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## **CHAPTER 15**

### **THE FAN(G) EXPERIENCE: Social Media and Pop Culture Tourism**

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#### *Abstract*

Social media use in tourism is rapidly increasing. Previous research on social media focused on various aspects of consumer behavior. Specifically, participation, involvement and identity are identified as important concepts to understand use of websites/blogs/communities to share, interact and communicate. A web survey for fans of the Twilight Saga is implemented, using the concepts of cognitive, affective, and evaluative social identity and personal, product, and situational involvement. Effects on average use of social media, future intention to travel and participate at events as well as recommendations are evaluated using regression analysis. Findings indicate that pop culture fans use social media to a large extent and involvement dimensions are more important than social identity dimensions.

*Key words: pop culture tourism, social worlds, social identity, involvement.*

## INTRODUCTION

Pop culture can be defined as a culture liked by many, something other than “fine culture”, situated in the context of mass production and mass consumption, culture by the people for the people, accessible, and commercial (Lindgren, 2005; Strinati, 2004). The term pop culture tourism refers to tourism induced by pop culture. The tourists that engage in this type of tourism can be characterized as fans. This form of tourism is becoming increasingly popular (Beeton, 2008). It is highly demand driven (Müller, 2006) and since tourists associate the destination with dramatic events or dramatic characters portrayed in literature, on TV or in a film (Kim & Richardson, 2003), it tends to create strong emotional ties to the destination visited. Tourists are mainly attracted to the mythology of a destination, not the “real” place (MacCannell, 1999; Selwyn, 1996). Perhaps, this is an even more important aspect for pop culture tourists (cf. Connell, 2005). For example, their motives are far more complex than what the traditional push-pull model suggests (Beeton; 2005).

The majority of published research within the field of pop culture tourism has been focused on film tourism. According to Beeton’s (2010) review, scholars have moved from estimating tourist flows (Riley & van Doren, 1992; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Riley, Baker & van Doren, 1998), to exploring travel motives (Beeton, 2005; Riley & Van Doren, 1992), management issues and effects on destinations (Beeton, 2005; Mordue, 2001) to post-modern interpretations of the phenomenon. To date, the literature is dominated by case based

research, in which specific destinations and/or films/TV-series have been in focus. One of the most investigated cases is the film series Lord of the Rings, located in New Zealand (Buchmann, 2010; Buchmann, Moore & Fisher, 2010; Croy, 2010; Jones & Smith, 2005; Tzannelli, 2004). Another popular research case within the field is Dracula tourism in Romania (Huebner, 2011; Light, 2007; 2009; Shandley, Hamal & Tanase, 2006; Tanasescu, 2006). This research has to a large extent focused on the re-creation of a destination's image as a result of a popular book/film character. Furthermore, regional effects of film and TV-series tourism have been documented in a number of studies on the British Isles (Brereton, 2006; Meaney & Robb, 2006; Young & Young, 2008). For examples, Harry Potter (Mintel Group, 2003; Iwashita, 2006) and Braveheart (Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley, 2000) have been under study. Australia is another example where the effects of film tourism have been documented. High-profile cases are Ned Kelly (Frost, 2006) and the Australian outback (Frost, 2009). Hence, research on this form of tourism is not new. However, the explosive growth of the creative industries of film and TV in recent decades offering consumers enormous amounts of choices and hence fierce competition between businesses, combined with the increased use of internet and social media making popular culture products more accessible, calls for additional perspectives on research in this field. Fans of pop culture do not exist in isolation. They communicate with each other, facilitated by various Web 2.0 applications, and access new information on the phenomenon in question from the constant flow of updates and sources available on the Internet. The contribution of the research in this chapter is thus to introduce technology mediation into the study of pop culture tourism.

It is by now a widely established fact that consumers' use of social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter has reached enormous proportions by the end of the first decade in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Also, the number of blogs on the Internet is vast and is now counted in the

hundreds of millions according to Blogpulse (Nielsen, 2011). Social media is very much the essence of Web 2.0 and the focal points of applications on the Internet are that they are customer-centric, user-generated, interactive and dynamic, foster community participation, and build on collective community intelligence (O'Reilly, 2005). Social media is becoming increasingly important for tourism. A PhoCusWright (2010) report on social media in travel states that traveler reviews, photos, trip planning and sharing, and blogging are all influencing how travelers connect to and interact with suppliers, and products. Also, results from Xiang and Gretzel (2010) support this view. They found that social media constitute a substantial part in the search engine results of travel searches. PhoCusWright (2010) also reported that there was a 35% increase in monthly visitors to social travel websites between 2008 and 2009.

The possibility to use the Internet to diffuse information and share opinions at the “speed of light” is an important factor that influences the proliferation of pop culture phenomena and hence potentially also the development of pop culture tourism. As Guex (2010, pp. 426) state, “the Web has become for many a travel companion who gives good advice and has an attentive ear”. The study reported on in this chapter investigates if various forms of social media use are important for pop culture fans in terms of planning and choosing to travel and participate in events. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to examine the effects of social identity and involvement on future intention to travel, recommendation to others, and average use of social media.

The study contributes to knowledge on to what extent fans use social media to make travel decisions, and what characterizes these fans in terms of involvement and social identity. These are important factors both for developing marketing strategies as well as for destination planning and development.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND POP CULTURE TOURISTS

Literature on social media in a tourism context is limited but rapidly increasing. Importantly for marketing management, use of social media has been researched from the perspective of how a destination or a tourism company is portrayed in social media (Jeong & Jang, 2010; Schmallegger & Carson, 2009; Wenger, 2008; Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009; Zhang, Ye, Law, & Li, 2010).

