Market your destination:

An investigation of how destination marketing organizations can reach generation Y

Author: Anton Aldevinge
Tutor: Prof. Mosad Zineldin
Examiner: Prof. Anders Pehrsson
Course: 5FE05E

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Abstract

Background: The tourism industry and especially those that market destinations, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), face challenges to meet generation Y, with an uncertainty of how to do it. DMOs need to be adaptable to an everyday changing market in order to attract visitors to their destinations.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore how destination marketing organizations can market their destinations to reach domestic tourists within the population of generation Y.

Method: A literature review was made in order to explore previous research regarding DMOs’ marketing strategies and tourists’ information search behavior. The literature review has been used in order to make hypotheses and a research model which lay the foundation for the design of a survey to test the hypotheses. An interview guide, based on the literature review, was made to address potential tourists and get deepen understanding of the field. Contrast and compare have been made between potential tourists’ opinions and the theoretical part, in order to draw conclusions on the subject.

Results and conclusions: Results of this study have shown that for the chosen population, generation Y, are search engines and DMOs’ websites seen as the best way to reach tourists. DMOs have high possibilities to be seen on the web (their website and social media sites) if they actively use search engine optimization. Social media sites are also important, but in a different way, and DMOs need to work harder and cleverer on these sites to market their destinations.

Keywords: tourism industry, destination marketing organization, web, social media, generation Y
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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The tourism industry stands for an incredible growth. According to United Nations’ world tourism organization tourism industry worldwide have increased its earning from 415 billion US dollar 1995 to 1245 billion US dollar 2014. While it is worldwide counted to 1133 million international tourists 2014, domestic tourism worldwide stands for approximately 6 billion tourists for same period (UNWTO, 2015).

This shows that the majority of tourist are domestic. Domestic tourism is defined as people who visit a destination or attraction outside of their own habitat but still in the same country as they live in. The trip both include overnight stays and same day visits (Page and Connell, 2014).

The sample for this thesis consists of people living in Sweden why it can be of interest to shortly introduce domestic travel statistics for Sweden. According to world travel and tourism council, regarding direct tourism and travel spending (e.g. entry fees for museums and national parks), domestic tourism spending in Sweden contributed to gross domestic product with 63.5 percent while foreign tourists contributed with 36.5 percent 2014 (WTTC, 2015). Tillväxtverket (2015) mention that consumption levels for domestic tourists are 172 billion Swedish kronor (approximately 20 billion US dollar) while foreign tourists spend close to 100 billion Swedish kronor (approximately 12 billion US dollar). Another comparable example is of stay overs. Domestic tourism in Sweden stands for just over 75 percent of all tourism nights (hostel, hotels, camping sites, holiday villas and apartments) spent in Sweden according to the latest statistics from the Swedish agency for economic and regional growth, Tillväxtverket (2015).

There is some sort of inspiration that draw tourists to destinations, a decision made often as a result of marketing efforts. Recently have more communities realized the need of organizing the marketing of their destination. The awareness of the tourism impact and the need of organize the marketing efforts towards attracting visitors have led to the development of destination marketing organizations (DMOs). By having an organization taking care of the
promotion of the destination is it possible to be more competitive against other destinations (Pike, 2016). Buhalís and Jun (2011) write that DMOs coordinate destination partners’ services, market tourism experiences at the destinations and are responsible for promoting and boosting the destination with tourism spending. Further, the authors write that DMOs use information and communication technology, for example communication through Internet, to help and enhance the tourist experience and information search before, during and after a destination visit. Standing et al. (2014) report from their literature review of journals regarding Internet’s role for tourism, that tourists tend to use a hub, a destination website with links where it is possible to navigate and explore the destination.

There are different reasons to search for travel information and different travel search needs, depending on such as type of travel (e.g. familiar or unfamiliar destination) or type of travelling company (e.g. travelling with family or travelling together with fiancé). The travel information process involves three stages, namely spatial (i.e. gathering information from own memory and from the environment), temporal (i.e. the time aspect of gathering info, such as ongoing and pre-purchase) and operational (i.e. the effectiveness of the specific source used for decision making and problem solving) (Fodness and Murray, 1999).

