YOUTUBE AS A DESTINATION MARKETING TOOL:

A Canadian Content Analysis

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the adoption and usage of YouTube as a destination marketing tool amongst Canadian destination marketing organizations [DMOs]. A content analysis approach was employed to analyze a sample group of 1000 videos uploaded by five provinces and three major cities. Two coding schemes were developed in order to classify each video by their content and production. The findings of this study provides insight as to how DMOs are using YouTube to manage their destination image. Results indicate that there are variations between the marketing strategies of DMOs. This could be attributed to the lack of information on how to effectively use YouTube to market travel destinations. This study attempts to bridge these gaps, by providing a clear indication as to what type of content is generating the greatest engagement rate.

Keywords: YouTube, social media, hospitality, tourism, destination image, tourism marketing, destination marketing organizations

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Web 2.0 has revolutionized the way tourists plan for travel (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Fundamentally, the Internet has modernized the travel-information process, specifically in the way consumers and destination marketing organizations [DMOs] are interacting and exchanging information. As the online availability of travel-related information widens, tourists are increasingly being presented with multiple choices, such as where they want to travel, activities/recreation, etc. The Internet has broadened accessibility and distribution of travel information made available to tourists (UNWTO, 2011), thus, impacting the way tourists are searching, and consuming travel-related information (Tuominen, 2011). It is critical that destination marketers adapt to these continuous changes by innovating their marketing practices accordingly.

With the advent of the Internet, consumers have been bombarded with information from every platform. In an attempt to eliminate this information-overload, advertisers have placed a larger emphasis on gaining and retaining consumers' attention. To mitigate these challenges, tourism organizations have begun adapting their communication methods from a traditional-persuasive methodology, towards a more benefit-driven and client-focused approach (Dixit, 2017). The introduction of online videos allows advertisers to provide relevant and entertaining content across a multitude of social media platforms (Dixit, 2017). Online videos allow potential tourists to be virtually immersed within the destination, without actually leaving their seat (Reino & Hay, 2011). Through the use of stimulating videos, tourists are able to "get an immediate and very real sense" of their desired travel destination (Reino & Hay, 2011). Increased access to the Internet, mobile phones and WiFi availability has spurred growth in the online video consumption market (eMarketer, 2017). In 2017, eMarketer predicted that the number of digital

video viewers will reach 2.15 billion. The digital video audience will account for more than 62% of the world's Internet users (eMarketer, 2017), primarily from video streaming platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. It has been suggested that YouTube is a vital information-source that tourists utilize within their destination decision-making process.

As a popular video-sharing social network, YouTube has inadvertently influenced consumer information-consumption (Reino & Hay, 2011). YouTube presents new opportunities for DMOs, primarily in the way they are communicating and promoting their destination image towards tourists. Researchers have suggested that the success of YouTube can be attributed to its abundance of video content available to its users, which caters towards a broad scope of potential viewers. Moreover, the affluence of unique users and videos being watched daily denotes a bright future for YouTube. It is apparent that tourism boards are unsure how to effectively use YouTube as a promotional vehicle (Reino & Hay, 2011). Not all DMOs are maintaining and developing their YouTube channels, which Reinhard (2009) advises is a critical strategy for success. Despite statistics indicating that tourists are becoming reliant on YouTube within their travel search, limited research has explored this topic.

Nevertheless, YouTube has been vastly underrepresented within academic literature, specifically in regards to the promotion of tourism destinations. Previous research by Reino and Hay (2011) has explored this specific topic, however, with exponential growth in the platform, results may significantly differ. This study attempts to bridge the gaps within Reino and Hays' research and modern-day usage. The results from this study will contribute to the lack of existing literature on YouTube.

The following research examines how Canadian DMOs are implementing YouTube to promote their destination. This study exercised a content analysis methodology to analyze the videos being uploaded by tourism organizations. To begin, three research questions were posed:

RQ1: How are destination marketing organizations using YouTube to manage their destination image?

RQ2: What types of video content is generating the greatest engagement rate (i.e. views, dislikes, likes, comments)?

RQ3: What is the nature of video production that Canadian DMOs are producing?

The findings will provide further insight into YouTube as a destination marketing tool, specifically in the context of video content, nature of the video production and social media metrics. This study will contribute to existing literature on YouTube usage in the tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Destination Image

The role and relative importance of destination imagery has been significantly researched since the 1970s (Hunt, 1975; Gunn, 1973; Mayo, 1973). Despite this, the definition of tourism destination imagery varies among studies, creating difficulty in identifying one definition as reference. This study will reference MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997), who define destination imagery as a "composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression". It has been found that destination imagery plays two dichotomous roles in determining a travel destination. First, destination imagery can influence one's destination decision making process. Second, it can provide reassurance to one's destination choice as well

as potentially impact their future actions (willingness to recommend and intention to revisit) (as cited in Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Previous research has indicated that image formation plays an important role in the tourist destination selection process (Gunn, 1988; Mercer, 1971). The image formation process describes how consumers perceive or imagine a destination. Mansfeld (1992) proposed that the process of choosing a destination typically occurs in two phases. In the first phase, individuals gather tourist information to assess attractive destinations based off individualized constraints, such as financial or social. The second phase evaluates each destination individually on a "place-utility" basis.