Further knowledge is found in the majority of tourism related research which is focused on user behavior from various aspects. Research on why consumers' use social media can be exemplified by research on triggers of electronic word-of-mouth (Jeong & Jang, 2010), motivations to write online travel reviews (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008), and using online reviews and recommendations (Zhang, Pan, Smith, & Li, 2009). Also, research on satisfaction (Jiang, Mills, & Stepchenkova, 2008), perceived usefulness (Zehrer, Crofts, & Magnini, 2011), consumers' response and source credibility (Xie, Miao, Kuo, & Lee, 2010), and the complementary role of online reviews for holiday decision making (Papathanassis & Knolle, 2010) contribute to understanding the value and impact of social media for tourists. Literature specifically focusing on member participation, involvement and identification can also be found (Arsal, Baldwin, & Backman, 2009; Casalo, Flavián, & Guinaliú, 2010; Huang, Chou, & Lin, 2010; Sanchez-Franco & Rondan-Cataluña, 2010; Qu & Lee, 2011).

Research focusing on participation, involvement and identification points to a relevant feature of social media, namely, the formation of virtual communities where users share content and communicate. The forming of these social communities seems particularly relevant for communities of pop culture due to the users' often high levels of involvement.

### *Social Media Communities*

Highly involved pop culture consumers are often referred to as fans. It has been suggested that fan tourists to a large extent are motivated by socio-cultural and social belongingness needs such as cultural and tribal connections (Chen, 2007; Kim & Chalip, 2004; Smith & Stewart, 2007). From a marketing perspective, Cova and Cova (2002) suggested that citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are more interested in social links and the identities that come with them, than the pure consumption of objects. Social media is one means of offering and supporting this sense of community. Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007) argue that these new types of consumers, consumer tribes, are active and enthusiastic in their consumption, sometimes to the extreme, and produce a range of identities, practices, rituals, meanings, and even material culture itself. These tribes also develop marketing competencies that rival companies.

“...Harry Potter fans making and sharing their own games, or Star Trek fans producing their own television shows and broadcasting them to the world through the Internet...” (Cova, Kozinets and Shankar, 2007, p. 16)

Maffesolis (1996) definition of a consumer tribe is:

“A group that is loosely connected, inherently unstable, and is held together essentially through emotion and passion” (Otnes & Maclaran, 2007).

Unruh's (1980) concept of the social world can be seen as an early conceptualization of the phenomenon of consumer tribes, noting that common “world views” are often created which unite social actors in terms of practices, procedures and perspectives.

“Since social worlds are amorphous and diffuse, constellations of actors, organizations, events and practices which have coalesced into spheres of interest and involvement for

participants, it is likely that a powerful centralized authority structure does not exist” (Unruh, 1980, p. 277).

Four features of involvement are typical for social worlds: (1) *voluntary identification*, i.e. the entry into and departure from the social world is relatively free, accessible and occasionally unnoticed. (2) *partial involvement*, i.e. any social actor can only be involved in a portion of the total “goings-on” in any social world, (3) *multiple identification*, i.e. all actors, organizations, events, and practices are probably involved in, or function to support, multiple social worlds, and (4) *mediated interaction*, i.e. reliance on channels of communication rather than spatial, kinship, or “formal” ties necessary implies the importance of mediated interaction in forming and maintaining social organization in social worlds. Unruh (ibid) discusses communication centers as vital to the coordination of activities, production and interrelationships among those involved in the social world. Whatever formalization occurs in social worlds (Unruh, 1980) arises out of these centers of communication. They are generally the “hub” of debates concerning authenticity, procedural matters, the extension or contraction of boundaries and decisions revolving about the organizational focus.

In virtual social worlds (such as in an online game like Second Life) people are motivated by entertainment and getting away from real life, as well as to meet and interact with people from around the world, to communicate and maintain relationships (Zhou, Jin, Vogel, Fang & Chen, 2011). Similar motivations are found in research on participating in online social networks. Chung and Buhalis (2008) found that information acquisition (e.g. finding information, sharing experiences), social-psychological (e.g. seeking identity, belongingness), and hedonic benefits (e.g. having fun) influence level of participation and attitude towards an online travel community. People are also motivated to contribute to content in social media. Yoo and Gretzel (2008) found that those who write online travel

reviews are motivated by the sense of helping travel service providers, concerns for other consumers, and needs for enjoyment and a desire of positive recognition from others. Jepsen (2006) also found that information search in virtual communities to some extent replaces information from marketer-dominated sources.

Based on this literature review and that pop culture fans are also tourists and part of a community, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H1: Online pop culture fans are intensive users of social media.*

*H2: Social media are important for pop culture fans when planning and making decision about travel and event participation.*

#### *Social Identity and Online Community Participation*

Social identity and a sense of belonging are important for our understanding of any social community. Social identity is widely used to explain group and collective behavior (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). Research on social identity and virtual communities (groups of people who interact online for the sake of achieving personal as well as shared goals) is part of a more general theme of research which tries to understand the nature and role of the social influence exerted by the community on its members. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) and Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Klein Pearo (2004) use the concept of social identity to understand virtual community participation. They state that social identity “captures the main aspects of the individual’s identification with the group in the sense that the person comes to view himself or herself as a member of the community, as belonging to it” (Dholakia, Bagozzi & Klein Pearo, 2004, p. 245). In their research, social identity is conceptualized as having



cognitive, affective, and evaluative components. The cognitive component concerns how the individual forms a self-awareness of virtual community membership, the affective component implies that social identity include a sense of emotional involvement with the group, and evaluative social identity is focused on the evaluation of self-worth on the basis of belonging to the community. Dholakia, Bagozzi and Klein Pearos conceptualization of social identity was later used by Cheung and Lee (2010) to study intentional social action in online social networks. The importance of all three dimensions of social identity were confirmed, and their results show the importance of social identity in the development of a virtual community.