Very much of the travel information is transferred through online sources. E-tourism (electronic tourism) dictate the competitiveness of the company by interacting with its stakeholder and customers using the Internet (Buhalís and Jun, 2011). Research indicate that tourism marketing through Internet are valued higher than print advertising (Loda et al., 2010). Recently studies have as well concentrated on the fact that many tourists go via search engines to find travel information and examined click through rates (Pan, 2015) and since long have blogs been a way of gathering travel information and be inspired through (Lin and Huang, 2006). Nowadays, different social media platforms are also a source for travel information and inspiration (Munar and Jacobsen, 2013).

Nonetheless, it is of importance to stress that offline sources still are used according to research. Research indicate that offline sources are used along with online ones, or as complementary to online alternatives (Xiang et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2012). Travelers use word of mouth both offline (e.g. face to face) and online (e.g. social media) (Tham et al., 2013).
Along with increasing Internet use it has become crucial for DMOs to have websites to communicate with tourists. As Internet have developed with more ways than ever to find destination information, is it of interest to investigate tourists’ travel information search behavior and the role DMOs have in tourists’ travel information search search process. With insights in this is it possible to investigate how DMOs can market their destinations better.

1.2 Problem Discussion

Internet and its information technology has come to be a crucial part of the communication between tourists and the destination. It will help management and marketing processes, and enhance and develop communication strategies for destinations (Buhalis and Law, 2008). This has made DMOs able to reach their customers easier than before and in new ways.

With the technological development increasing consumers’ power however, new channels for tourism information has evolved. With tourists having a wide range of sources for travel information such as public and company websites, social media and blogs (No and Kim, 2015), DMOs have started to face the challenge of reaching tourists with their marketing and information (Choi et al. 2007).

There are different methods that DMOs use to to reach customers with travel information. DMO strategies does not only includes the own provided website but also those footprints taken by the organizations outside of their own website. DMOs can provide their own websites with destination specific information such as local events, accommodation and transportation (Choi et al. 2007). Further, DMOs can market their destinations through social media channels to a relative low cost (Hays et al., 2013) and Saur-Amaral et al (2013) mean that social media can act as an experience channel for the DMOs’ destination. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) on the other hand write that a key to reach tourists’ is to be seen on search engines since a lot of tourists use search engines to search for information like as shopping, restaurants, events and nightlife, activities and accommodation. Despite the above mentioned media focused sources, tourist information centers are still seen as the most important of DMOs offline travel information sources (Minghetti and Celotto, 2014).
Research has been made to investigate international DMOs’ social media (Facebook and Twitter) activity (Hays et al., 2013), the effectiveness of national DMOs’ websites based on criteria from an expert panel and success factors of a DMOs’ websites based on the most used concept from previous journals (Li and Wang, 2010). Further, there are content analysis studies which evaluate how well DMOs’ website meet quality criteria (e.g. completeness of information and offered language translations) (Bastida and Huan, 2014; Inversini et al., 2014; Luna-Nevarez and Hyman, 2012) and how well (or to what extent) DMOs implement social media on their websites (Míguez-González and Fernández-Cavia, 2015), but there is less of consumer research, that is, what do tourists think. None of these have put the findings in context of tourists’ travel information search behavior in relation to DMOs, which should be evaluated more in future research (Dolnicar and Ring, 2014) and Law et al.’s (2014) findings also suggest that more research is needed for understanding consumers in context of destination development. This study therefore aims to fill in the research gap by study consumer behavior in the perspective of DMO’s marketing.

Further, Standing et al. (2014) report that cultural differences in information search behavior creates a need for research to evaluate each potential target market. Today we face experienced travelers growing up in an economy providing lots of travel opportunities with an interest of today’s broad range of travel opportunities (Glover, 2010). This aging mass is named Generation Y.

Generation Y, are defined as those born between 1982 and 2000 (Hills et al., 2013) and this group is of special interest for this study for several reasons. According to Leask et al. (2014) is it of importance for the travel industry to study generation Y to understand this large volume of consumers with increasing buying power. The authors point out that this generation of tourists are less loyal and easily find alternatives if they are not pleased with the offering (e.g. destination switching), making it crucial for DMOs to target them in the right way.

