

EVOLUTION OF THE PRESENCE AND ENGAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL SOCIAL NETWORKS IN PROMOTING TOURISM IN SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

The recent growth in scale and relevance of social networks has generated new possibilities for communication and interaction with and among their users in the tourism sector. As Spain is among the world's top tourism destinations, it is valuable to study its presence and engagement with users of official social networks. These social networks are used to promote Spain as a tourist destination. This study's methodology focused on measuring a series of indicators of destination performance through the online analysis tool 'Fanpage Karma'. Data were obtained for each of the last four full years (2015 to 2018), with the purpose of deepening understanding of destination performance, including its evolution. The findings show that Facebook's importance increasingly declined, despite maintaining a large number of followers, it has seen reduced publications and, above all, less interactions with users. By contrast, Instagram has experienced continuous growth in promoting Spain as a tourist destination, demonstrating increasing levels of interaction with potential travellers. Implications for academia and industry are drawn from the findings.

Keywords: Social Networks, Engagement, Tourism, Spain.

JEL Classification: M31

1. INTRODUCTION

Information communication technologies (ICT) and the Internet have changed how companies and tourist destinations approach the design, marketing, and communication of their products, just as the ways that tourists reserve and live their tourist experiences have changed (Munar, 2012). The scenario created by the Internet and ICT has undoubtedly favoured the incorporation of various resources and processes that generate information on tourist consumption preferences, enabling countries and operators to more effectively respond to revealed needs and, thereby, improve the competitiveness of destinations' tourism offering (Arroyo, 2016).

Tourism has been potentiated with the social web since it has facilitated the use of social media involving online communication platforms where the content is created by users themselves, facilitating aspects such as editing, publication, and exchange of information (Perdomo Castellano et al., 2014). Blogs, social networks, recommendation systems, content integration, audio, and video contribute to the process of anticipation, experience, and

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recreation of a tourist trip (Caro et al., 2015). Organisations can use these online channels to improve user experiences, leading ultimately to the achievement of long-term customer loyalty (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Leva & Ziliani, 2018).

In this relatively new reality of users having access to huge amounts of information, the phenomenon of Web 2.0 offers new channels for user interaction (Domínguez Vila & Araujo Vila, 2012). According to Martínez (2013), social media entails users becoming part of the web, rather than merely spectators who receive information. Social media offers consumers the opportunity to share opinions, recommendations, and experiences with other users through comments, images, or videos, which can be viewed and discussed among them. Consequently, many tourism companies have launched to try it, pursuing the opportunity to both analyse information and communicate with consumers, thus tailoring sales promotion to create customer-focused messages.

Given this environment, Becerra & Badrinarayanan (2013) determine that members of a brand's online community contribute to a greater extent to disseminating information about that brand. In addition, the characteristics of the tourism sector make its impact through social media especially important: as a service sector, it sells intangible products that are characteristically inseparable, perishable, and heterogeneous, making the communication process a vital element of the offering (Chen & Wu, 2019). Therefore, it is of great interest to understand how users intervene in brands' online communities and to discover what benefits they perceive. In this sense, it is essential to analyse the engagement of consumers. Consumer engagement towards a tourist destination adds value as it is based on increased interactivity and enhanced relations with the consumer (Vivek et al., 2014).

The document presents the following structure: first, the introduction and the objectives of the study are specified. Secondly, the most significant aspects of the theoretical framework regarding the importance of the tourism sector in Spain, involvement of social networks and the concept of engagement are explored. Third, the methodology is presented. Fourth, the conclusions, limitations and future research lines are discussed.

2. OBJECTIVE

This study's general objective is to identify how Spain engages as a tourist destination via four official social networks through presence and engagement, as measured through a series of performance indicators provided by the online analysis tool 'Fanpage Karma'. Spain is one of the most important tourism destinations in the world, but there is a lack of studies that provide insights and knowledge about social networks for tourism promotion are used. Thus, three specific objectives were set:

Objective 1: Determine the number of followers on the four official social networks of Spain as a tourist destination.

Objective 2: Establish whether any social network stands out in terms of the number of publications.

Objective 3: Test whether engagement has allowed more interactions on each social network.

Data were obtained for each of the last four full years, from 2015 to 2018, making it possible to discern the evolution of the results. The public body in charge of managing the official social networks is TURESPAÑA: attached to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism through the Secretary of State for Tourism, it is responsible for marketing Spain as a travel destination around the world (TURESPAÑA, 2019).