Similarly, the real value of online travel communities lies in the extent to which members can identify with the group through interaction (Casaló, Flavián and Guinalú, 2010). High interactive travel community members are more likely to share and promote the community with others (Qu & Lee, 2011). According to social exchange theory people interact in virtual communities because they expect that it will be rewarding both in terms of tangibles such as goods or money but also in terms of social amenities such as friendship. Also, not only the outcomes of interaction but the interaction itself can offer benefits. Interaction is about how to interact, with whom, and what should be exchanged (Füller, 2010). Research on consumer interactions in virtual communities shows that the stronger the social ties and the more enjoyment is experienced in interactions the more likely the member is to display reciprocal behavior (Chan & Li, 2010). Hence, the authors conclude that consumers not only focus on utilitarian values but also value hedonic social relationships and enjoyment when determining their engagement in virtual communities and co-shopping behavior.

**Kommentar [m1]:** e-fluentials Sun et al. 2006  
<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol11/issue4/sun.html>

As noted above, a sense of belonging is important in online communities. However, research also shows that members of a travel community with a high degree of identification with the group take an active role by sharing knowledge while they may not be influenced in their product-related behaviors, although this is moderated if members of a community are highly interactive (Qu & Lee, 2011). Furthermore, in blogs people share detailed accounts of experiences. These blog posts later on influence readers and potentially influence purchase decisions. Research has shown that blog users find multiple evaluations that are concordant helpful, irrespective of if they are positive or negative. Negative postings are also not always a bad thing if they are followed by a positive counter-reaction (Zehrer, Crofts & Magnini, 2011). Attempting to influence behavior and retain customers to their online services, websites like Virtual Tourist and Lonely Planet has integrated community functionalities to build a sense of belonging and trust (Franco & Rondan-Cataluña, 2009). Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H3: Perceived social identity in online communities has a positive effect on online pop culture fans' future intention to travel and participate at events.*

*H4: Perceived social identity has a positive effect on online pop culture fans' future intention to recommend to others to travel or participate in events.*

*H5: Perceived social identity has a positive effect on online pop culture fans' average use of websites/blogs/communities.*

#### *Involvement*

The extent of consumers' involvement with an object is said to impact behavioral decisions (Zaichkowsky, 1985; 1986). According to Andrews, Durvasula, and Akhter (1990)

the level of intensity in involvement varies by product types, situations, and individual conditions. Involvement is defined by Park, Lee, and Han (2007) as “the perceived personal relevance of a product based on the individual consumer’s needs, interests, and values” (p. 129). In order to explain bloggers’ intention to purchase travel products, Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) propose to model involvement as personal involvement, product involvement, and situation involvement. Personal involvement is related to consumers’ inner needs, interests, and values. Product involvement is instead focused on the consumers’ perceptions about the product such as the risk involved, price, symbolic meaning, endurance, pleasure, importance, brand, and purchase duration. Situation involvement is defined as the situations that consumers’ face when interacting with product communication, purchasing the product, using the product, and risk perceptions. They find that high-involvement travel bloggers are more likely to form a favorable impression towards marketing communication in blogs. Also, Sanchez-Franco and Rondan-Cataluña (2010) find that level of purchase involvement has a strong moderating effect on consumers’ willingness to engage in online service relationships and that virtual communities should be designed according to the customers’ involvement levels. Furthermore, Cai, Feng and Breiter (2004) conclude that consumers who have high levels of purchase involvement are more likely than others to use the Internet to search for destination information. These studies clearly show the effect of involvement on consumer perceptions and intentions of marketing activities in an Internet context.

Hence, different personal perceptions, product characteristics, and situations will lead to various levels of involvement. In this study Huang et al’s (2010) model of involvement (personal-, product-, and situation involvement) is used to understand pop culture fans and their use of the Internet and social media. Level of involvement in the pop culture phenomenon as such, as well as their involvement in the online community is explored. Also,

the effect of involvement on future travel intention and intention to recommend is investigated. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H6: Level of perceived involvement has a positive effect on online pop culture fans' future intention to travel and participate in events.*

*H7: Level of perceived involvement has a positive effect on online pop culture fans' future intention to recommend to others to travel or participate in events.*

*H8: Level of perceived involvement has a positive effect on online pop culture fans' use of websites/blogs/communities.*

#### *The Twilight Saga Fans, Tourists and Web Users*

The empirical case for the role of social media in tourism presented here is focused on the pop culture phenomenon and international block-buster movies and bestselling books - the Twilight Saga. Twilight is a story about the teenager Bella Swan and her impossible romance with vampire boyfriend Edward Cullen. The story is primarily set in the small town Forks, Washington which is the rainiest town in continental US. She also befriends a young man called Jacob Black who turns out to be a werewolf. In short, the story has a strong romantic element with a touch of science fiction (<http://www.stepheniemeyer.com>). The four books included in the series have sold a total of 226 million copies worldwide (<http://wiki.answers.com/>). The three films released before 2011 have grossed over 2.3 billion US dollars worldwide ([www.the-numbers.com/](http://www.the-numbers.com/)).

