

*Review*

# Understanding Tourism Online Consumer Behavior and eWOM Strategies for Sustainable Business Management

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**Abstract:** Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has been widely used by the majority of consumers in different digital platforms. This exploratory study was conducted with the aim to get further insights about online consumer behavior through social networking sites and online reviews sites in order to help tourism businesses develop sustainable eWOM strategies.

In order to carry out this objective, an exploratory study has been developed to analyze the existing literature of eWOM strategies and online consumer behavior. The systematic literature review analysis establishes two main topics: (i) tourism (ii) eWOM. The scientific database of Web of Science has been used to collect relevant literature of the subject matter. The search term “Tourism” and “eWOM” were applied. The database of Web of Science produced a total of 124 articles and with the different filters applied during the PRISMA 2009 Flow diagram the process resulted in a selection of 13 studies. The results of the research will provide a broader knowledge for scholars of social sciences and businesses for adopting sustainable strategies of the increasing influence of eWOM in tourism.

**Keywords:** eWOM, online reviews, online consumer behavior, management, tourism

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## 1. Introduction

The continuously developing technologies and widespread of Internet have empowered the evolution of traditional word-of-mouth to electronic word-of-mouth, also known as eWOM (Manes and Tchetchik, 2018). Nowadays, consumers use different social platforms, including social networking sites, consumer review sites, blogs, social communities in order to communicate and share their purchase experiences on products and brands with other consumers (Liang and Turban, 2011; Olbrich and Holsing, 2011; Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Chew et al. 2017; Hubert et al., 2017; Reyes-Menendez et al. 2018; Saura et al., 2018). The growing relevance of eWOM strategies along with the Internet trends have resulted in an increase in the number of consumers' online reviews and have become a significant influence on consumers' purchase decision making (Riegner, 2007). Electronic word-of-mouth can be considered as a powerful communication in social sciences that has enabled the shift power from companies to consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Reyes-Menendez et al. 2018) specially in certain industries like the tourism industry (Papathanassis and Knolle, 2011; Saura et al. 2017).

The following tables are retrieved from Cornell Hospitality Report (2010), a study of 2,830 respondents that was conducted with the purpose to explore the influence of both positive and negative information on consumer's choices of hotels and the way consumers search for hotel information.

Table 1. Hotel information sources for leisure travelers

Hotel information sources	Men	Women
Meta - search websites (e.g. Expedia, Priceline, Kayak )	40 %	44 %
Hotel reviews posted on TripAdvisor, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, etc.	28 %	37 %
Hotel reviews provided professionals, Forbes Travel Guide, etc.	31 %	31 %
Colleagues and business associates recommendation	15 %	12 %
Friends and family recommendation	49 %	58 %
Travel - related websites	43 %	41 %
Google, Yahoo, Bing or other search engine	48 %	47 %
Hotel recommended by my organization	12 %	9 %

Source: McCarthy, Stock and Verma (2010)

As presented in Table 1, the majority of the respondents look first for hotel recommendations from friends and family. More than 40 percent seek for travel related websites, meta-search websites, Google, Yahoo and other search engines. Almost 40 percent of female look for hotel reviews on Tripadvisor and social networking sites. Though there is a small difference between men and women, the results generally show that leisure travelers use many sources for hotel information.

According to the research conducted by McCarthy et al (2010), there are several hotel information sources that consumers consult prior to purchase decision. These sources are presented in Table 2. More than 1,600 respondents begin their search for online search engines. Almost one third indicated that they look on online travel agency and brand website. Finally, less than 600 respondents stated to consult other hotel information including Tripadvisor, Facebook and online meta search engines.

Table 2. Information sources consulted in the early phase of a hotel purchase decision

Hotel information sources	Number of respondents
TripAdvisor	590
Facebook	300
Brand Website	1050
Online Travel Agency	1100
Online Meta – Search Engines	650
Online Search Engines	1625
Read a travel book	950

Source: McCarthy, Stock and Verma (2010)

Table 3 shows the total visits of consumers on popular websites before booking an accommodation. According to Comscore Score Worldwide Path to Purchase Report (2017), the most visited hotel websites are most popular a week before the hotel transaction when consumers are in the purchase process.