If the tourism industry and DMOs want to continue adapting their market strategies to the effectively changing market environment, is it crucial to understand and have an on-going research process about the consumer patterns of generation Y which is the next generation that will have influence on travel decisions (Cohen et al., 2014; Gardiner et al., 2014). Glover (2010) writes that tourists of generation Y have in general higher interest of international
destinations than domestic ones, compared with older generations. Gardiner et al. (2015) develop the reasoning by writing that DMOs do not attract generation Y’s attentions and domestic DMOs do not compete enough with international destinations. For these reasons this study will investigate in the information intake of domestic generation Y tourists to evaluate the market importance of DMO’s marketing strategies.

Finally, research findings regarding the importance of DMOs for tourists in their travel information search process is varying. Jacobsen and Munar’s (2012) research findings suggest that tourists’ rank DMOs low for destination decision-making. Loda et al. (2010) mean that information regarding visiting attractions, restaurants, shops and outdoor activities from DMOs websites are ranked higher than print and online advertising not coming from DMOs. This information has been considered when phrasing the purpose of this thesis.

As concluded, to fill the gap of consumer research, getting an insight into generation Y’s travel information search behavior and an understanding of how domestic DMOs can reach this generation and market their destinations to them, this thesis has proposed the following purpose.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how destination marketing organizations can market their destinations to reach domestic tourists within the population of generation Y.

1.4 Research Question

RQ 1: What importance do destination marketing organizations have in the tourists’ travel information search process?

RQ 2: Do destination marketing organizations have an influence on tourists’ intention to visit domestic destinations?
RQ 3: How can destination marketing organization market their destinations to generation Y?

1.5 Delimitations

This study is based on domestic, Swedish tourism market, hence it may be difficult to generalize results to other markets. Due to limitations of time was it not possible to include every member of the chosen population, the current study’s sample was therefore selected by the researcher. With the framework and resources given, the chosen data collection could be larger with less restrictions. The study solo focused on generation Y, defined as those born between 1982 and 2000, meaning that all other ages span than the included are left out from this study, an intentional choice considering the time given.

1.6 Outline of study

The paper is organized as follows; background, problem discussion, purpose of study and delimitations are given here in the introduction (1). Next, the literature review and hypotheses (2) presents a literature review with theories that are relevant for the study followed by a presentation of the proposed research model in the end of the chapter. Consequently, the methodology (3) follows, which motivates research approach and explains how the empirical data collection is made. Data from interviews is found in the empirical findings (4). Analysis (5) present the analysis made of the quantitative study. The analysis results and the empirical findings are then, together with the theories presented in the literature review, discussed (6). Conclusion (7) includes points to take home. It also contains suggestions for further research, limitations of this study, managerial implications and theoretical contributions.

In this thesis are travelers, tourists, users, customers and consumers used interchangeably to not wear down the reader but they are all are used with the implication of a potential tourist that visit a destination.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

This chapter contains the theoretical framework and hypotheses. All the materials are collected from books and academic papers concerning tourism. The data will be used to
construct and make sense of the gathered data by analyzing it according to these theories. The chapter will wrap up by presenting the proposed research model.

The literature review starts with digging deeper into DMOs challenges with measuring brand performance and some of the possibilities for DMOs (chapter 2.1). It follows by an exploration of travel information search and different types of search processes (chapter 2.2). Then, the literature review digs into social media and its relationship to DMOs (chapter 2.3), followed by an exploration of possible DMOs’ social media strategies (chapter 2.4). An insight into researchers’ view of website quality and appearance will then be presented (chapter 2.5) followed by an exploration of criteria and methods for evaluating DMOs’ websites (chapter 2.6).

2.1 Success factors of DMOs

According to Pike and Page (2014) the dominant paradigm within destination marketing is the 4P (price, promotion, place, product) which may be challenged of today’s DMOs according to the authors, whereas many compete with the philosophy of branding as performance tool. Overall, there is no mutual agreement on brand performance measurement, that is, what should the dependent variable be when measuring DMOs’ success. Hence, according to the authors researchers have difficulties to show DMO best practice examples. Further the authors mention, DMOs are like a regional hospital in a town, which means that the DMOs are the only service provider of their kind in their particular town. While the destinations compete against other destinations, DMOs do not compete in the same way. Still there is a need of understanding visitor relationship marketing and how to keep consumers loyal and repeat visitation. As a part of this it is of importance as well to understand consumers’ destination switching decisions and the impact social media and internet communication have on destination choices. To meet these new agendas there is a need of research for destination competitiveness and case studies of marketing communication effectiveness according to the authors.