Contrary, to the media perpetuated image of Twilight fans as young, screaming, obsessive girls, the Twilight Saga attracts a wide range of fans, mostly females between the ages of 8 – 80 (Wilson, 2011). Twilight's main attraction can be found, according to scholars, in its vacillation between contradictory messages: "a series that presents neither a subversive nor a conservative view of larger social contexts but is an ambiguous mixture of both" (Wilson, 2011, p. 8).

The Twilight Saga fan community includes many websites, blogs, forums, and on-line networks which are dedicated to this phenomenon. Online, these fans discuss their own constructed meaning of Twilight: "In both the virtual world and the real world, love, romance, and desire are held up as the meaning behind Twilight" (Wilson, 2011, p. 44). In addition to this, their online behavior includes more superficial elements, at least among the more mature female fan-base, which focuses on the romantic message of the saga: "albeit in a more "sexed-up" form/.../a sort of Playgirl for Twilight fans (sans the full-frontal nudity but with plenty of bare chests and bulging muscles)" (Wilson, 2011, p. 44).

Furthermore, fans use Twilight websites, blogs and forums when searching for and communicating information before, during and after their Twilight related trips. Many of them include various types of explicit tourist information often provided by other users (see example in Figure 1 and 2). These "online spaces" constitute a platform for fans to interact, search for and share information related to their interest in this pop culture phenomenon and hence potentially influences the behavior of these fans including their tourism behavior. The fandome can be described as very organized, not least when it comes to tourism. There is an abundance of examples of online Twilight fandome organized trips to the locations where the

films have been shot, to the destinations where the book series are set (e.g. Twatwaffels on Twitarded.blogspot.com), and Twilight events, conventions and get-togethers (e.g. TwiMOMs Conventions & Get-Togethers on Twilightmoms.com). The principal destinations for Twilight tourism in terms of setting (i.e. where story is set, Frost, 2006; 2009), are two small towns in the US and in Italy - Forks, Washington and Volterra, in Tuscany. Regarding the locations where the films have been shot, the main attractions are Portland, Oregon in the US, British Columbia in Canada and Montepulciano, Italy. To this, in major cities all over the world official and unofficial Twilight events/conventions are held with thousands of visitors several times a year by event companies such as Twilight Convention Tour, Twicon, and Eternal Twilight.

*INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE*

*INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE*

*INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE*

### *Study Methods*

An international web survey was implemented as a link on websites for Twilight fans offering Web 2.0 applications in September 2010 to measure the activities of the Twilight Saga online community and their tourism behavior. 40 websites/blogs/communities dedicated to the Twilight Saga were identified through a search for websites/blogs/communities with a large number of visitors/users (based on the number of visitors/users published by the site or through their position as nodes in the online community). When one was identified then this site was searched for affiliate sites, mention of sites, and links to other sites which were then

added to the list of websites which could be used for sampling. This can be described as a form of snowball sampling. Attention was also paid to the geographical location of websites, so that an international representation of respondents could be reached. The owners/administrators of the websites were contacted and invited to publish the link to the web survey, and 6 of them did in the end actually publish the link. The link was also picked up by Twitter users and was both tweeted and re-tweeted generating additional respondents from the online Twilight community.

The questionnaire was developed based on literature reviews for the research themes included in the survey and pilot tests were conducted using friends and colleagues as test respondents. The survey measured behavior related to Twilight tourism and participation in events, motivation, perceived value, future behavioral intention, as well as use of the Internet including the use of blogs and communities. The total number of questions was 38 and items were measured using a Likert type scale from 1-7 as well as categorical, dichotomous, and open ended questions. The total number of respondents was 967.

Table 1 shows the descriptive distribution of the sample. However, due to the positioning of the background questions at the end of the survey, the number of respondents to these questions is lower than that of other parts of the questionnaire.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Measure items on average use of Twilight related websites/blogs/communities, experience of Twilight related content on the Internet, purpose of this use, type of use, and Twilight related tourism behavior were developed by the authors (see Appendix 1 for the survey questions). Furthermore, from the literature review we assume that future intention to

participate or recommend as well as average use depend on 2 variables, social identity and involvement. Six items adapted from Dholakia et al. (2004) and Cheung and Lee (2010) were used to measure social identity. 13 items that measure involvement were adapted from Huang et al. (2010). See Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The dataset was prepared for further analysis and cases considered as outliers were removed. 881 respondents were retained for further analysis. Reliability tests of the scales used in the regression analysis showed acceptable levels of Cronbach alpha coefficients (Nunnally, 1978); cognitive social identity (0.88), affective social identity (0.93), evaluative social identity (0.96), personal involvement (0.83), product involvement (0.75), and situation involvement (0.86). The data was also evaluated in terms of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.

#### *Twilight Fans Behavior and Internet Use*

The majority of the respondents (66%,  $n=772$ ) state that they have travelled to Twilight related destinations or events. Also, 63% ( $n=517$ ) report that their interest in Twilight was the primary motive for travelling. The most important source of information ( $n=326$ ) is Twilight websites (62%), other websites (16.5%), social media (10.5%). Specifically, respondents use information in blogs and communities to plan trips and events ( $M=5.64$ ,  $n=464$ ) and while they participate ( $M=5.59$ ,  $n=459$ ). They also state that they share these experiences on blogs and communities ( $M=5.19$ ,  $n=461$ ) and that it influenced their decision ( $M=5.19$ ,  $n=462$ ).