Destination images are an effective form of marketing to potential tourists in situations where actual visitation to the destination is impractical (Gartner, 1989). Gartner (1989) explained that perceived images of a destination are formed in the mind of potential travelers. He accredits that this process is the result of cognitive and perceptual processing of multiple secondary sources, such as mass media and secondary sources. Destinations are then evaluated by their attributes and attractions (Stabler, 1995), which motivate the tourist to either visit or reject the destination (as cited in Carballo, Araña, León, & Moreno-Gil, 2015). The findings of Beerli and Martin (2004) support this theory, suggesting that the image formation process must correspond to the reality of the destination. There are certain destination attributes and symbols that are contributing factors as to how a destination is perceived. The exclusion of these specific elements could alter the perceived image from the promoted.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) developed a framework to explain the image formation process, identified in Figure 1. It was determined that there are three determinants that influence a destination image: tourism motivations, socio-demographics and stimulus factors

(informational sources and previous experience). The model also indicates that primary and

secondary sources of information influence the tourists' pre-visit perceptions and post-visit

evaluations of a destination (Baloglu &McCleary, 1999). A primary source is an image

construed as a result of personal experiences and visitation to a particular destination, whereas

secondary sources are images formed prior to visiting the destination. It has been proven that

secondary sources play a vital role in the destination selection process (Gunn, 1988).
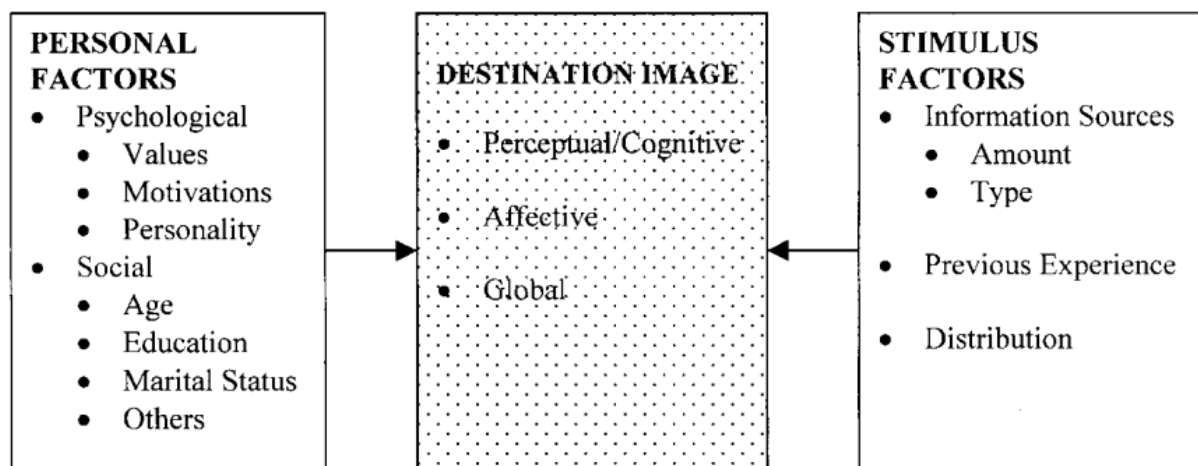
Figure 1. Framework for Destination Image Formation (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999)

More recently, the Internet has become an important resource for tourism and hospitality

information (Buhalis and Law, 2008). Buhalis (1997) suggested that technological

advancements, mass media and the Internet have affected the way destinations are imagined,

perceived and consumed. Similarly, Pavlovic and Belullo (2011) examined the role of the

Internet as an agent in tourism destination image formation. It was determined that the Internet

creates a virtual experience of the destination, proving to significantly impact the consumers'

perceived image. Additionally, social networks can play an important role, acting as an inside

source of information for potential tourists (Govers and Go, 2004). This includes word-of-mouth

recommendations, engagement and multimedia sources. These multimedia sources allow potential tourists to visualize a more in-depth image of a destination.

Images influence the tourist's evaluation of a destination, ultimately impacting their decision to choose or reject a destination. Lim and O'Cass (2001) concluded similar results, reporting that a strong destination image allows a destination to stand out from its competitors, increasing the likelihood that the destination will be selected. It can logically be concluded that images are one of the most important and influential assets of marketing a tourist destination.

Social Media Tourism

Social media has created unprecedented opportunities for hotel and tourism businesses (Sánchez-Franco & Rondan-Cataluña, 2010). In the tourism sector, communication between business-to-business, business-to-customer, and customer-to-customer has significantly transformed, with a focus on creating genuine and trustworthy relationships (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) suggested that social media platforms are useful tools for managing customer relationships, as they provide businesses with the ability to attract, engage and retain customer relationships.

Upward trends in social media usage, specifically tourism consumers, have prompted hospitality and tourism organizations to investigate the role of social media in the travelers' decision-making process (Fuchs, Scholochov, & Höpken, 2009). Social media provides potential tourists with access to other travelers' experiences, a vital source of information when planning a vacation. Typically, the travel planning process is complex in nature and can be classified as a high risk, high-cost decision. In lieu of this, potential travelers extensively research destinations to ensure they are content with their decision and that their money is optimized (Murphy,

Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2007). Travelers have identified the various uses of social media in aiding them to search, organize, and share their travel experiences (Leung et al., 2013).

The use of social media for gathering travel information can be classified into three elements: (1) the online traveler, who identifies personal constraints (social, financial, etc.) and trip related requirements; (2) the online tourism domain, which act as an information hub from various sources, including social media; (3) the search engine, the representation of the tourism domain determined by design interface features: search result rankings, metadata and paid links (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). These design features are presumed to influence the traveler's overall perception and decision making.