New consumer behaviors within tourism attracts new possibilities for DMOs and tourism companies to advertise other products along with traditional ones. Xiang et al. (2015) report from their finding that there is a saturation found regarding the search and purchase of
traditional travel related products / services such as air tickets and lodging. Travelers are now ready to purchase and search for other things that are natural in the tourism industry such as museum tickets or dining.

Many researchers have evaluated DMOs and tourism websites based on their usability for tourists searching for travel information. No common definition of evaluation techniques for DMOs and tourism websites have been developed. Morrison et al (2004) mention in their literature review that there is no state of the art regarding best in class evaluation tool or some form of standardized evaluation tool for tourism websites but a wide range of different views. Some general guidelines are given by the authors telling that it is of importance to evaluate websites from the customers’ perspectives. Further, it is still problematic for non-profit organizations and governmental organizations to measure return of investment on their websites. Beyond website strategies new internet technologies have evolved new strategies to attract customers. Social media indicates a new paradigm that redefines new ways of marketing and customer service for tourism businesses and DMOs. Since the tourism industry have long relied on consumers’ feedback, that is, the spread of positive word of mouth to increase destination reputation, research points out that social media can be valuable investment for the tourism industry (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014).

Pike et al. (2011) write that their results indicate that DMOs tend to be reactive instead of proactive when it comes to visitor orientation. This was found by conceptualizing a model with the aim to develop a measurement tool for the visitor relationship orientation of DMOs and carry out research on several worldwide DMOs. The model investigates how visitor relationship orientation of DMOs are operationalized in five dimensions, namely customer relationship management culture (e.g. if the organization is structured with visitors in focus), information generation (e.g. maintaining communication with visitors and understand needs), resources management (e.g. trained employees for meeting visitors’ demands), responsiveness (e.g. accurate and quick responses to visitors) and relationship commitment (e.g. allocate time and resources for managing relationships and set up goals to get returning visitors).

2.2 Travel information search and internet as a source for travel planning
According to Choi et al. (2007) search engines is the base for the majority of travel information search sessions. Xiang and Gretzel’s (2010) research design was to mimic a travel planning scenario where they searched on search engine (Google) a total of ten key words such as hotel and attractions in combination with nine US destination names. Findings indicate that social media websites have a substantial part of the first few search results which suggest that they have up to date and relevant information to provide for travel planning purposes according to the authors. The amount of social media publicity search results is quite equal between the compared destinations. The big differences are which key words are used. For example, do key words such as nightlife attract more social media results. Further, different types of social media websites incorporate different key words. Consumer review websites are more likely to correspond with such as restaurant, virtual communities correspond with core tourist products such as attractions and social networking websites corresponds with such as events and nightlife.

Xiang et al. (2015) suggest that more online channels are used for travel information search such as communities, social media websites and blogs and the trend is that each traveler want personalized information customized for them and their interests. A way to answer to this for companies is the rising trend of text mining consumers’ blogs, other consumer written texts online and what competitors write online to identify improvements for the own business and what to offer. According to the authors, is it of importance to meet the demands of both the traditional online travel search type but also have a long term strategy of how to reach the increasing mass of consumers who are adopting new technologies and their changing demands.