Future travel intentions to Twilight related destinations are indicated by the fact that 61% ( $n=500$ ) of the respondent's state that it is likely or extremely likely that they will participate in a Twilight related event or trip. 60% ( $n=498$ ) of the respondents also state that it is likely or extremely likely that they will recommend others to participate at a Twilight related event/trip.

Twilight fans are avid users of the Internet. 92% of the respondents ( $n=881$ ) visit a Twilight related website, blog, or community from several times a day to a few times every week. They are also experienced users since 50% of respondents ( $n=868$ ) started to search for Twilight related content on the Internet between 1-2 years ago, 30% more than 2 years ago and a minority, 20%, did so more recently (up until a year ago). The most important purposes for searching for Twilight related content on the internet is to find information in general, to find information on the actors/characters, to read or watch Twilight related content, to find exclusive Twilight content, and to interact with other fans.

#### *Social Identity, Involvement and Effects on Use and Future Intention*

The variables used for analyzing the effects of social identity and involvement are future intention to participate in a Twilight related event/trip (F1), future intention to recommend others to participate at a Twilight related event/trip (F2), average use of Twilight related website/blog/community (AU), cognitive social identity (CSI), affective social identity (ASI), evaluative social identity (ESI), personal involvement (PI), product involvement (PRI), and situation involvement (SI).

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

As shown by the mean values in Table 3 the majority of respondents perceive strong links between the online community and themselves with the highest mean occurring for affective social identity indicating that emotional ties are most important. Involvement variables on the other hand show much higher means. The high mean of personal involvement shows how respondents perceive that what is available on Twilight website, blogs, and communities is very much linked to their inner needs, interests, and values. Also, situation involvement has a high mean score indicating how valuable the respondents perceive the use of these online websites, blogs, and communities.

In order to test the direction and strength of the linear relationship between the concepts of social identity, involvement, and Twilight fans future intentions to participate at a Twilight related event/trip or to recommend this to others, Pearson's correlation was used. Results are shown in Table 4. The interpretation of the results follows the criteria established by Cohen (1988). Between the dependent variables (F1 and F2) the correlation effect is considered large. Also, large effects are found between CSI and ASI, CSI and ESI, ASI and ESI, PI and PRI, PI and SI. All other correlations are considered moderate except between F2 and AU, F2 and CSI, and AU and CSI which have small effects.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Three models were tested with multiple regression analysis conducted on the three independent variables separately. The independent variables for all the models were cognitive social identity, affective social identity, evaluative social identity, personal involvement, product involvement, and situation involvement. The dependent variable for Model 1 was future intention to participate at a Twilight related event/trip. For Model 2 it was future

intention to recommend others to participate at a Twilight related event/trip, and for Model 3 it was average use of Twilight related websites/blogs/communities.

High correlations between dependent and independent variables are first indicators of causal relationships within the overall construct. No multicollinearity problems are shown in the correlations or the tolerance or VIF statistics when compared to established thresholds (e.g. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2005).

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

As seen in Table 5 in Model 1 and 2 the largest significant contributions to explaining future intention to participate and future intention to recommend others to participate at a Twilight related event/trip was found with the personal involvement and product involvement variables. However, in Model 3, a part from large significant contributions to explain average use of Twilight related website/blog/community by the personal and product involvement variables cognitive social identity also makes a significant contribution to explain this behavior.

The combination of variables that entered the regression explain 33% of the variance in Twilight tourists future intentions and 24% of their future intention to recommend, as well as 25% of average use of Twilight related website/blog/community. The effect size ( $f^2$ ) for Model 1 was .05, for Model 2 it was 0.32, and for Model 3 it was 0.34. Using Cohen's (1988) conventions for effect size these are all large effects.

CONCLUSION

The proliferation of social media use in customers' online activities raises questions as to the effects of this for marketing in general as well as consumer behavior. Based on previous research and available statistics it is clear that social media influences the behavior of tourists in their planning, purchasing, and post-consumption activities. In social media communities tourists are motivated by entertainment, communication, interaction and maintaining relationships (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Jepsen, 2006; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008; Zhou, Jin, Vogel, Fang & Chen, 2011). Social identity and a sense of belonging are important for the development and success of online communities (Casaló, Flavián and Guinaliu, 2010; Chan & Li, 2010) and tourists' level of involvement can explain the formation of certain behaviors (Cai, Feng and Breiter 2004; Huang, Chou and Lin, 2010; Sanchez-Franco and Rondan-Cataluña, 2010).

Highly involved pop culture consumers can be characterized as fans and they are often motivated by socio-cultural and social belongingness needs (Chen, 2007; Kim & Chalip, 2004; Smith & Stewart, 2007). Also, they are engaged in travelling to places in connection to their interest and they use and meet on various websites, blogs, and communities. This chapter investigates the importance of social media for pop culture fans based on an online survey of fans of the Twilight Saga. The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of social identity and involvement on future intention to travel, recommendation to others, and average use of social media.