Today, social media is comprised of various platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, etc.) which allow individuals to post content and multimedia in real-time from various locations. Vemeulen and Seegers (2009) believe that online exposure to other customer's experiences could amplify potential tourist's awareness and consideration to travel. Published reviews on tourist destinations and facilities act as an inexpensive and strategic marketing tool for destinations (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Xiang & Gretzel (2010) presented similar findings, suggesting that social media aids consumers during the travel information search, but can also acts as an effective destination marketing tool. In comparison to traditional marketing methods, social media serves to instill trust with customers, by placing less emphasis on promotion-oriented messages (Fernando, 2007; Schmallegger & Carson, 2008).

To measure the effectiveness of social media usage, engagement rates are calculated (Smith, 2013). The social media engagement theory has been extensively studied by several researchers. This study will reference Smith (2013) who defined social engagement as a method for calculating a brand's effectiveness of audience engagement. Moreover, it provides a

benchmark for advertisers, allowing them to compare their ability of delivering content to a specific audience (Smith, 2013). Similarly, Fishman (2016) explored the engagement rate of online video consumption across social networking platforms. It was determined that those videos with shorter video duration will generate higher user engagement (Fishman, 2016). As a relatively new measurement method for social media platforms, engagement metrics are still relatively exploratory.

Extensive research has been conducted on the effectiveness of social media from the consumer's perspective, however, limited academic research has explored the DMOs' point-of-view. Kasavana, Nusair, and Teodosic (2010) recognized the strategic success of Facebook, primarily its potential in assisting travel companies with their international marketing campaigns. Facebook offers businesses with access to consumer-rich data (Leung et al., 2013), enabling them to understand how consumers perceive their destination, brand, and organizational image. Hays, Page, & Buhalis (2013) employed a content analysis approach in order to analyze the Facebook and Twitter accounts of seven national tourism boards. An earlier pilot study was conducted by the researchers and indicated that Facebook and Twitter were the most common social media platforms used by DMOs. Based on the data collected, it was concluded that social media is still experimental, often varying among DMOs.

Xiang and Gretzel (2010) allude that 'the extent to which social media constitute the online tourism domain is not well understood in an objective, comprehensive way. Additional research is required in order to understand how DMOs are adopting and integrating social media as a destination marketing tool. This paper seeks to identify factors that influence the success of embedding social media by Canadian DMOs.

YouTube

YouTube, an online video-sharing website with approximately 1.5 billion monthly users (Matney, 2017), has quickly risen to be the global leader in the video streaming market. Its services are geared towards content sharing, where users are intended to supply and upload their own videos to the platform. With over six billion hours of video (Etherington, 2017), it is no surprise that advertisers are beginning to explore advertising and promotional opportunities within YouTube.

Social media networks have encouraged business-to-consumer websites to place a larger emphasis on integrating user-generated content. O'Connor (2008) researched the influence of user-generated content and its potential impact on motivating tourist purchases. It was concluded that information created by consumers is more trustworthy than traditional advertising. User-generated content is perceived to be a credible and influential factor for online consumers (Yoo & Gretzel, 2010). Similarly, Cheong and Morrison (2008) denoted that tourists heavily rely on user-generated content. Consumer reviews and social media threads improve consumer purchasing intent, as well as the perceived credibility of content (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Kraft, Rise, Sutton & Røysamb, 2005). Markwick (2001) suggested that images help to authenticate, as well as encourage tourists to explore genuine and intimidate experiences of the destination A prime example of integrating user-generated content within the tourism sector is by Tourism Ireland. In 2013, the national tourism board implemented Ireland GO, a campaign featuring short videos composed by Ireland locals. Uploading user-generated content provided viewers/potential tourists with a glimpse into the country from a local's perspective. The campaign draws reference to Gartner (1993), implying that tourist's desire authentic experiences.

Google and Ipsos MediaCT conducted a study on the adoption of YouTube in the travel industry (Crowel, Gribben, & Loo, 2014). It was determined that two thirds of U.S. travelers

watch online travel videos prior to booking their trip (Crowel et al., 2014). Researchers, Crowel et al. (2014) suggested that YouTube travel searches (destination names, general travel queries, local attractions, flights, hotels and travel brands) usually occur during the beginning stages of travel-planning. More specifically, eighty-eight percent of travel searches on YouTube are related to destinations, attractions/points of interest and/or general travel ideas (Crowel et al., 2014). Results from this research are dependent on YouTube's video categorization system, which entails the uploader classifying the video by content and theme.

Rising trends in YouTube usage has urged marketers to investigate the use of YouTube as a destination marketing tool. Embedding YouTube videos within corporate websites and blogs is presumed to add richness to a website, as well as attract potential tourists (Reino & Hay, 2011). Advertisers from a variety of industries are embracing online video, as they have been proven to drive consumer awareness and engagement (Crowel et al., 2014). It is predicted that online video consumption will continue to dominate, as researchers have predicted that by 2019, eighty percent of Internet consumer traffic will be watching online videos (Cisco, 2017).

Online video is a powerful medium for travel advertisers to highlight their destination, product, service, and brand. Crowel et al. (2014) explored the success of online videos produced by professionals/brands. Despite YouTube being a community-generated platform, it was determined that majority (67%) of travel-related views were produced by DMOs, such as Disney or Expedia (Crowel et al., 2014). In 2014, Visit California released, Dream365 Project, an online video campaign to attract potential travelers worldwide. *Dream365 Project* was a YouTube initiative that showcased travel opportunities in California. The success of this campaign is largely attributed to the "7% increase in trip consideration, as well as a 17% increase in likelihood to visit".