3. SPAIN'S TOURISM SECTOR

The tourism sector makes a fundamental contribution to the overall Spanish economy. According to the annual report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2019), tourism in Spain contributed 178 billion euros to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, accounting for 14.6% of total GDP, which was 2.4% higher than in 2017. This study forecasts that tourism's total contribution to Spanish GDP will increase by 2.8% in 2019 and by an annual average of 2.3% until 2028. In addition, the total contribution of tourism to the world economy in 2018 amounted to 8.3 trillion dollars (6.7 trillion euros), accounting for 10.4% of global GDP, and a 4.6% increase on the 2017 level.

The tourism industry has also become a fundamental source of employment in Spain. Tourism employment is defined as the number of jobs generated by or attributable to visitors' consumption of the goods and services produced by that industry (Perona et al., 2016). A study published by the Survey of Active Population (INE, 2019a) indicates that in Q1 of 2018, the tourism sector had 2,854,775 active workers (employed and unemployed), which was 1.9% more than in Q1 of 2017. Since 2014, employment linked to tourism activities has grown annually; in 2018, 2,420,680 were employed in the tourism sector, which was 89,874 (or 3.6%) higher than in 2017. Those employed in the tourism sector accounted for 12.8% of total employment in the Spanish economy. The percentage of unemployed over assets in tourism activities has also improved, decreasing from 16.6% in 2017 to 15.2% in 2018.

In 2018, tourism sector employment increased across all branches of tourism activities: compared to the same period in 2017, employment in accommodation services, food and beverage services, transportation and travel, and other tourism activities respectively increased by 1.6%, 5.9%, 0.7%, and 2.6%, contributing to an overall increase of 4.9%.

The importance of the Spanish tourism sector as a key pillar in national economic growth is reinforced by the fact that Spain is among the world's most popular tourist destinations (Cuadrado Roura & López Morales, 2015). According to provisional data from the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda (2019), Spain was behind only France in terms of the most international tourist arrivals with more than 82 million in 2018, representing an increase of 0.9% on 2017 (Table 1).

Table 1. Countries with the most international tourist arrivals (in millions of people) from 2014-2018

	2015	2016	2017	2018
1. France	84.5	82.6	89.3	96.18
2. Spain	68.2	75.3	82.0	82.74
3. USA	77.5	75.9	72.9	77.93
4. China	56.9	59.3	59.3	60.66
5. Italy	50.7	52.4	57.5	60.32
9. Turkey	39.5	30.3	39.2	48.06
6. Germany	35	35.6	37.5	38.96
8. Thailand	32.1	32.6	35.1	37.87
7. United Kingdom	34.4	35.6	38.2	36.18
10. Russia	31.3	24.6	23.9	24.23

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda (2019)

According to this study, Spain also broke the record for total expenditure by tourists, which reached 89.856 billion euros. In this sense, the average expenditure per tourist grew by 3.1% in 2018, while, in absolute terms, each tourist spent an average of 1,094 euros during their stay in Spain. The international tourists visiting Spanish destinations in 2018 came mostly from three countries: the UK (18.5 million), Germany (11.4 million), and France (11.3 million) (INE, 2019b). In this scenario, destination managers face a difficult task in promoting themselves in this market. One way to reach tourists is through consumer engagement.

4. SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

Over the past decade, researchers have shown a growing interest in the role of social networks in the tourism field. The literature review conducted suggests that social media platforms play an important role in many tourism issues, especially consumer behavior (information search and decision making), marketing and communication, tourist interaction and even business process management (Leung et al., 2013; Gretzel & Yoo, 2013; Law et al., 2014; Bilgihan et al., 2016).

According to Xiang & Gretzel (2010), web 2.0 has been the beginning of two fundamental trends: the emergence of social media and the increase of information generated. These are two elements that are closely linked, since the web 2.0 enabled the information coming from the social networks and tourism sector during user's engagement to increase, either due to visitors' interactions or because of the companies responsible for managing tourist destinations content (Hudson & Thal, 2013; Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013).