Table 3. Share of visits to most popular sites prior to Hotel transaction

Online booking websites	5 weeks +	4 weeks	3 weeks	2 weeks	1 week	Same day
TripAdvisor	16%	10%	11 %	11 %	28 %	24 %
Booking.com	13%	12 %	8 %	15 %	23 %	29 %
Expedia	11 %	9 %	16 %	11 %	34 %	20 %
Choice Hotels	10 %	9 %	11 %	17 %	12 %	40 %
Hilton	10 %	5 %	3 %	8 %	26 %	48 %

Source: Comscore Score Worldwide Path to Purchase Report, (2017)

Reading online reviews posted by consumers in different eWOM forums has a significant effect on consumer's buying behavior (Bajpai and Pandey, 2012). Tripadvisor is the world's largest travel websites and over 57 % of hotel clients visit Tripadvisor before their purchase. A recent research has emphasized its growing importance for consumers related to online reviews in the hospitality industry building competence and commitment of consumers (Manes and Tchetchik, 2018).

The results abovementioned in the different tables were used as the foundations to explore the impact of eWOM strategies on different social platforms and to provide an overview of consumer behavior during the information search phase with a social science approach. Following the lines of this research McCarthy et al. (2010), this study aims to investigate in-depth online consumer behavior in order to help tourism businesses develop sustainable eWOM strategies.

In this research, the concept of sustainability of hotels is understood in a managerial and economic perspective. Sustainable business are companies that have strong foundations that help the adapt to changes in markets and economy (Reyes-Menendez et al. 2018)

The structure of the research is divided into sections; methodology explains the process of obtaining the sources and knowledge for conducting and executing the study; exploratory analysis contains the existing literature review, which highlights the interests of researchers in influencing consumer's decision making and business outcomes. Analysis results reveal the evidences and the impact of eWOM on decision making of travelers in online review sites and social networking sites. Finally, the conclusions provide a further understanding of eWOM strategies in studies of marketing and tourism.

## 2. Literature review

Over the years, numerous scholars have studied the significant impact of eWOM strategies on consumer's purchase behaviour (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Pan et al., 2007; Riegner, 2007; Gretzel and Yoo, 2008; Zhu and Zhang, 2010; Reyes-Menendez et al. 2019). Numerous industrial statistics have also reported the significant influence of online reviews in online consumer behavior for tourism businesses (Reyes-Menendez et al. 2018b; ChannelAdvisor, 2011; Lightspeed Research, 2011).

Electronic word-of-mouth has become a strong influence in the tourism industry (Papathanassis and Knolle 2011). Litvin et al. (2008) reported that eWOM is the most important source of information when consumers are deciding to purchase hospitality and tourism services. The revolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the past decades has transformed both traveler behavior and tourism industry (Buhalis and Law 2008). Travelers who access the Internet to book hotel rooms via third-party intermediaries are continuously increasing (Line and Runyan 2012). Infomediaries, which allow users to exchange information through eWOM, have become especially relevant in the hospitality industry during the pre-purchase stage (Runyan, 2012; Serra-Cantallops and Salvi 2014). A study showed that 73 % of respondents prefer to read online consumer reviews about a hotel rather than to rely on hotel's description of itself (Cox et al., 2009; Saura et al., 2018). Such online reviews are visited by hundreds of millions of potential hotel visitors every year (Saura et al., 2019)

In this sense, 78% of online users are influenced by online reviews in their purchase decision-making (eMarketer, 2013). Online consumer reviews have become relevant sources of information for travelers and play a powerful role in social sciences and purchasing travel services (Pan et al., 2007; Nielsen, 2010).

At the same time, tourism has experienced continuous growth over the past six decades, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (UN World Tourism Organization, 2017). UNWTO reported that by 2030, it is expected to reach an increase of 57% representing 1.8 billion international tourist arrivals (UN World Tourism Organization, 2017). Therefore, tourism is considered a continuously developing and highly competitive global industry involving different sectors worldwide.