2.2.1 Use of DMOs for travel information

Choi et al. (2007) suggest from their findings that DMOs are used by tourists for finding comprehensive travel information about the destination during the pre-trip planning. Tourists’ pre-trip internet behavior is gathered around information seeking while tourists’ post-trip internet behavior is gather around sharing travel experience activities and socializing. Regarding DMOs on different levels (national, state, city) it was found that tourists’ information behavior on the closest level (city) concerned destination specific information such as hotel bookings or events while zooming out to state and national level tourists wanted more general information about such as history or geography.
Further, the amount of previous visits to a destination did not indicate the use of different travel information sources but the indicators travel party composition and trip purpose indicated a difference between usage of internet or other sources (i.e. DMOs, travel agents and friends and relatives) implying that thoroughly segmentation is needed (Luo et al., 2004). There is saturation in the market regarding Internet use for travel purpose according to Xiang et al. (2015). The authors mean that Internet as travel searching source is well applied and results also show that Internet is the number one source for information. Sass’s (2011) findings suggest the same, that is, the tourists prefer using Internet for travel information search and bookings. Younger tourists are more likely to use online sources for booking. A note is made by Xiang et al. (2015) that desktop use is decreasing while travelers are using mobile platforms more to seek for travel information. Lyu and Hwang’s (2015) findings suggest that the new information technology have a negative impact on the use of tourist information centers. Further, it was less likely to visit tourist information centers for those tourists who found mobile devices useful for travel information search. Xiang et al. (2015) write that search for information about a specific destination is a top reason for information search. But when the destination is chosen this type of research is declining. Instead a lot of search for the destination is made during the trip and not in the pre-planning stage.

There is a difference between websites categorized under web 1.0 and web 2.0. Web 1.0 characterizes of a focus on information processing. Web 2.0 on the other hand, focus on interactivity. There are different perceived values with travel information search sources which can be both positive and negative values. Chung and Koo’s (2015) results shown that four perceived value parameters, that is, information reliability, enjoyment, complexity and effort, affected web 1.0 and web 2.0 travel information search sources. Dickinger and Stangl (2013) mention that website effects (i.e. usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, website design, trust, content quality, navigation challenges and system availability) had a positive impact on satisfaction and perceived value of websites. Satisfaction had as well positive impact on loyalty while perceived value of websites did not.

2.2.2 Using DMOs’ websites

By reviewing previous literature Chung et al. (2015) proposed a model with the aim of investigate how Korean tourists’ satisfaction with Korea Tourism Organization’s (national
DMO) website qualities influence the intention to use the website and visit the destination. The authors put up hypothesis to test the model. Firstly, it is hypothesized that information, service and design quality have a positive impact when meeting tourist expectations. Secondly, if those quality criteria are met, then it will positively impact the usefulness and satisfaction with the website. Further, usefulness is hypothesized to have a positive impact on satisfaction of website as well. Lastly, it is hypothesized that usefulness and satisfaction of website will have a positive impact leading to continued usage intention. Which, if the continued usage intention is met, will have a positive impact on the the intention to visit the destination. Carrying out analysis it was shown that all hypotheses were supported. In this study, according to the authors, information quality confirmation was the hypothesis that had the strongest results indicating that if users’ expectations about DMOs information quality (e.g. info is interesting, fun and pleasant to read) are met they will likely continue to use the website according to the authors.

So and Morrison (2003) compared two different groups, those who visited a DMO website and those who did not. They then compared those two group against each other regarding actual visit of destination, the intention to visit the destination and their demographics. The authors put up hypotheses stating that those who visit DMOs’ websites have higher rate of visiting the destination and intention to return. Further, the authors hypothesize that there is demographic difference between those who use and not use DMOs’ websites and that first timers and repeat travelers have different behaviors of using DMOs’ websites. All hypotheses were accepted. Some demographics results showed that those over 50 were less likely to visit DMOs’ websites, users of DMOs’ websites had higher income than non-users and that those with college education were more likely to visit. Results indicated as well that first time visitors were more likely to visit DMOs’ websites. As a future studies recommendation, the authors mention the need to investigate how design and content can match a better user experience.

Even though new technologies enable new ways of travel planning it face some challenges good to know. As with other internet related experiences, the users of online travel information search encounter problems with outdated data (Ho et al., 2012) or slow connection speeds leading to barriers for information search (Ho et al., 2012; Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2006).
2.2.3 Travel planning process

A travel planning process is proposed by Ho et al. (2012). The authors conclude the travel search process as four stages, beginning with the initially start of online search, continuing with the actual online search which eventually leads to the end of the online search, continuing in further research offline. Eight attributes of travel information search emerged according to the authors. Previous knowledge and experiences of travelling and search behavior positively impact consumer online searching for travel information. The search strategies online incorporate utilize of search engines, utilize of keywords to match what they want to find an answer on and compare search results including multitasking behavior where many sources are compared at the same time. Further, a landmark site such as a start page or preferred homepage is used and lastly consumer sort the relevance of webpages search results by going back and forth among them and estimate the value of them.