The information shared on social media is recognised by academia and industry as a fundamental facilitator of travel scheduling, which is capable of influencing the decision-making of potential tourists (Kang & Schuett, 2013). However, these tourists are also often influenced by the experiences and opinions of third parties when making decisions regarding their trip (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). For these reasons, social media has transformed the way users design and buy their trips. The social networks have diminished the importance of the *web of the past* (i.e., web 1.0), since in quantitative and qualitative terms, the information available has improved considerably due to users' sharing their own experiences.

The destination image and the online reputation in the field of tourism is in general of vital importance, since the products offered are intangible and cannot be evaluated before consumption. This makes the experience of the other users to be of great value for the purchase decision (Lim, 2010). Various studies such as Inversini et al. (2010) and Liu & Park (2015) clarify the importance of social networks for the online reputation, because users become creators and influencers of the information and content they share. Blogs, reviews, ratings, forums, are common elements of this online reputation process. For these social media tools, collaboration, exchange and user-generated content are critical factors for any marketing manager. For instance, users opinions can be converted into product or service prescriptions. This in turn transformed into a viral marketing campaigns, influencing in a decisive way the decision-making process and the value of the shared online content, generating great value for the construction and empowerment of positive online reputation.

The destination image and the online reputation are metrics that make sense due to the huge amount of content generated by online users in social networks. Moreover, the content generated by users allows bi-directional communication on social media and as such this content is gaining special relevance in the tourism sector. Due to the characteristics of the services (intangibility, inseparability, perishability and heterogeneity) the destination image and the online reputation are considered crucial. Thus, it is possible to argue that the

construction of an online reputation in social media can be managed by organizations in a vital way to attract more tourists. In addition, destination managers must be aware that marketing in the tourism sector and social networks must take into account the growing number of users, diversity of opinions and influencers, factors that increase the difficulty to succeed in this environment.

Nevertheless, social media is an important source of information that can be used for the development of a series of business strategies in the tourism sector, including the improvement of customer satisfaction through the improvement of the customer service, visitor experience, product image and reputation.

One of the main functions of social media is to establish an interactive communication channel, which is mutually beneficial for all the parties involved, since it offers a way for users (i.e., tourists) to express their wishes, while at the same time provides tourism service providers an opportunity to obtain customer feedback (Leung et al., 2013; Oz, 2015). These platforms have also been recognized as knowledge exchange networks because they allow tourists to connect, share and interact with others (Oz, 2015).

For this reason, social networks, such as interactive platforms, are attracting the attention of the tourism industry, leading to the extensive use of social media with an influential impact on the marketing (strategic and operational) management functions (Law et al., 2014). The characteristics of the tourism sector, in general, and the hotel sector, in particular, make the impact of social media greater. The tourism sector like any service sector sells intangible products, hence the communication process is a vital element of the offer side. For this reason, the use of social media permits new communication possibilities and has provided a substantial impact on tourism demand and supply (María-Dolores et al., 2013).

An essential aspect in social media is the KPIs (key performance indicator) measurement by companies or company brands. For them, the creation of a set of unique indicators and metrics is needed to measure the campaigns impact on users and to determine how successful the brand efforts are on the social web. These two examples can also serve as a competitive analysis (González Fernández-Villavicencio, 2016).

Key performance indicators are metrics used to quantify objectives that reflect the performance of an organization. The act of monitoring the key performance indicators in real time is known as *business activity monitoring*. KPIs are communication vehicles and are usually tied to the strategy of the organization. For Castelló Martínez (2012) KPI is a key performance indicator, a variable that is linked to an objective in social media with the purpose of monitoring the progress status or degree of compliance with the objective. The KPIs provide inputs on how to energize the brand's channels in social networks and will give clues about how to continue applying the strategy.

In this context, this study will take into consideration the use of a series of indicators derived from the PRGS model that will measure the presence (number of followers and publications) and the engagement of Spain as a tourist destination in social networks. This approach focuses on the analysis of social media interactions between a brand and its fans / followers and then explores how relationships can be more fruitful (Geho & Dangelo, 2012). Due to the importance of the concept of engagement in social networks this concept will be studied in the next section.

5. ENGAGEMENT

Researchers have focused on identifying brand engagement, exploring the relationships between brands, consumers, and social networks (Schau et al., 2009; Oh et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018), including some studies focusing specifically on the tourism sector (Harrigan et al.,

2017; Mariani et al., 2018). The literature recognises customer engagement as a predictor of consumer behaviour, including brand loyalty (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Hapsari et al., 2017).