Therefore, online travel sites and social networking sites should be taken into account in order to have wider understanding of the continuously increasing impact of eWOM on different social platforms and its effect on decision making of hotel consumers.

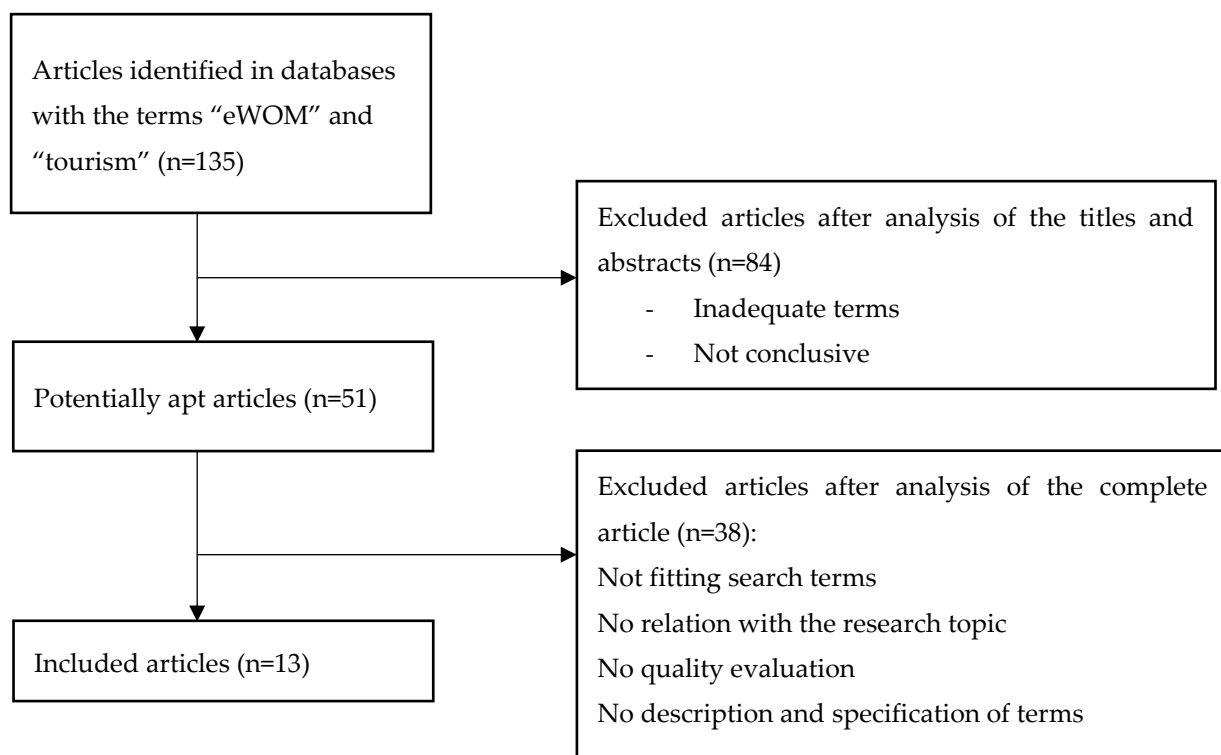
### 3. Methodology

Following the existing studies of McCarthy et al. (2010) and Reyes-Menendez et al (2019), an exploratory study has been developed to analyze the existing literature of eWOM and online consumer behavior for tourism businesses. The systematic literature analysis establishes two main topics: (i) tourism (ii) eWOM.

The scientific database of Scopus, PubMed, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect and Web of Science were used to collect the existing literature of the subject matter. The search term tourism and eWOM were applied. The database of Scopus, PubMed, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect and Web of Science produced a total of 135 articles and with the different filters applied during the PRISMA 2009 Flow diagram the process resulted in a selection of 13 studies. No filters were used and the Boolean operator AND was applied to optimize the results of the corresponding topic related to this study. All the articles were analyzed by reading the titles and abstracts and finally, selecting the ones which meet the inclusion criteria of this investigation. The data collection was gathered during the month of June 2019.