Reinhard (2009) contended that the perpetual success of YouTube has not been fully understood by marketers, as it requires them to "consistently and frequently publish refreshing content that has intrinsic value for audiences online". Reino and Hay (2011) presented similar findings, proposing that DMOs are having difficulties understanding the success of new media. They inferred that organizations are failing to recognize that "the media produced for traditional marketing outlets, cannot be transferred directly to YouTube" (Reino & Hay, 2011). Rather than redistributing their content from other mediums, destination marketing organization's should be producing content specifically for YouTube. In regards to destination marketing organizations, the facets of video content and production has not been formally researched. This paper seeks to explore the adoption and usage of YouTube by destination marketing organizations.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The purpose of the study was to understand the use of YouTube by Canadian DMOs. A pilot study was employed in order to narrow down the sample study of which channels to analyze. To begin, government official websites for all provinces/territories and major cities were examined. Major cities were classified by the 2016 census, identifying Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver as the largest Metropolitan areas in Canada. Moreover, channels were selected based off DMOs with 1000+ subscribers, that are actively using YouTube as a destination marketing tool. It is assumed that channels with over 1000 subscribers would present reliable data that can be used to formulate a conclusion. Based off the gathered information, it was concluded that five provinces and three major cities' channels should be studied.

A two stage approach was adopted, using a data scrubbing program to gather quantitative information from the following channels: Travel Alberta, Tourism Saskatchewan, Tourisme Quebec, Travel Ontario Canada, Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism, Tourisme Montreal, Tourism Toronto and Tourism Vancouver.

Data Collection

The initial stage of the data collection explored how Canadian DMOs are using YouTube to promote their destination. Data was collected from 1623 video recordings on June 1st, 2017, scrubbing all accessible data from the eight identified YouTube channels. To begin, data was collected on the DMOs channel, identifying their total subscribers, view counts and video uploads (Table 1). The purpose for collecting this data was to investigate the DMOs' frequency and use of YouTube. Due to time constraints of the study, 1000 videos were randomly selected for analysis.

Table 1
YouTube Channel Data

Domain	Subscribers n	Videos n	Views n
Provinces			
Travel Alberta Canada	13,826	153	18,323,325
Tourism Saskatchewan	1,0009	140	857,702
Travel Ontario Canada	4,077	80	3,299,642
Tourisme Québec	10,826	98	17,198,509
Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism	7,601	184	4,806,334
Major Cities			
Tourism Vancouver	3,150	190	1,244,911
Tourism Toronto	3,045	114	4,397,633
Tourisme Montreal	7,545	664	7,710,212

Notes: Data was collected from each DMOs YouTube channel on June 1st, 2017. The views category refers to the total amount of views for the entire channel.

Following the collection of channel statistics, the program scrubbed data on the DMOs uploaded videos. Information was recorded for each video, specifically in regards to the channel domain, URL link, video title, video description, duration and upload date (Table 2). Video upload dates ranged from July 2nd 2008 to May 23rd, 2017. This gathered information was vital to understand what type of content DMOs are promoting.

Table 2

YouTube Video Data

Field	Purpose	Example
Channel Domain	Name of the Channel where the video was posted	Travel Alberta
URL Link	The URL link to video allows the researchers to view the video at a later date when doing content analysis	https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=eke4s0erdgs
Video Title	The title of the video (as listed)	Alberta Canada - (remember to breathe) - Reuben and the Dark
Video Description	Text description of what the YouTube video is about	Explore Alberta Canada - the breathtaking landscapes and exciting experiences will captivate you.
Date Published	Date the video was initially published. It allows the researchers to calculate how long the video has been live on YouTube	2013-04-05
Duration	Length of the video	1:01 (1M, 1S)

The final step was to collect data on the engagement and viewership metrics, specifically gathering information on comments, likes, dislikes and view counts. This information provides valuable insights in regards to what content potential tourists are interested in watching.

Coding Scheme

Primary Category

Previous research exploring YouTube as a destination marketing tool has provided valuable insights into the application of YouTube in the tourism industry (Reino & Hay, 2011; Jakopovic, 2015). Despite this, limited research has been conducted on YouTube from a content-

specific perspective. For this study, methodology referenced Stepchenkova and Zhan's (2013) content analysis framework. Their study analyzed destination visuals on Facebook and Flickr, and developed a classification system based off visual attributes. Stepchenkova and Zhan coded the following categories: nature & landscape, people, archaeological sites, way of life, traditional clothing, architecture/buildings, outdoor/adventure, wildlife, art object and tourism facilities. Each video was analyzed and then coded into a primary category: way of life, nature & landscape, food, tourism facilities, promotional standard, promotional extended, events, outdoor/adventure and wildlife (Table 3). Videos were guided by Kardas' (1993) restrictions, which states that videos can only fall under one primary category.