In essence, the concept of engagement is related to participation and interactivity, two factors that reflect consumers' attention to or interest in a brand or company, and considers cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects (Brodie et al., 2013; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Greater client engagement to the brand also positively influences results, including sales growth, cost reductions, or a greater client contribution to collaborative product development (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2010; Kumar et al., 2017). However, despite the evident interest in client engagement, empirical research has not yet advanced sufficiently, thus limiting understanding of the concept and its quantification (Verhoef et al., 2010; Bolton, 2011).

Among the main definitions of customer engagement are the following:

- The intensity of individual participation in and connection with an organisation's offering and/or activities that the consumer and the organisation start (Vivek et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2018).
- The cognitive and affective engagement of the client to the brand, characterised by dimensions such as knowledge of and satisfaction with the brand (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017).
- The outcome of consumer experiences in interacting with the brand, including via ICT and social networks (Sashi, 2012; Lee et al., 2018).
- A psychological state produced by the client's interaction with the brand through a specific service (Brodie et al., 2013).

Client engagement to a brand appears to be multidimensional, combining elements such as attention, dialogue, interaction, emotions, and sensory pleasure (Gambetti et al., 2012). Client engagement behaviours go beyond purchases and are defined as manifestations of a client's behaviour towards a brand or company (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Client engagement is a motivational state resulting from the client's experiences in interacting with an agent/object (e.g. a brand). The concept comprises cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, and entails a state of being involved or absorbed in something, generating consequences such as feeling a special attraction.

Researchers have highlighted the multidimensional aspects of client engagement and the variables that influence it. Hollebeek (2011), Pansari & Kumar (2017), and Brodie et al. (2013) have revealed three dimensions: immersion; passion, and interaction (availability of spending time with a brand). In this sense, they maintain that the client's engagement has cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Calder et al. (2009) suggest two types of engagement online: personal and social. The first is relevant to newspapers, assuming ideas such as learning or stimulation. The second is more relevant to social networks and involves participation with other users.

Therefore, the emergence of the Internet and social networks has allowed new marketing strategies to develop (Han & Windsor, 2011). Social network communities and consumer groups dedicated to particular brands are increasingly emerging, facilitating interaction with and among consumers. The communities and groups of online consumers are characterised by communication through technologies and the interactions that occur between users (Potgieter & Naidoo, 2017). Consumer engagement in social networks involves a variety of activities, from consuming content to participating in discussions and interacting with other consumers; therefore, consumer engagement in social networks increases the possibility of viral messages and creates a forum for constant information exchange (Oh et al., 2017).

As Cawsey & Rowley (2016) contend, organisations have begun to recognise social networks as a tool to establish relationships with consumers and form the aforementioned

communities of users around a specific company. More advanced businesses have started using social networks to increase brand awareness. However, companies using social networks such as Facebook need to devote time and energy to monitoring the results and influencing consumer engagement to the brand.

6. METHODOLOGY

To study presence and engagement, this study monitored and analysed the official social networks used to promote Spain as a tourist destination. To perform the analysis, this study employed the PRGS model, proposed by IAB Spain Research as a basis for researching brands' social media activities. This model has previously been used in various studies (see, e.g. Casado & Cardona, 2015; Bueno et al., 2017; Cardona & María-Dolores, 2017).

This model is based on four variables (Presence, Response, Generation, and Suggestion), which are used to measure the presence and activity of brands in social networks (Cardona & María-Dolores, 2017):

- P (Presence) is obtained by two indicators, the first referred as the number of fans or followers and the second by the number of brand publications on the page.
- R (Response) is calculated as the number of user likes generated by brand publications, divided by the number of fans.
- G (Generation) is calculated as the number of user comments generated by brand publications, divided by the number of fans.
- S (Suggestion) is calculated by the number of shares or recommendations by users of brand publications, divided by the number of fans.

