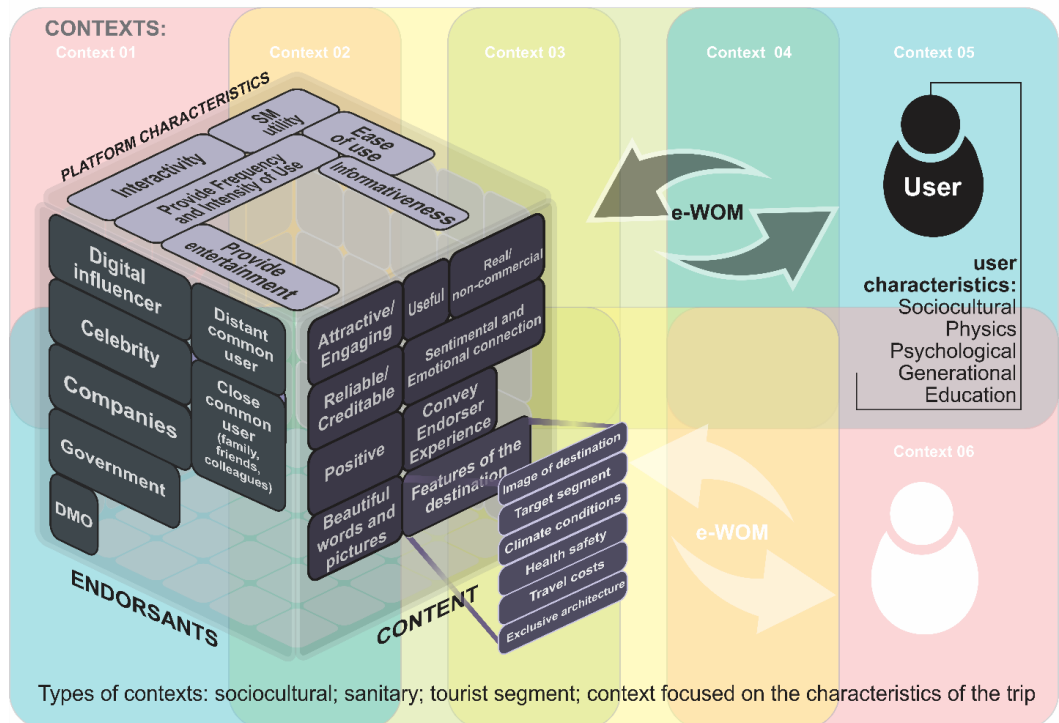
Source: Organized by the authors.

The "Social Media Azevedo-Ferreira Model" contains a cube that represents the various faces of SM studied to choose the tourist destination. One side is dedicated to endorsers of tourist destinations; the top side represents the usability of the platform and shows the necessary characteristics of a good social media for choosing a tourist destination.

The third side represents the content published on social media and highlights the variables that are necessary for quality content capable of generating eWOM and influencing the user in choosing the TD, in addition to highlighting the characteristics of the tourist destination that users of SM are looking for.

It is worth noting that the representation of the cube under construction alludes to the possibilities of changes, inclusions and exclusions of new items as the SM evolves, which means that it is expandable.

It also represents the user, with their different characteristics, influencing and being influenced by social media through eWOM. Finally, the different rectangles at the bottom of the image represent the different contexts in which social media and users are located.

7. Conclusions, contributions and limitations

There was a significant increase in publications in the last three years — 2020, 2021 and 2022. From the systematic review with content analysis, it was concluded that the factors present in social media that can influence the choice of destination tourism are: propagation of destination characteristics; content quality; SM usability; and eWOM. However, the work carried out in different contexts and with different profiles of people can present varying results. This indicates that the context and characteristics of users must be taken into account when carrying out new studies.

According to the findings, it can be understood that there are three major classifications of factors that influence SM users: (1) 'influence factors', which are quality content, created by endorsers, which propagate the characteristics of the destination through eWOM; (2) 'facilitating factors', such as the usability of social media platforms that provides ease, frequency and intensity of use of the SM; and, finally, (3) 'modulating factors' — user characteristics and context —, which will determine the degree to which social media will influence the choice of a tourist destination.

Furthermore, it appears that there is still no universal law on the influence of SM on the choice of TD, which reveals the need for new studies. Another point that highlights this need is the fact that there is little research with an emphasis on Latin America. For example, only two studies in the database on the subject involved Brazilians. In the case of Europeans, only one study was found.

In this way, it is considered that this work answered its research question and achieved its general objective, which was to analyze the scientific production regarding works that dealt with the influence of social media on the choice of tourist destinations.

Contributions to academia

This study highlighted gaps in the science about the influence of SM on the choice of TD, in addition to displaying the need for new studies in the area, considering different contexts and types of users. It was also able to identify the influencing factors present in SM and its variables.

The "Social Media Azevedo-Ferreira Model" was proposed — a flexible model capable of being shaped as science advances —, which organizes the factors and variables present in social media which are capable of influencing the choice of TD.

Contributions to the tourist market

The factors found provide an indication of which variables tourist destinations must observe to produce quality content for the dissemination of TD in SM. In general, content about TD must be real, attractive, express regional culture and generate connections between user and TD. Furthermore, it must highlight the characteristics of the place, especially health, climate and costs.

Destination managers, therefore, must know their target audience and the context in which they operate. They should also think about the types of endorsers who will promote the TD, since there is no unanimity about which endorser can best persuade the user. It is suggested that they use different types of endorsers (such as celebrities and digital influencers) and that they also encourage common users to generate content about the destination..

Limitations and propositions for new studies

The limitation of this work lies in the use of a single data source, leaving its results restricted to it. Therefore, it is suggested for new studies to use other databases, such as SCOPUS.

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