Table 3

Primary Category: Coding Framework

Content Category	Description of Content
Way of Life	Way of life portrays the typical way that a person/group lives. It incorporates visuals into how the local people are living their daily lives, as well as their everyday activities. Examples include language, occupation, local people, culture, etc.
Nature & Landscape	Nature and Landscape visuals provide panoramic and close up shots on the destination's surrounding areas. Examples include mountains, lakes, forests, arctic, etc. If videos incorporate people and or state they are a promotional video, they should not be classified as nature & landscape.
Food	Cuisine refers to restaurants, bars, local eats, cuisine, etc. If videos are filmed at a food festival, they will be coded as an event rather than food.
Tourism Facilities	Tourism facilities refers to resorts, hotels, spas, ski resorts and lodges, etc. that are serving food and recreational grounds to tourists. Videos showing tourist attractions, such as museums, art galleries, etc. will be classified as Tourism Facilities.
Promotional Standard	Promotional videos are essentially used to promote a destination, and entice potential customers to visit. Videos that explicitly stated "TV commercial" or "promotional advertisement" were categorized under the promotional content category. This category is for video durations between 1s-30 seconds.
Promotional Extended	Promotional videos are essentially used to promote a destination, and entice potential customers to visit. Videos that explicitly stated "TV commercial" or "promotional advertisement" were categorized under the promotional content category. This category is for video durations between 31 seconds +.
Events	Events refer to planned public or social occasions. Examples include festivals, parades, Pride, business conventions, etc. If a video is referring to a food festival, they will be classified as an event.
Outdoor/Adventure	Anything that features active lifestyle and appreciation of nature is coded as outdoor/adventure (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). Skiing, hiking, swimming, hockey, zip lining, etc.
Wildlife	Wildlife shows animals, marine mammals and birds at the forefront of the video.

Following the primary categorization, another coding instrument was established. Table 4 outlines the nature of the video production, specifically differentiating video production between professional and amateur. With the advancement of video cameras and editing software, it can be quite difficult to differentiate these types of production. This coding instrument strives to provide a clear outline of video characteristics, based off visual quality, audio quality, editing (music, text, transition) and camera stability. It is important to delineate between the two production strategies in order to determine whether each have a profound impact on a consumer's willingness to purchase.

Table 4

Secondary Category: Coding Framework

Nature of Video	Definition	Key Visuals	Source
Professional	A video that has been created by the company or professional videographers. References TV commercials, music videos, promotional videos	● Panning/Zooming ● High quality camera ● High quality audio ● Editing with music, transition effects	(Hitchen, 2016)
User-Generated	Video content produced by non-professionals, drawing on their own thoughts, opinions or beliefs. References blogs, video blogs or slideshows	● Poor lighting ● Poor audio ● Shaky footage by a handheld camera ● Limited editing (no music, graphics, or transition effects	(Hitchen, 2016)

An inter coder reliability test was administered, by having a second researcher independently code a sample group of 50 videos. This was conducted in order to determine whether the coding schedules were an accurate and reliable representation of the DMOs

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uploaded videos. In the first pilot test, the results presented an inter-coder reliability of less than Cohen's kappa 86.0. After redefining the production categories, a second inter-coder reliability test was administered, where it reached an adequate level of reliability, 89% accuracy.

RESULTS

The following discussion determines the type of marketing strategies being implemented on YouTube by destination marketing organizations. The purpose of this study was to explore the proposed research questions, specifically in terms of content analysis, engagement metrics and video production strategies.

Research Question 1

How are destination marketing organizations using YouTube to manage their destination image?

Table 5 provides a detailed assessment from a content-specific perspective, categorizing the content into three sectors: Culture, Place and Promotion. The content analysis segmented each sector further by Events, Food, Nature & Landscape, Outdoor/Adventure, Promotional Extended, Promotional Standard, Tourism Facilities, Way of Life and Wildlife. The table presented below calculates the total number of videos in each sector and subcategory, as well as their frequency within the dataset.

Table 5

Attribute Frequencies

Categories	Total *n*	Frequency (%)
Culture	**519**	**51.9**
Events	207	20.7
Way of Life	222	22.2
Food	90	9.0
Place	**269**	**26.9**
Nature & Landscape	30	3.0
Outdoor/Adventure	146	14.6
Tourism Facilities	75	7.5
Wildlife	18	1.8
Promotion	**212**	**21.2**
Standard	59	5.9
Extended	153	15.3

The results present similarities amongst the type of content DMOs are producing, indicating that 519 of the 1000 videos showcased the destination culture, such as *Events, Way of Life* and *Food.* Deconstructing this sector further, displays that 222 of the 519 videos (42.7%) represent the local population's *Way of Life.* It is surmised that the Food category has a lower frequency (n=90), due to food festivals being coded as "Events" rather than "Food".

Examining the "Place" sector (n=269) reveals that 14.5% of the videos were outdoor/adventure oriented. Majority of videos within this subcategory featured tourists snowmobiling, skiing/snowboarding and fishing. *Wildlife* generated the least amount of videos (n=18).

Lastly, the promotional sector was the least frequent category, representing 21.2% of the sample study (n=212). Within this sector, extended promotional videos were predominantly redistributed content from TV commercials and represented 153 of the 1000 videos sampled.

Table 6 presents a summary of the type of content uploaded by provinces and cities. The destination marketing organizations were segmented into provinces and cities in order to determine whether there are differences between their marketing strategies and how they are conveying their destination. Results depict an observable difference between the type of content produced, as well as the number of videos uploaded.

Table 6

Content Analysis: Provinces and Cities

Domain	Culture n	Place n	Promotional n	Total n
Provinces	**107**	**196**	**132**	**435**
Alberta	14	53	36	103
Saskatchewan	35	40	9	84
Ontario	5	29	18	52
Quebec	21	26	21	68
Newfoundland & Labrador	32	48	48	128
Cities	**412**	**73**	**80**	**565**
Vancouver	76	19	21	116
Toronto	61	13	11	85
Montreal	275	41	48	364

Within the provincial sector, the most prominent category is "Place", which accounts for 196 of the 435 videos. The results further conclude that this category is proportionally uploaded

by all of the provincial DMOs, averaging 39.2 videos uploaded per DMO. On the contrary, the least prominent category is "culture", which represents 107 of the 435 videos.