This study combines 'Response', 'Generation', and 'Suggestion' in a single variable called 'Engagement', calculated as the sum of these three variables. The formulation and calculation of engagement have been addressed in several studies (see, e.g. Castelló Martínez, 2012; Oviedo-García et al., 2014; Buhalis & Mamalakis, 2015). The study's variables and their performance indicators are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables and performance indicators used in the analysis

Variable	Indicators	Description
Presence	Number of followers	The number of followers of the destination's social network
	Number of publications	The number of publications made by the destination's social network
Engagement	Total number of interactions / number of publications	The total number of user interactions per publication, in terms of reactions (I like, I love, surprised, laugh, etc.), comments, and shares, divided by the total number of publications

Source: Own Elaboration

To measure the indicators of the variables, Fanpage Karma was employed to analyse and monitor social networks. This online tool has been used in several research studies to analyse social networks (see, in particular, Jayasingh & Venkatesh, 2015; Huertas & Marine-Roig, 2016; Márquez-Domínguez et al., 2017). It has also been specifically used for tourism studies (see, e.g. Amboage, 2015; Wozniak et al., 2017).

The database was obtained from Spain tourism official pages of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. These social networks were chosen because Tourism Spain officially uses them in its tourism promotion and, in addition, they are the most used in the tourism

sector (CEPETCONCULTING, 2018; IAB Spain, 2018). The data were obtained for 2015 to 2018 (four full years), which was considered a sufficient time period to obtain significant data on the engagement by Spain in its official tourism social networks, allowing insight into the evolution of the results. Due to the seasonality of tourism, the quarterly evolution of the data was analysed from January 2015 to December 2018.

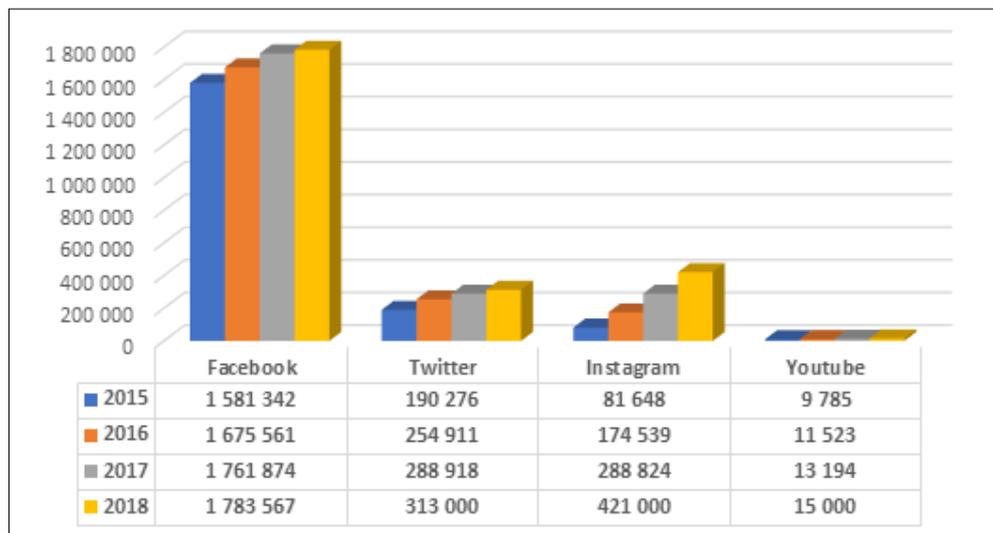
The official pages for the tourist promotion of Spain in the social networks studied were: a) Facebook: <https://es-es.facebook.com/spain.info>; b) Twitter: <https://twitter.com/spain>; c) Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/spain/>; d) YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/spain>

7. RESULTS

7.1 Presence

To determine the presence of official social networks for promoting tourism in Spain, the number of followers and the number of publications on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube were analysed. In terms of the number of followers, presence on Facebook was by far the largest in 2018, with 1,783,000 followers. Second largest was Instagram with 421,000 followers, after experiencing a large increase compared to 2017 to surpass Twitter, which had 313,000 followers in 2018. Finally, there were 15,000 followers on YouTube. The number of followers gradually increased on all four social networks from 2015 to 2018, with the growth on Instagram especially prominent, increasing from half the number of followers on Twitter in 2015 to exceeding Twitter's number in 2018. Overall, the data show that most users prefer to be followers on Facebook, but the great development of Instagram is noteworthy (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average number of followers per year on each social network