According to Luo et al. (2004), consumers searching online had also a higher travel consumption level than those using other sources such as friends and relatives and travel agents. Similar findings did Jacobsen and Munar (2012) get with high number of internet use for travel planning and almost everyone in their sample had bought some parts of their trip online. Xiang et al.’s (2015) insights indicate that traditional carrier of travel related purchases online have been airline ticket and hotel rooms. These purchases have then pushed sales for other items such as museum and festival tickets. As behavior have changed it is seen that this category now not only belongs to the tail (as in long-tail products) but are in the front ready to carry other purchases. The authors note that while all generations do travel planning online, generation Y consumers are more likely for purchases of these new items (e.g. event, museum and festival tickets).

Clearly internet have re-define the travel information search process but not eliminated traditional information sources completely. Ho et al. (2012) found that users were very much likely to continue their search after the search session ended, by complementing with other sources they know of. These sources could be both online or offline, for example hotels or travel agencies. As Xiang et al. (2015) report, while internet is the number one source for travel information searching, other sources are now complementary. Their results indicate that travelers use a variety of online and offline sources to compare and contrast what they have found online.
Travel information that is found while searching is often shared with other persons. Ho et al. (2012) write that online users ultimately come to an end where the search session will end, for example because they have found what they are looking for or have set a deadline for themselves. Users tend to record their search results, for example by saving or bookmark the URL of websites or write down the information in word processors or notebooks. The authors report that a common thing for the users was that after they had found and summarized the content they found valuable and matching their search criteria, they very likely shared it with others online.

**Hypotheses Website:**
H1a The presence of DMOs own websites positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H1b Frequent usage of tourism information from DMOs own websites positively affect the intention to choose and visit a destination.

**Hypotheses search engines**
H2a DMOs visibility on search engines positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H2b Frequent usage of search engines to get tourism information from DMOs positively affects the intention to choose and visit a destination.

**Hypotheses non-internet sources:**
H3a The presence of DMOs on non-internet sources positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H3b Frequent usage of tourism information from DMOs’ non-internet sources positively affect the intention to choose and visit a destination.

**Hypotheses tourism information center:**
H4a DMOs use of tourist information centers positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H4b Frequent usage of tourism information from DMOs’ tourism information centers positively affect the intention to choose and visit a destination.
2.3 Social media

Social media is an information source for travel planning. Social media is a widely used tool to access destination information (Sass, 2011). No and Kim (2015) report that when searching for travel information and answers to tourism related questions their results showed that the respondents thought personal information sources were more interactive than public websites and company websites. Personal blogs and social media websites Twitter and Facebook were thus seen as a better communication platform according to the authors. Xiang et al.’s (2015) findings suggest that social media are widely used for travel planning. They report that travelers like to share, comment and read recommendations in social media about tourism related products such as destination choice and shopping options.

Social media is used to interact, communicate and get feedback from customers. Social media is the concept of a new communication era whereas people can interact socially online, powered by information and communication technology both via desktop and mobile. Further, social media enables users to share and take part of multimedia such as pictures, songs and videos and narrative texts. Social media includes social network sites, review sites, different kinds of forums and communities. The success of social media is grounded in peoples’ contribution and interactivity (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014). The content created by users within social media is called user generated content (UGC). UGC enables consumers to set their own digital footprints by the ability to create digital content such as writing reviews for restaurants and hotels, share travel experience and post pictures (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2015).