In the cities sector, the findings suggest that the most prominent category is culture (n= 412). Contrary to the results from the provincial sector, the place category was the least frequent category, signifying 73 of the 565 uploaded videos.

There are large discrepancies in the numbers of videos being uploaded by provinces and cities, with 435 (43.5%) and 565 (56.5%) respectively. Disparities between the two samples point to an exuberant amount of videos being uploaded by Tourisme Montreal (n=364), which can be attributed to all of their videos being uploaded in both French & English.

Research Question 2

What types of video content are generating the greatest engagement rate? (i.e. views, likes, dislikes, comments)

Social media marketers measure their engagement rates in order to determine how effectively they are reaching their audience. The engagement rate calculation varies between social media platforms as each have their own unique engagement variables, such as followers, shares, likes, retweets, etc. The engagement rate for YouTube is calculated by adding the total interactions of each video (likes, dislikes and comments) divided by the total views per video. This average was used to determine what content was generating the highest engagement rate.

Table 7

Primary Category: Average Engagement Rate

Primary Category	Average Engagement Rate (%)
Events	0.67
Food	0.39
Nature & Landscape	0.30
Outdoor/Adventure	0.40
Promotional Extended	0.62
Promotional Standard	0.74
Tourism Facilities	0.40
Way of Life	0.54
Wildlife	0.34

Table 7 indicates variances in social media engagement between the primary video categories. Results concluded that the "Promotional Standard" videos received the highest average engagement rate of 0.74%, with a total of 158 comments, 132 dislikes and 1,258 likes. In comparison, the "Promotional Extended" category only averaged an engagement rate of 0.62%, with a total of 1,469 comments, 564 dislikes and 11,649 likes. Those videos categorized as Nature and Landscape, generated the lowest average engagement rate (0.30%). Examining this category further, reveals that the videos received a total of 67 comments, 47 dislikes, and 1,185 likes. It is important to note that these engagement rates are all relative to the number of videos within the category and how many views each video received.

The average views per day were calculated in order to account for different video upload dates. To determine the views per day, the days since upload date was calculated, which is the upload date subtracted by the date the data was collected (June 1st, 2017). Using this

information, the average views per day were calculated- dividing the views per video by the days since upload.

Table 8

Primary Category: Average Views per Day

Primary Category	Average Views per Day
Events	32.8
Food	18.1
Nature & Landscape	45.4
Outdoor/Adventure	62.9
Promotional Extended	95.9
Promotional Standard	878.8
Tourism Facilities	21.4
Way of Life	199.9
Wildlife	40.5

Table 8 concludes that the "Promotional Standard" videos are producing the highest amount of views per day [VPD] (n=878), whereas the "Promotional Extended" category has only generated 95.9 VPD. The category with the lowest average views per day, "Food", only accounted for 18.1 VPD.

Figure 1 presents a summary on the average views per video for each content category. To calculate, the average views were divided by the amount of videos within the category. The purpose of this calculation was to determine what content is producing the most amount of views.

Figure 2

Primary Category: Average Views per Video
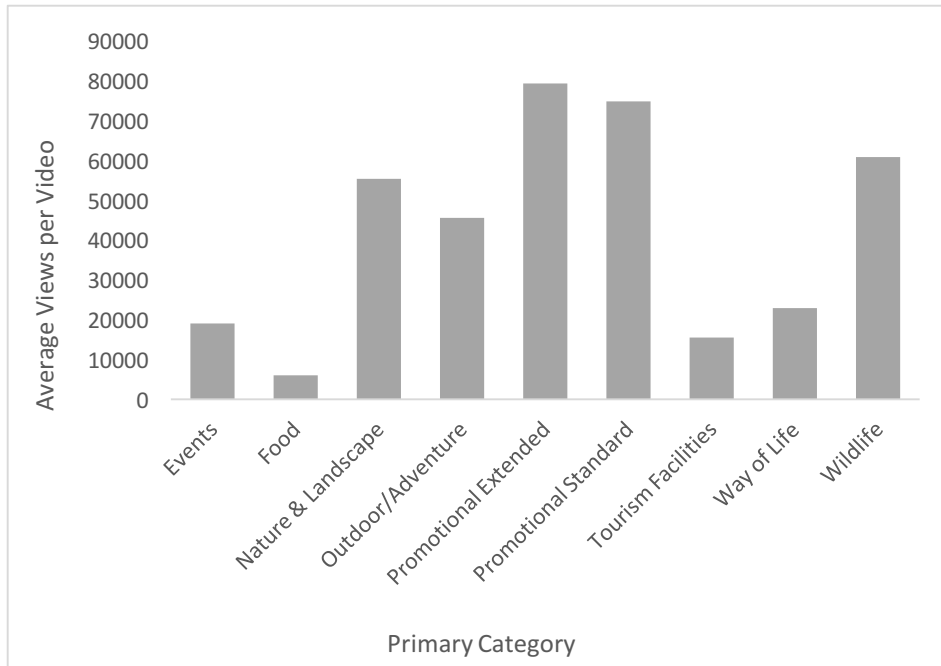
Results indicate that the videos within the "Promotional" sector generated the most amount of views per video [VPV]. More specifically, the "Promotional Extended" averaged 79, 289 VPV, and the "Promotional Standard" averaged 74,835 VPV.

Despite the limited amount of videos uploaded within the "Wildlife" category (n=18), they represent the third highest average view count, an average of 60,817 VPV. Whereas the "Events" category, one of the most frequently uploaded content categories, only generated an average of 6,144 VPV.