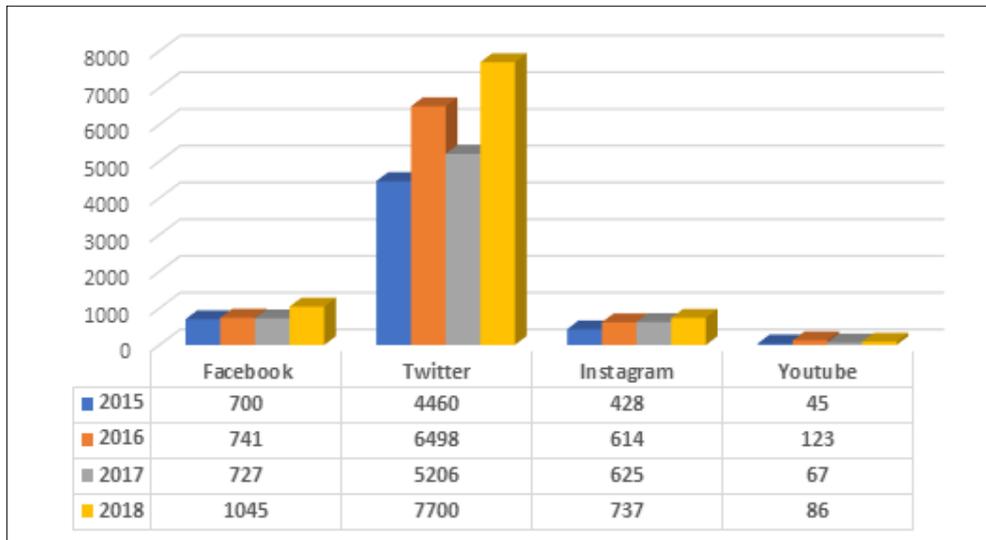


Source: Own Elaboration

In terms of the number of publications, presence on Twitter was by far the largest, with 7,700 messages in 2018. There were far fewer publications on Facebook (1,045), Instagram (737), and YouTube (86). Regarding the evolution in publication numbers, it is interesting to observe that significant increases from 2015 to 2016 were followed by significant declines from 2016 to 2017, except for Instagram, which is the only social network on which the number of publications increased every year during the study period. Subsequently, the number of publications notably increased on all four social networks in 2018, with almost

2,000 more messages on Twitter and 300 more on Facebook compared to 2017. Twitter is evidently used most for brand publications, and 2018 saw greater activity in promoting Spain as a tourist destination on all social networks compared to 2017 (Figure 2).

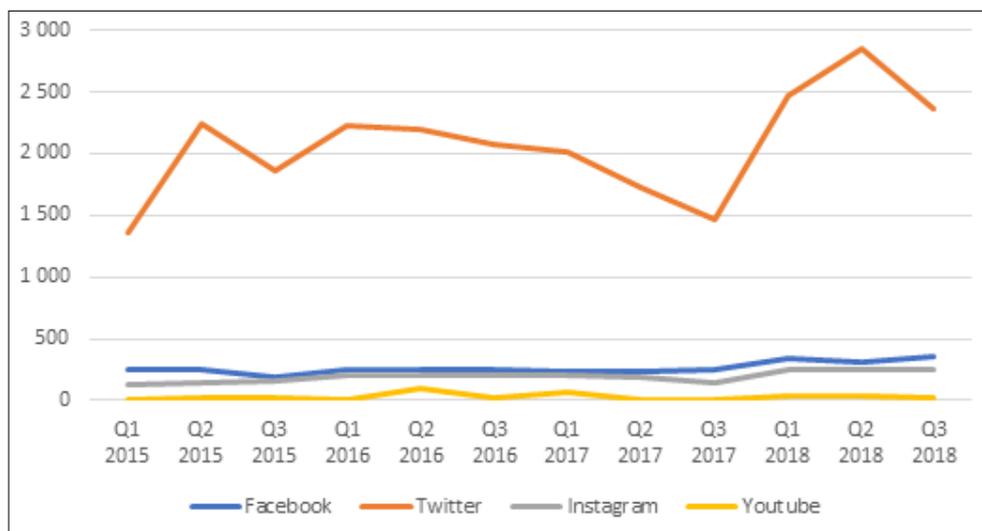
Figure 2. Number of publications per year on each social network



Source: Own Elaboration

As noted above, the seasonality of the tourism sector necessitates analysing the quarterly evolution in the number of publications per social network from January 2015 to December 2018. As Figure 3 shows, there is a slight decline in the summer months (Q2). The figure also confirms the previously identified fall in the number of publications in 2017 on all social networks except Instagram, and its subsequent general increase during 2018.