The authors have analyzed the titles and abstracts of articles to identify the adequateness of the articles to continue with the systematic literature review process. The criteria are based on the AMSTAR tool (AMSTAR, 2017) (see Figure 1) to incorporate only high quality abstracts. Although the AMSTAR tool was initially designed to assess the quality of the articles from their abstracts, we have followed the indications of Bosch and Sang (2017) as an eligibility gauge for this research.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram



The objective is to achieve the highest possible amount of evidence in the results based on quality studies. Some of the variables used in AMSTAR to evaluate the quality of the systematic review were: (i) the relationship of the research question to the criteria included in the study, (ii) the extraction of data from at least two independent researchers (iii) the quality of the literature review, (iii) the identification and definition of concepts, and (iv) the quality of the references used throughout the study.

### 4. Exploratory analysis of results

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was proposed in the studies of Bassett (2015) and Reyes-Menendez et al. (2019) as a development to carry out an exploratory analysis of the results obtained.

Such literature review was applied to emphasize the interest of researchers on a specific topic. A literature review is considered as a methodology of exploratory study which consists of collecting and re analyzing existing literature of a specific subject and it aims to identify and justify conclusions that would bring relevance to the investigation. A literature review should address both primary and secondary sources of information and take these sources of information into consideration as a result of exploratory analysis or the main investigations in the field of studies.

Luo et al. (2016) and Comerio and Strozzi (2018) conduct a literature review and an exploratory analysis applied specifically to the tourism sector and social sciences while Huete-Alcocer (2017) focuses the research in the transformation of word of mouth into eWOM and its implications for consumer behavior for tourism businesses.

This exploratory study is mainly based on the analysis of the previous literature, which is shown on the table 4. These articles were selected due to the same topic of interest. The following table summarizes the existing literature used to develop this research.

Table 4. Literature review of eWOM strategies and online consumer behavior in online review sites for tourism businesses

Authors	Description of the study
Kim et al. (2018)	A study of 793 respondents proposes an integrative model of three social network constructs associated with the website (i.e., tie strength, homophily, and source credibility) and their relationship to consumers' evaluations associated with attitudes and perceived influence of eWOM strategies effectiveness.
Teng et al. (2017)	As little is known about the validity and applicability of cultural orientations in countries with perceived inherent similar values, this study identifies the critical factors that influence Chinese and Malaysian users' attitudes and behavior when processing persuasive eWOM messages.
Yan et al. (2016)	This study indicates the adoption process of consumers when EC-eWOM and SM-eWOM are presented simultaneously. A conceptual model is proposed to reveal the relationship between the adoptions of the two types of eWOM.
Ladhari and Michaud (2015)	The study focuses on of the influence of comments written by Facebook friends on the intentions of booking a hotel, the trust in the hotel, the attitude toward the hotel, and the perception of its website. The research also examines the moderator role of Internet users' trust in those comments on these relations.
Luo and Zhong (2015)	Considering eWOM communication on SNSs as a network based on the users social relationships, this study applied social network analysis to examine the communication characteristics of travel-related eWOM on SNSs from the perspective of both ego and whole networks.
Kini (2015)	The particular interest of this study is in existing frameworks and models to study negative eWOM in leading social networks, and its impact on brand, products and services.