Research Question 3

What are the main differences between user-generated and professional videos of Canadian provinces and cities?

To understand the nature of production, videos were classified into two sub-categories: professionally-produced or user-generated content. Figure 2 compares and contrasts videos, illustrating the total frequency of video production for each DMO.

Figure 3

Secondary Category
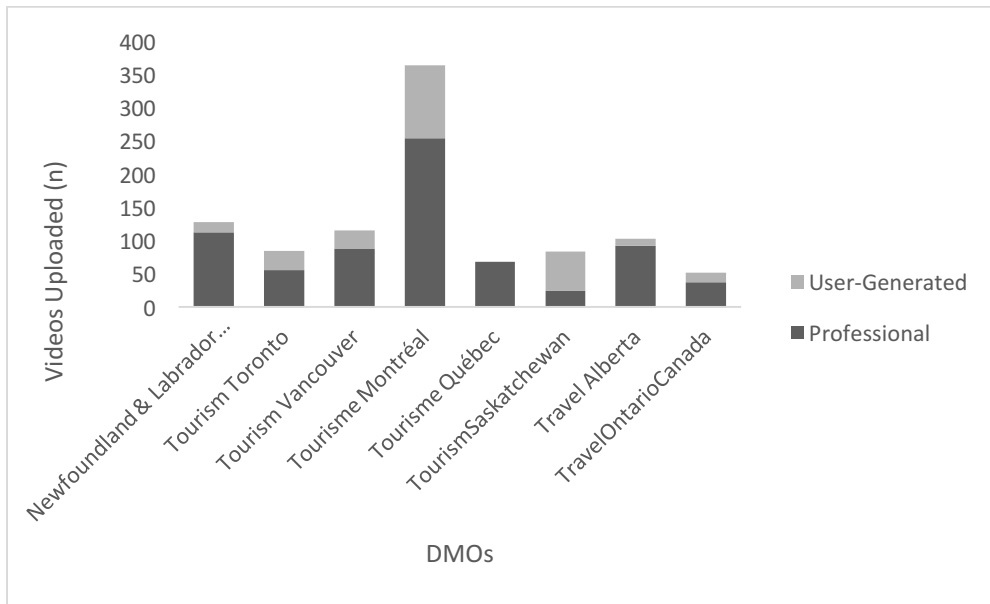
There is an observable difference between the DMOs video production usage. The results indicate that few DMOs are predominantly producing user-generated content, while a majority opted for a more professional approach. The findings revealed that majority (87.5%) of the DMOs were producing professional videos to promote their destination. It has been determined that Tourisme Quebec is exclusively (100%) uploading professionally-generated videos. Similarly, Newfoundland and Labrador is primarily uploading professional videos, accounting for 113 of the collected 128.

In contrast, the results indicate that Tourism Saskatchewan is uploading user-generated content, represented throughout 59 of the 84 sampled videos. This classifies as the highest percentage of UGC amongst the destination marketing organizations, signifying 70.2%.
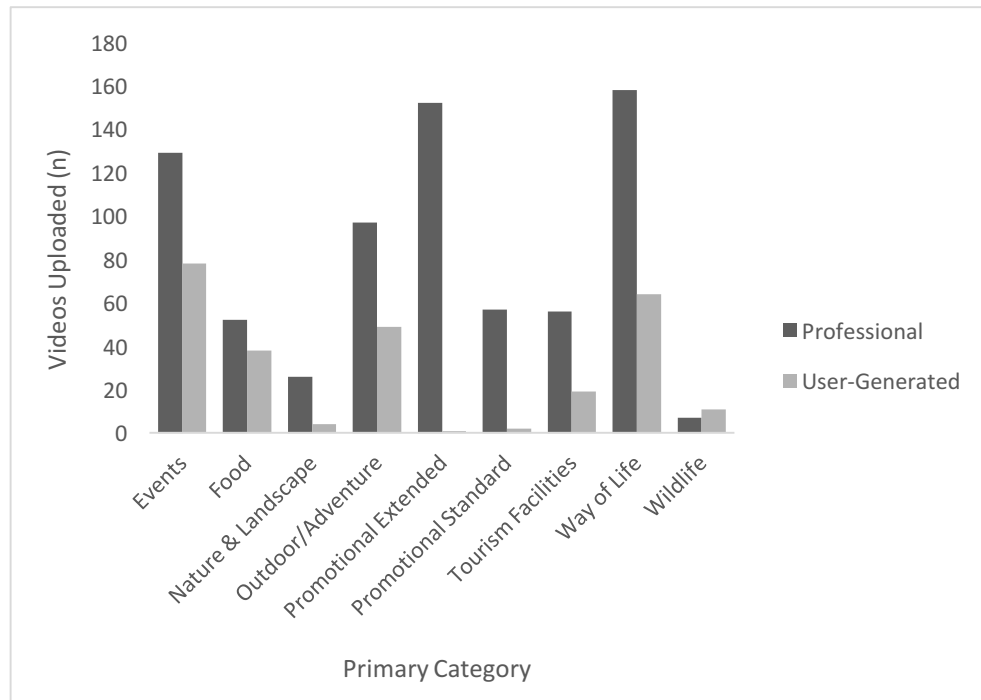
Figure 4

Primary & Secondary Category

Figure 4 provides insight into how the primary content is being produced, be it professionally or user-generated. Results conclude that four primary categories are distinctly being professionally-produced: Events, Outdoor/Adventure, Promotional Extended and Way of Life. Way of Life comprises mainly professionally-generated content, constituting 158 of 222 sampled videos. Similarly, Promotional Standard is exclusively being produced professionally (n= 57). Only 2 videos within this category were user-generated content. For the most part, the Wildlife category has uploaded user-generated content. User-generated content denotes 61.1% of the videos categorized as Wildlife.