Figure 3. Number of quarterly publications on each social network



Source: Own Elaboration

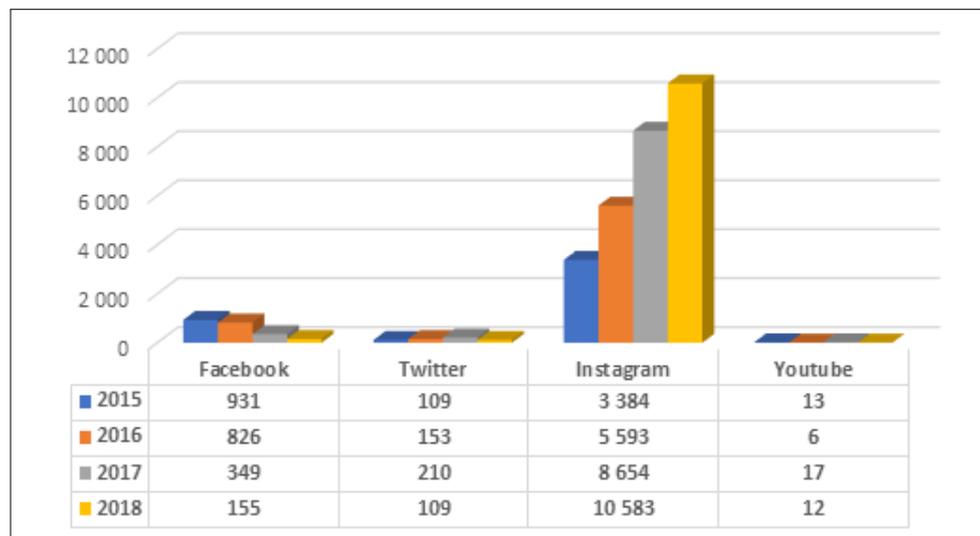
7.2 Engagement

To calculate the engagement of each official tourism social network, the following formula was used:

Engagement = total number of interactions (number of reactions + number of comments + number of times shared) / number of publications

As Figure 4 shows, engagement was by far the largest on Instagram in 2018, with more than 10,500 interactions per publication, followed distantly by Facebook (155), Twitter (109), and YouTube (12). Regarding the evolution of engagement over the last four years, Facebook declined every year, with the number of interactions in 2018 less than half of the number in 2017. This may be due to several factors, such as a shift in preferences among young people and the general public towards using other social networks (especially Instagram), as well as the changes to Facebook’s algorithm, which now allows fewer publications to reach users’ newsfeeds. By contrast, Instagram experienced a large continuous rise over the last four years, especially in 2017 and 2018, increasing by more than 2,000 interactions per publication each year. Meanwhile, Twitter and YouTube experienced slight fluctuations over the past four years. Therefore, for the social tourist networks of Spain, many users have evidently migrated from Facebook to Instagram, where interactions are now significantly higher.

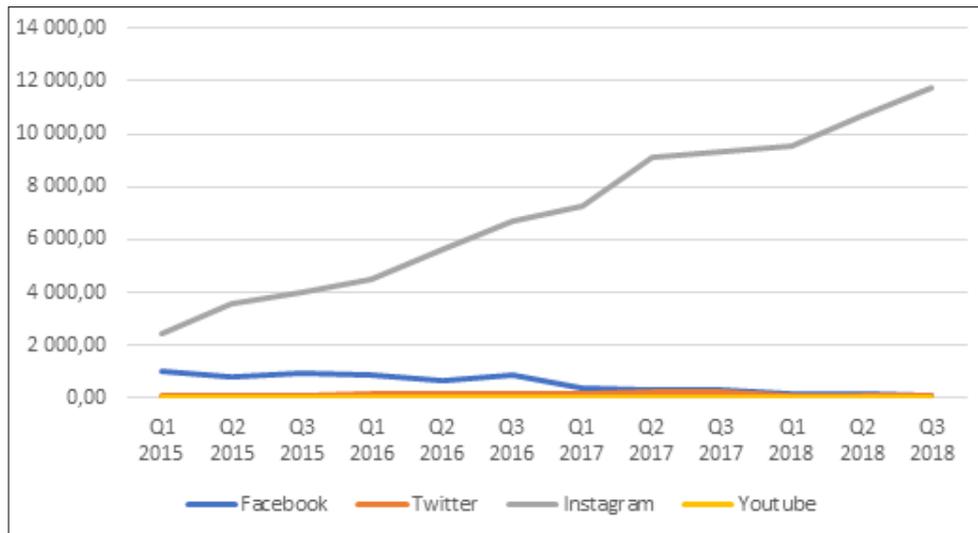
Figure 4. Average number of engagements per publication on each social network