The results show that pop culture fans use social media to a large extent and that it is important for making decisions about travel and event participation. They use social media in order to find information but also to interact with other fans. Overall involvement dimensions are more important than social identity dimensions. Personal involvement and product

involvement are the most important factors which explain use of social media, future intention to travel and participate in events as well as to recommend to others. This implies that fans' inner needs, interests and values as well as perceptions about the product are most important for social media use and tourism behavior. Emotional ties and self-awareness are also valuable explanatory factors, and also fans' interaction with websites, blogs, and communities. Perceptions of self-worth seem to be less important implying that these fans do not feel that it is important to be valued by the community.

This study contributes to our understanding of social media use in tourism. Particularly, reasons for using social media in connection to future tourism behavior are better understood. By pointing at the importance of customers' inner needs, interests and values when using social media, marketing strategies can be formulated to focus the fulfillment of these customer motives. It is also evident that the social media channel is important in shaping tourism behavior, something which is a valuable insight when prioritizing marketing activities. Furthermore, the findings indicating that fans' perception about the product are very important for their use of social media and tourism related behavior can be seen as an implication that not all types of tourism can expect the same benefits of social media marketing. Pop culture tourists can be characterized by their strong involvement in a specific phenomenon, in this case the Twilight Saga, and this drives their use of social media and consequently their intention to travel. This in turn supports the idea that social media use is an important link between pop culture fans and their tourism related behavior.

Several topics for future research can be drawn from this study. First, the reasons for the weak contribution of social identity towards future intention to travel, recommend, and

use social media need to be further explored. Second, if in fact pop culture fans disposition to be highly involved and consequently causing high levels of social media use means that they are somehow different to other tourists, this needs to be verified by studying other types of tourists. Third, since social identity and involvement only partly explain the variance in future intentions and use of websites, blogs, and communities other concepts need to be explored to complement these findings.

Regarding methods to study social media use in tourism it is proposed that on the one hand tourists with high levels of social media use need to be further studied from as many aspects as possible. Especially in terms of concepts that can explain the motives behind their use. On the other hand, further knowledge on areas of tourism related behavior where social media use is not so widespread is needed. In this study an online survey was used and the sample was users of website, blogs, and communities connected to the Twilight Saga. A type of snowball sampling was used in order to frame a sample which to the best of our knowledge represent the online community of Twilight fans. The generalizability of the results from a sample where the population to a large extent is unknown, in terms of size and general characteristics, is of course always a potential limitation. Therefore, a mixed methods approach using triangulation is proposed for future research in order to increase both reliability and validity. For instance, focus group interviews or in-depth interviews with tourists who use social media for various purposes could be complemented with online surveys and experimental designs.

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## Appendix 1

Question	Scale
How often on average do you visit a Twilight related website/blog/community?	1 = several times a day 2 = every day 3 = a few times every week 4 = once every week 5 = a few times every month 6 = Once every month 7 = Less than every month 8 = Less than every six months
When did you first start searching for Twilight related content on the Internet?	1 = Now until 6 months ago 2 = 7-12 months ago 3 = 13-18 months ago 4 = 19-24 months ago 5 = 25-30 months ago 6 = 31-36 months ago 7 = 37-42 months ago 8 = 43-48 months ago 9 = 49-54 months ago 10 = 55-60 months ago 11 = more than 5 years ago
When searching for Twilight related content on the Internet, which are the three main purposes?	To find information on events/trips To plan participation at events/trips To book participation at events/trips To find information in general To find information on the actors/characters To purchase Twilight related products To read or watch Twilight related content To read or listen to fan-fiction related to Twilight To find exclusive Twilight content To look or download Twilight related pictures and applications To watch or download fan-made videos To interact with other fans Other, please specify
Have you participated at a Twilight related event/trip (e.g. convention, visit to movie locations or places portrayed in the books, movie premier, dvd release, get-together, party)?	Yes/No
Please evaluate the following statements regarding your use of social media and your participation at Twilight related events/trips. - I have used information in	1= Not at all, 7= to a large extent

<p>blogs/communities to plan my participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information in blogs/communities influenced my decision to participate.</li> <li>- Information in blogs/communities influenced my decision NOT to participate.</li> <li>- Information in blogs/communities was helpful while I participated.</li> <li>- After I participate, I have shared my experiences on blogs/communities.</li> </ul>	
How many Twilight related events/trips have you participated in where Twilight was the primary motive for your participation?	1-11 (1 = 1, 11 = more than 10)
How many Twilight related events/trips have you participated in where Twilight was the secondary motive for your participation?	1-11 (1 = 1, 11 = more than 10)
Regarding your most recent trip/event: Would you, at this point in time, have travelled to this destination if it was not for Twilight?	Yes/No
Regarding your most recent trip/event: What was your primary source of information when planning your event/trip?	<p>Travel operator/agency (on-line and off-line)</p> <p>Social media (blogs and communities)</p> <p>Twilight related websites</p> <p>Other Internet websites</p> <p>Word-of-mouth in real life</p> <p>Other, please specify</p>
<p>To what extent is it likely that you would do the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate at a Twilight related event/trip</li> <li>- Recommend to others to participate at a Twilight related event/trip</li> </ul>	1= Not likely, 7= Extremely likely