DISCUSSION

The first research question sought to determine the marketing strategies being implemented by destination marketing organizations. Results found that videos were predominantly being used to educate and inform potential tourists about the destination's local culture and way of life (n=519). Theoretically, these results support Markwick (2001), which suggests that tourists seek to experience a "commonplace, every day and authentic life of the local people". The study presented a clear indication as to how destination marketing organizations were conveying their perceived destination image. Results conclude that provinces and cities have integrated different destination marketing strategies. Provinces seemed to use YouTube as a way of communicating place-based information, ranging from Nature and Landscape to Wildlife, whereas cities were primarily focused on advertising the culture. Two attributes frequently uploaded by all of the DMOs were "Events" and "Way of Life". In an attempt to provide tourists with a taste of Canadian culture, the DMOs have adapted their marketing strategies to promote less structured destination images. The findings support the theory of authenticity becoming increasingly important within the tourism industry. DMOs within this study have catered towards those tourists who want a glimpse of the local culture and environment.

The second research question intended to explore what types of video content are generating the greatest engagement rate. The research concluded that there is an observable relationship between the engagement rate and the content of the video. Videos within the "Promotional Standard" category generated the highest engagement rate, which can be attributed to their short video duration, i.e. under 30 seconds. According to a study conducted by Wistia Productions, the optimal length for video marketing content is usually between 15 to 45 seconds. Their results reveal that shorter videos retain consumer attention longer, and therefore have a

higher probability of increasing user engagement (Fishman, 2016). Previous academic research has yet to explore the YouTube engagement rate, making it extremely difficult to develop a benchmark of what is considered to be "successful". In the future, researchers could replicate this study to discover whether the video duration has a significant impact on the YouTube engagement rate.

Lastly, the third research question intended to investigate whether DMOs were primarily producing professional or user-generated videos. Based off the gathered data, it can be concluded that 87.5% of the DMOs were integrating professionally-produced videos within their channel. Yoo and Gretzel (2010) suggests that user-generated content is crucial for destination marketers, as UGC posted from the official tourism websites is said to increase credibility by 41.2%. Additional research by Willemsen, Neijens and Bronner (2011) concludes that consumer-generated media can potentially influence consumers' behaviour and purchasing intent. Despite a multitude of researchers indicating that UGC can influence tourists' choices, the Canadian DMOs have failed to comply to this theory. The research has indicated that the DMOs are primarily producing culture-based content, specifically on the local's way of life. Had this content been produced through a local's perspective, it could have provided tourists with a more authentic and credible source of information. This study intended to provide a more updated outlook as to whether DMOs were providing tourists with user-generated content. Additional research should explore the video production in relation to engagement rates. This will determine whether the nature of the video production (UGC or professional) has a profound effect on the amount of likes, shares or dislikes a video receives.

LIMITATIONS

This study presents methodological and practical implications. Currently, there is limited supporting research available on YouTube, specifically in regards to the tourism industry. This is contrary to the other social media platforms, as researchers have developed an engagement rate formula and applied them in the context of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In this specific instance, the researchers had difficulties identifying a validated formula to calculate engagement rates per video.

The results of this study were obtained using a content analysis methodology. Researchers were asked to code each video according to primary and secondary coding schemes, however, it should be noted that the categories were heavily reliant on subjective judgements by the researchers. This may confound the effects of personal variables and biases in the findings. Therefore, the findings related to video content and production should be viewed under these limitations. An inter coder reliability test was administered to mitigate potential bias of the coding schema.

Furthermore, increasing the number of destination marketing organizations studied may enhance the generalizability of the findings. Researchers only analyzed 1000 videos from eight destination marketing organizations. It would be erroneous to assume that this data sample represents the global use of YouTube as a destination marketing tool, as the study was restricted to Canada.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand how destination marketing organizations are using YouTube to promote their destination. Researchers examined (1) the most frequent destination attributes identified within the videos, (2) engagement rates per video, and (3) video production, namely user-generated or professionally produced. The proposed approach allowed the researchers to identify similarities and differences amongst the tourism boards marketing strategies.

The results of this study clearly indicate that the adoption and usage of YouTube as a destination marketing tool is still in its infancy. Tourism suppliers are failing to understand that they cannot redistribute their TV content onto YouTube and must tailor their content accordingly. Through this, it can be concluded that destination marketers have yet to determine the true marketing potential of YouTube. It is vital to recognize the changing marketplace and consumer demands in the tourism industry.

Increasing engagement rates denote a bright future for YouTube. Thus, it is no surprise that destination marketers have begun integrating online videos within their marketing mix. The future of the YouTube within the tourism industry is still to be determined.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The study confirmed that a variety of tourism boards are using YouTube to promote their destination, however, it is unknown how influential these videos are towards potential tourists. Further research is required in order to understand tourists' perception of destinations via YouTube videos. Moreover, this research will provide insight on the role of YouTube within the destination decision-making process. It would be beneficial for DMOs to fully understand the influences of their online videos to potential/current tourists. This would entail measuring an

individual's intention to visit/revisit a destination prior to watching an online video. Lastly,

future research should investigate if the trends found in this study are paralleled on a global

scale. This will confirm whether video production and content vary depending on the destination.

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