Source: Own Elaboration

As for presence, it is important to analyse quarterly evolution in the number of interactions with publications on the social networks. Figure 5 confirms the previously identified the great rise of Instagram and the decline of Facebook, especially during 2017 and 2018. As for the number of publications, the data show a greater increase or a lower fall in Q2 (the summer months).

Figure 5. Number of quarterly interactions per publication on each social network



Source: Own Elaboration

8. CONCLUSION

Considering the great importance of the tourism sector for Spain and the increasing relevance of social networks in recent years, this study analysed the use of official social networks to promote Spain as a tourist destination from 2015 to 2018. The findings revealed that Spain as a tourist destination actively engages on the four social networks analysed, which has generally led to high interaction with tourists.

Regarding objective 1, which was to determine the number of followers on the four official social networks of Spain as a tourist destination, the study verified that the number of followers remains highest on Facebook, followed by Twitter and Instagram. However, while the number of followers has progressively increased on all four social networks, the data indicates stagnation or maturity on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. By contrast, more pronounced growth in the number of followers on Instagram suggests that this social network is still growing.

The second objective, tried to establish whether any social network stands out in terms of the number of publications. Twitter had by far the largest number of publications, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Therefore, Twitter has been consolidated as the main communication channel for informing users 'in real time' about Spain's tourist environment through more direct messages. The study also observed a significant reduction in the number of publications on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in 2017, compared to a slight increase on Instagram. However, in 2018, the generation of content on all four social networks increased again, demonstrating renewed interest by the tourism of Spain in communicating with consumers via social networks.

The objective 3, sought to test whether engagement has allowed more interactions on each social network. The most notable finding in this regard, is the drastic fall in interactions with publications on Facebook during 2017 and 2018 compared to previous years, and the great growth experienced annually by Instagram, doubling even the results obtained in 2015. The fall in interactions on Facebook may be due to several factors, such as a drop-in interest among young people and the general public, who increasingly prefer to use other social networks (especially Instagram), as well as the changes to Facebook's algorithm. Therefore,

for Spain's social tourist networks, many consumers seem to have migrated from Facebook to Instagram, where levels of interaction are now much higher.

Finally, it should be noted that although the activity and interaction of videos on YouTube is not very high, it can be used as a means of online advertising, attracting attention and visually making tourist destinations known, which is why it is considered a type of Interesting content to show users.

Finally, although few videos are published on YouTube and achieve a low level of interaction, such publications can be used as online advertising and allow users to visually discover tourist destinations, which makes this type of content of particular interest to them.

In this context, tourist destinations would have to consider these trends that social networks are experiencing in order to gain users attention, since constant updates occur in the digital environment. Thus, the use of a differentiated strategy for each social network is recommended, since findings in this study showed that each of them would be useful depending on the objective that is sought.

Thus, it is essential for attractive, dynamic and constant information and engagement to be made on the social networks, especially on Instagram, since it is the social network with the greatest growth and, by far, the one with the greatest interaction. Twitter is a good option for the launch of news, events and offers. On the other hand, Facebook requires more attention due to its maturity and because of the rise of new and trendy social network platforms. Despite of these facts, Facebook is still a social network that has a good interaction and highest number of followers worldwide. Thus, an active and frequent intervention on both Instagram and Facebook is essential for developing an effective content marketing strategy, without neglecting that the various social networks generate different levels of interactions. For example, twitter can serve as a communication and information channel. Moreover, when considering YouTube, it seems to be a social network more oriented for long-term objectives, trying to harness the potential of the video to gain visibility and interest among users. Regarding the limitations of the study, an analysis regarding the type of content (e.g., photos, videos, text, sounds), interactions and reasons for the interactions is somewhat lacking. Thus, it would be interesting for future lines of research to carry out a content analysis to examine the publications and interactions that are made in the social networks of the tourism sector through qualitative research software such as Atlas or Nvivo.

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