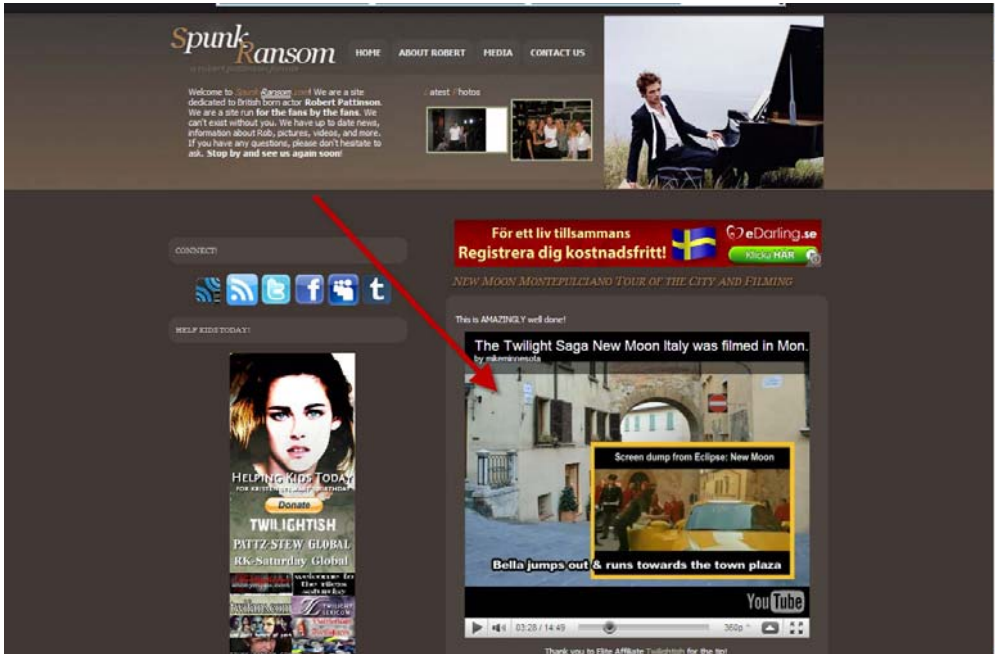


Figure 1: User-generated slide-show with voice-over and music on a website. The slide-show includes screen dumps from films compared to real life photos taken by a fan travelling to Italy where there are several locations connected to the books and films of the Twilight Saga.

**Google Map of all filming locations from Twilight!!**

Posted by [ImPriNtEd\\*By\\*JaKe!](#) on April 11, 2011 at 10:27am  
[View ImPriNtEd\\*By\\*JaKe!'s blog](#)

View [Twilight Journey](#) in a larger map

Hey guys thought id share this with you, I did this tour last summer and it took me about 8 months to find all the locations... it was an amazing trip and I recommend going if you can.) I am going to Forks and Vancouver this September to do the New moon, Eclipse and Breaking Dawn tour which I am still working on!

I am going to post the addresses to the locations as well... please leave me feedback once you go on your own twilight adventures.)

DAY TRIP TO PORTLAND AND AREA!!!

1. Dew Drop Inn 100 Fern Hill Rd. Forks, WA 98331, United States (888) 433-9376- This is where we stayed for a week

Figure 2: Blog post with user-generated content related to Twilight tourism.

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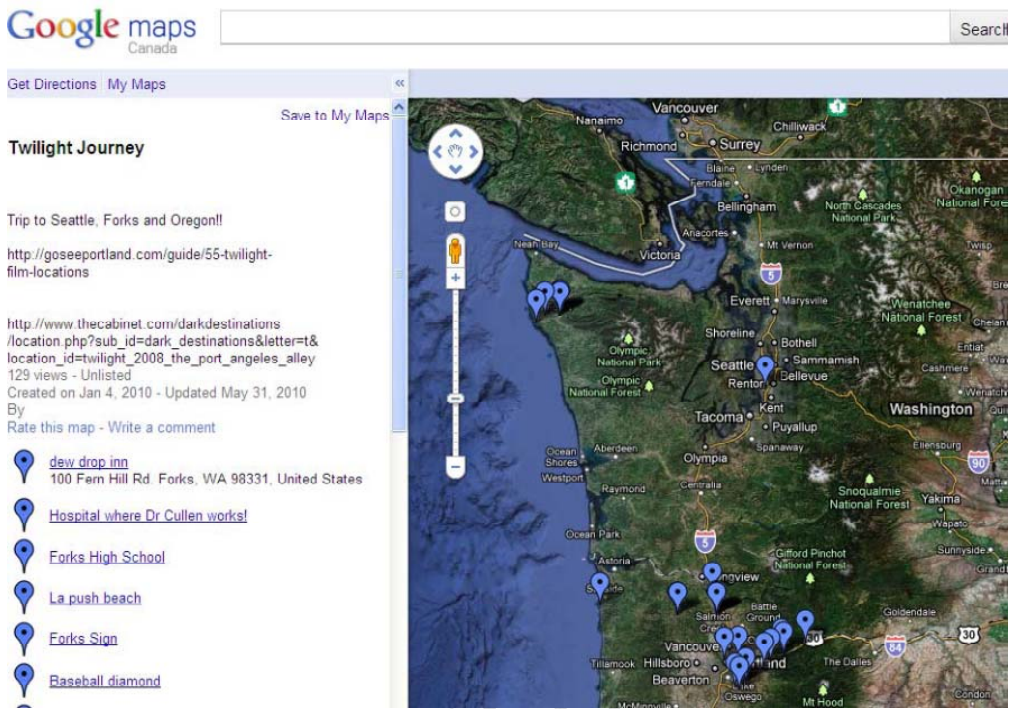


Figure 3: Google map with places linked to Twilight.