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Cheung et al. (2014)	This investigation empirically examines how the two social information cues frequently found on online social communities, action-based social information and opinion-based social information, influence consumer purchase decisions. It also explains the moderating role of consumer characteristics, consumer engagement and consumer expertise.
Munar and Jacobsen (2014)	The study is based on a destination-specific survey and explores summer holidaymakers' motivations for social media contributions and their willingness to share content through various social media. The findings in relation to destination of Mallorca offer an understanding of the adoption of tourist social media in technologically-advanced markets with high levels of ICE use.
Teng et al. (2014)	As few researches have directly tested potential antecedents of persuasive eWOM messages among message recipients in social media context. The purpose of this paper is to critically discuss and examine the determinants of persuasive eWOM messages when message recipients intend to accept and use eWOM messages.
Arenas-Márquez (2014)	Influencers can have an important impact over the decision-making of other users. Therefore, the popular eWOM community, Ciao.com has been modelled as a social network. Using social network analysis techniques, the existence of influencers is justified by the power law distribution of user participation, and then they are identified using their topological features within the social network.
Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013)	By developing a conceptual framework for understanding the foundations of digital communication, this study empirically investigates its validity by examining the factors influencing the tourism consumer behavior. The study adopts a conceptual model of e-WOM and explores the use of Twitter by the tourists.
Zhang and Kim (2013)	This paper examines the acceptance of word-of-mouth information dissemination through social media. The determinants of acceptance and the effect of acceptance on purchase intention as the result of information on social media pertaining to overseas tourism are researched in detail.
Tham et al. (2013)	This conceptual article advances the understanding of electronic word of mouth in presenting distinctive credibility profiles toward a proposed influence on destination image and choice.

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As observed in the abovementioned cites, the development of the literature demonstrates the increasing interest of numerous researchers related to the concept of eWOM and social networking sites. Over the years, interesting results have been found and explained as follow.

Kim et al. (2018) revealed that the homophily and tie strength between a website and a consumer are important drivers of source credibility, which influences attitude toward the reviews as well as the website. The attitude formed through the perceptions of tie-strength, homophily and source credibility determines the influence of eWOM consumers' purchase decisions.

Following the studies conducted in 2014, Teng et al. (2017) found out that argument quality, source credibility, source attractiveness, source perception, and source style exerted varying influences on Chinese and Malaysian users' attitudes and intentions to continue their study abroad. Researchers also showed that Ecommerce-eWOM's usefulness and credibility positively influence the adoption of EC-eWOM, but negatively influence that of Social media-eWOM. EC-eWOM adoption negatively impacts SM-eWOM adoption, and mediates the relationship between usefulness, credibility and SM-eWOM adoption (Yan et al., 2016).

Moreover, Ladhari and Michaud (2015) conducted a research of 800 university students and found out the influences of comments generated on Facebook in the users' decision-making process. Luo and Zhong (2015) indicated that travel-related eWOM strategies communication via SNSs relied on existing social relationships, ties of which can be categorized as strong, of middling strength, or weak and the effect of transmitted information was stronger than that of influential decision-making. Kini (2015) studied current research of eWOM, social media and negative eWOM strategies while Manes and Tchetchik (2018) present its importance to reduce the asymmetry of information.

Cheung et al. (2014) discovered that consumer purchase decisions are influenced by the two social information cues and that action-based social information is more influential than opinion-based social information. It was also observed that consumer engagement and consumer expertise play an important moderating role in consumer purchase decisions. Munar and Jacobsen (2014) clarified the dominance of visual content, along with the relevance of altruistic and community-related motivations and motivational differences between types of content creators.

Furthermore, Teng et al. (2014) examined the determinants of persuasive eWOM messages when message recipients intend to accept and use eWOM messages. Arenas- Márquez (2014) explained that influencers are not determined by the number of performed reviews, but by the variety or scope of their performed reviews and their central position in the consumer network.

Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013) determined the factors affecting tourists' decision-making and indicated that twitter is another marketing channel to be wisely used in integrated communications marketing of tourism services. Zhang and Kim (2013) stated that the professionalism of senders and the practicability of eWOM significantly affect the acceptance of the information. In addition, the acceptance of eWOM information has a significant effect on the spread of eWOM and customer purchase intention.

Finally, Tham et al. (2013) focused on understanding of electronic word of mouth in presenting distinctive credibility profiles toward a proposed influence on destination image and choice.

Then, in order to deepen the literature review and to unveil the adequate platforms to develop eWOM strategies, we have classified the articles included in the review according to the social platforms they have used in the research. This analysis can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Social Networks used in previous research for eWOM strategies.

	Facebook	Tripadvisor	Twitter	Website	SNS
Kim et al. (2018)	-	-	-	-	√
Teng et al. (2017)	-	-	-	-	√
Yan et al. (2016)	-	-	-	√	√
Ladhari and Michaud (2015)	√	-	-	√	√
Luo and Zhong (2015)	-	-	-	-	√
Kini (2015)	-	-	-	√	√
Cheung et al. (2014)	-	-	-	√	√
Munar and Jacobsen (2014)	-	-	-	-	√
Teng et al. (2014)	-	-	-	-	√
Arenas-Márquez (2014)	-	-	-	-	√
Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013)	-	-	√	-	-
Zhang and Kim (2013)	-	-	-	-	√
Tham et al. (2013)	-	-	-	-	√

Source: authors

In view of the previous information we can highlight that the previous investigations have focused their analysis of the data in the Social Networks in a generic way. It is what in the previous table we have named SNS and it appears in the last column. This is because the authors in their research have done a survey on the online or eWOM reviews in which they asked about Social Networks in a generic way (SNS) and not in a specific way.

This shows that previous research has focused on the development of studies that make it possible to understand social networks globally. However, each of the social platforms has very specific particularities, a specific tone and once that must be used by tourism businesses to develop specific strategies for each social channel. Being highly recommended also have experts who dominate these social networks and ensure the success of tourism businesses in a sustainable way. An exception to these generic questions is found in the research of Ladhari and Michaud (2015) in which despite having done a survey on eWOM, the questions specifically included information about the Social Network Facebook as can be seen in the previous table.

Another research that also focuses on a single social network is the research of Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013) in which the authors take information specifically on reviews or eWOM strategies on the Social Network Twitter.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Social Tourism Network par excellence, Tripadvisor, has not been used in any of the reflected research. This may be due to the difficulty of obtaining the data from Tripadvisor since it is necessary to develop an algorithm that allows downloading this data, unlike the Social Network Twitter that allows to connect to the API directly and thus obtain reviews or comments from the users

Another reason why Tripadvisor has not been used as a source of information or a key part of the research collected is because some researchers do not consider this platform to be a Social Network and therefore would not fall within the possibilities of eWOM strategies on social platforms.

To conclude with the analysis of the different platforms and information sources of the previous investigations on eWOM it is interesting to reflect that one of the columns is the company's own web page. In his investigations, Cheung et al. (2014), Ladhari and Michaud (2015), Kini (2015) and Yan et al. (2016) use the website of companies as a source of information on online reviews.

In order to understand which are the areas of greatest interest to the eWOM strategies from the different scientific publications. With this objective, it is interesting to analyze it through a scientometric analysis.



Table 6. Scientometric analysis.

Journal	Total of Findings	Quartile	Category
Computers in Human Behavior	1	Q1	Psychology, Experimental
Journal of Computer Information Systems	1	Q3	Computer Science, Information Systems Business,
Electronic Commerce Research and Applications	1	Q2	Computer Science, Information Systems, Interdisciplinary Applications
International Journal of Hospitality Management	1	Q1	Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Environmental Studies,
Tourism Management	2	Q1	Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Management
2nd European Conference on Social Media (ECSM)	1	-	Communication, Social Sciences Computer Science;
Decision Support Systems	1	Q1	AI Operations Research & Management Science
Journal of Computer Information Systems	1	Q3	Computer Science, Information Systems
Technology Analysis & Strategic Management	1	Q3	Management
International Journal of Information Management	1	Q1	Information Science & Library Science
Electronic Commerce Research	1	Q3	Business & Management
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1	Q3	Hospitality Leisure Sport & Tourism

Source: authors

As shown in Table 6, in recent years research has been conducted with respect to eWOM in tourism around 13 central themes: (Psychology, Experimental, Computer Science, Interdisciplinary Applications, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism, Environmental Studies, Communication, Social Sciences, Artificial Intelligence, Operations Research & Management Science, Information Systems, Business & Management, Information Science & Library Science).