Table 1: Sample descriptives

<b>Sample descriptives</b>	<b>% of n=407 - 433</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	1%
Women	99%
<b>Age</b>	
Between 12-67	Median: 20
<b>Country of origin</b>	
Sweden	64%
North America	19%
Other (South America, Asia, Europe, Australia)	17%
<b>Family status</b>	
Single	48%
Single with children under 18	3%
Married/common law	8%
Married/common law with children under 18	12%
Other	29%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than high school	27%
High school	24%
Under graduate	41%
Post graduate	8%

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Table 2: Operational measures for social identity and involvement

Items	Scale	Construct
<p>Please evaluate the following statements as regards to your use of Twilight blogs/communities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. My self-image overlaps with the identity of the user group as I perceive it</li> <li>2. When I'm interacting with other users on blogs/communities I feel there is an overlap between my personal identity and the identity of the group</li> <li>3. I am very attached to the user group</li> <li>4. I have a strong feeling of belongingness toward the user group</li> <li>5. I am a valuable member of the group</li> <li>6. I am an important member of the group</li> </ol>	1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree	Social identity (Cheung et al., 2010) Item 1 and 2: cognitive social identity, item 3 and 4: affective social identity, item 5 and 6 evaluative social identity.
<p>Please evaluate the following statements in relation to your involvement in Twilight.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I'm interested in reading blogs about Twilight information and photos etc.</li> <li>2. When reading information in blogs I feel the information is appealing</li> <li>3. When reading information in blogs I feel that Twilight is relevant in my life</li> <li>4. When reading information in blogs I feel that Twilight means a lot to me</li> <li>5. I'm interested in Twilight</li> <li>6. Twilight is essential to me, thus it is difficult to choose between Twilight and my other hobbies</li> <li>7. Purchasing Twilight products is a ways of rewarding myself</li> <li>8. The Twilight products I purchase symbolize my personality and character</li> <li>9. I think Twilight blogs provide good efficiency in information searching</li> <li>10. I think Twilight blogs provide sufficient information</li> <li>11. I think what is written in Twilight blogs is reliable</li> <li>12. I think the communication in Twilight blogs is free from being interfered by sales-persons</li> <li>13. I think the communication in Twilight blogs is free from being interfered by friends outside the Twilight community</li> </ol>	1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree	Involvement (Huang et al., (2010). Item 1-4: personal involvement, items 5-8: product involvement, items 9-13: situation involvement.



Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the dependent and explanatory variables

<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. deviation</b>
F1	500	4.99	2.158
F2	498	4.83	2.156
AU	881	2.06*	1.148
CSI	396	3.0051	1.780
ASI	394	3.1256	2.029
ESI	400	2.9438	2.040
PI	439	5.8759	1.140
PRI	433	4.4307	1.496
SI	417	5.0293	1.323

\*Note that 1 represents several times a day and 8 less than every six months.

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Table 4: Pearson's correlations between measures of future intention, average use of websites/blogs/communities, social identity, and involvement.

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
F1	-	.813**	-.350**	.361**	.425**	.389**	.483**	.473**	.393**
F2		-	-.245**	.273**	.345**	.311**	.415**	.402**	.353**
AU*			-	-.215**	-.334**	-.328**	-.433**	-.381**	-.357**
CSI				-	.638**	.527**	.409**	.466**	.376**
ASI					-	.800**	.409**	.475**	.349**
ESI						-	.361**	.429**	.361**
PI							-	.542**	.580**
PRI								-	.498**
SI									-

\*Note that this scale is reversed so that 1 indicates high frequency of use.

\*\* $p < .001$  (Sig. 2-tailed, pairwise exclusion of cases)

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Table 5: Regression analysis of social identity and involvement on future intention and average use.

<b>Model 1</b>						
<b>Dependent variable:</b>	F1 (Future intention to participate at Twilight related event/trip)					
<b>Variable</b>	<i>Standardized coefficients</i>		<i>Collinearity statistics</i>		<i>t-Statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	Beta	Std. Error	Tolerance	VIF		
CSI	.014	.070	.546	1.832	0.251	.802
ASI	.133	.084	.289	3.463	1.683	.093
ESI	.078	.076	.356	2.806	1.088	.277
PI	.241	.108	.561	1.783	4.237	.000
PRI	.200	.081	.579	1.727	3.569	.000
SI	.077	.089	.608	1.644	1.416	.157
Model fit: $R^2 = .334$ , F-value = 30.616, $p = 0.000$						
<b>Model 2</b>						
<b>Dependent variable:</b>	F2 (Future intention to recommend others to participate at a Twilight related event)					
CSI	-.040	.075	.546	1.832	-.642	.521
ASI	.133	.090	.289	3.463	1.572	.117
ESI	.043	.081	.356	2.806	.560	.576
PI	.208	.115	.516	1.783	3.430	.001
PRI	.176	.086	.579	1.727	2.939	.003
SI	.100	.095	.608	1.644	1.713	.088
Model fit: $R^2 = .241$ , F-value = 19.396, $p = 0.000$						
<b>Model 3</b>						
<b>Dependent variable:</b>	AU (Average use of Twilight related website/blog/community)					
CSI	.133		.546	1.832	2.180	.030
ASI	-.112		.289	3.463	-1.331	.184
ESI	-.119		.356	2.806	-1.571	.117
PI	-.257		.516	1.783	-4.262	.000
PRI	-.146		.579	1.727	-2.466	.014
SI	-.108		.608	1.644	-1.875	.062
Model fit: $R^2 = .253$ , F-value = 20.743, $p = 0.000$						