The eWOM has a computer science perspective since it involves the analysis of data from social platforms from a computer science point of view since algorithms are needed to download the data provided by users and therefore are Computer Scientist those who have paid attention to the analysis of the eWOM and have published in Journals included in this category. Another one of the great categories that have analyzed the eWOM is from the point of view of Information Systems since the information coming from the Social Networks forms information systems that are used by part of the tourism professionals. The last of the categories that can be identified after carrying out the scientometric analysis is that of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism since eWOM is a particularly relevant topic in the tourism sector because travelers' decision-making is usually supported by the comments contributed by previous visitors. As well as the category of Business & Management since the information obtained in social networks and Internet on the reviews will be used by the management of tourist companies.

With respect to the quality of the publications, it can be highlighted that most of the investigations belong to the quartile 1 and the quartile 3. Of all the included investigations, half of them belong to Q1, that is to say that they have the highest possible classification of a Journal (Computers in Human

Behavior, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, International Journal of Information Management, Decision Support Systems).

## 5. Implications

The findings of the study reveal the importance of eWOM strategies for the hospitality industry not only in major websites but also in other type of forums that require managerial attention for proper brand management as it reduces the asymmetry consumers get about the industry (Manes and Tchetchik, 2018).

The continuously growing sector of tourism has been supported by the development of Information and communication technologies for nearly four decades (Buhalis and Law 2008). As we progress through 21st century, digital revolution in social sciences and tourism must be taken into account, as it is one of the important factors that make the industry globally competitive (Moutinho, Ballantyne and Rate, 2011). Nowadays, online review sites and social media websites have become important sources of information for consumers and significantly influencing online consumer behavior (Manes and Tchetchik, 2018; Gretzel, 2006; Kim, Lim and Brymer, 2015; Lee and Koo, 2015). Therefore, efficient gathering and analysis of eWOM strategies can help companies to remain competitive in this industry (Brown et al., 2007; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2003; Hu et al., 2011; Lin et al., 2006; Zhang, 2006).

The popularity of digital online platforms related to online reviews and the increasing influence of eWOM on consumer behavior have driven numerous scholars to explore and to provide a broader knowledge related to this phenomenon of online reviews. Considering that online reviews has become a marketing tool and a success factor of many business models (French et al. 2011), gaining insights of the behavioral factors that influence consumers' purchase decision making through online review sites and social media should be considered prominent (Robinson, Goh and Zhang, 2012).

## 6. Conclusions

This exploratory study aimed to get further insights about online consumer behavior through social networking sites and online reviews sites in order to help tourism businesses develop sustainable eWOM strategies. As observed throughout this research, numerous scholars have gained the interest of the concept of eWOM strategies in social networking sites and online review sites. Although many studies have been conducted concerning its impact on hotel industry (Vermeulen et al., 2009; Xie et al., 2011; Mauri et al., 2013) there is still need for further research due to the evolution of the industry and the consumers. The significant relevance of the influences of eWOM strategies for social sciences and the tourism industry have been acknowledge over the years and filling this gap should be taken into consideration in order to develop the existing literature of tourism and marketing.

Taking into account that tourists now live in the information era, analyzing the flows of information and identifying that information asymmetry might happen because of tourism social networks is one important aspect to be considered (Manes and Tchetchik, 2018).

Moreover, following the lines of this research will help the businesses and companies of tourism industry to adapt strategies along with the innovation of information technologies. Adapting to the continuously changing behavior of consumers within the online tourism context should be considered as opportunity rather than a challenge. Understanding the current tourist is essential and exploring how to influence and reach those tourists in coming years will crucially impact the sustainable development of business within the hospitality and tourism sector (Moutinho et al., 2011).

Therefore, market research, analyzing online consumer behavior and taking the opportunity of the possible influence of purchase decision making are crucial. For the future research, we propose to continue the exploratory study with quantitative techniques which allow measuring the impact of online review sites and social networking sites on consumers' decision making related to hotel choices.

The limitations of this study are related to the sources of articles, the number of studies analyzed, and the number of previous studies consulted. Future studies should get deeper knowledge in some of the aspects presented in the paper as the information sources for eWOM strategies or the evolution of these websites. Other possible lines of development might be the analysis of information flows and weight in quantitative terms for online consumer behavior.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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