2.3.1 E-word of mouth and user generated content

Social media is the most used way of spreading electronic word of mouth (eWOM) by users creating content (i.e. UGC). eWOM is defined as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39). While word of mouth is made of the same principles but takes place offline, that is, face to face or through telephone for example. Tham et al. (2013) determine five
characteristics that differentiate word of mouth with electronic word of mouth (eWOM) regarding the impact on destination image and travel-planning. First, source receiver relationship differs, where WOM incorporates known relationships between users and eWOM incorporates both known relationships as well as unknown relationships between users. Second, there is a channel variety, that is, WOM is face to face while eWOM is online communication on communication platforms. Third, information solicitation, where WOM relies on known sources and the typical source network is smaller whereas eWOM relies on both known and unknown sources and thus the source network can be larger. Fourth, message retention, that is, WOM is based on the capacity to recall information given while eWOM message are stored online. Fifth, motivations for disclosing information, where WOM is considered to help decisions making while eWOM is both considered to help decision making and act as socializing. The authors report that the impact of eWOM on travel decision is that there are now more sources to be influence by. Further, while eWOM have a great coverage, the credibility and trust of eWOM may be less compared to WOM.

Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) proposed a model applying theory of planned behavior to investigate how eWOM affects destination choice. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) aims to explain the intentions to perform an action (actual behavior). There are three elements within the model. The first element is attitude. Attitude concerns to what degree a person has a favorable or non-favorable attitude towards the behavior. The second element is subjective norm. Subjective norm concerns the social pressure applied to carry out the behavior. The third element is perceived behavior control. Perceived behavior control concerns to what degree a person finds it easy or difficult to carry out the behavior. Perceived behavior control is based on both previous experiences but also the perceived obstacles with carrying out the behavior. The intention to do the action is stronger if an individual have stronger positive attitudes, a favorable social pressure and increased perceived behavior control regarding the behavior. Further, the beliefs of whether a behavior in question is favorable or non-favorable depends on the consequences with performing the behavior. For example, can the attribute cost (i.e. consequences time and money) of performing a behavior be greater than the benefits of doing it, then the attitude is likely to be non-favorable (Ajzen, 1991).

Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) hypothesize that eWOM affect the factors of TPB (i.e. attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control) regarding visiting a destination.
Further, it is hypothesized that the factors of TPB and eWOM affects the intention to visit a destination. According to the authors all hypotheses but eWOM were significant and important predictors of intention to visit a destination. This means that eWOM does not have a direct effect on the intentions to visit a destination. Instead it has a mediating affect considering that the impact of it on the factors of TPB which in turn affects tourists’ intentions to visit a destination. Further, results show that previous travel experience had a crucial impact on using eWOM and the TPB factors. According to Ayeh et al. (2013) perceived usefulness, enjoyment, attitude and ease of use have an effect on using UGC for travel planning. Attitude had a mediating role regarding the intention to use UGC. For example, if the attitude towards the UGC travel information source is positive it is more likely to feel perceived ease of use of UGC. Further, the authors note that similarity in interest is crucial for the intention to use UGC in travel information search. Even more, similarity in interest had a strong connection towards trustworthiness indicating that known sources are of importance regarding the intention to use UGC for travel information search.

### 2.3.2 Usage of social media

It is discussed how much weight DMOs should put in different channels. Fernández-Cavia et al.’s (2014) investigation with analysis of international and Spanish national DMOs indicated two main themes among them according to the authors. First, traditionally parameters (information architecture, usability, home page and content) have higher scores while newer parameters (interactivity, social web and mobile communication) have lower scores. Chung and Koo (2015) write that travelers preferred high density of useful information instead of socialization indicating that web 1.0 information sources still have their valuable spot in travel information search. Low relevance for using DMOs’ websites in destination decision was shown though. Further, social media information sources are seen as complement to traditional sources instead of one taking over the other according to the authors. No and Kim (2015) mean that social media platforms are rated higher when it comes to accessibility of information because the respondents are more exposed to these type of information sources and it is more likely that they use these sources compared to public websites and company websites. Lyu and Hwang (2015) stress that their research indicate that those who use social media for travel information search is more likely to use and visit traditional information sources such as tourist information centers. This, according to the authors, because social media offer a wide range of information while tourist information centers have specific
information about the destination (online and offline). If tourist information centers are more present in social media this behavior may be changed according to the authors.

Munar and Jacobsen (2014) report that the majority of the travelers only used social media for destination decisions and not for any other travel planning activities. The willingness for sharing visual graphics were higher than the use of social media for the trip undertaken. Still, in this research slightly more tourists are readers than posters of shared travel experience. Second, the motivations for sharing content is not primarily to fulfill as information source for other’s trip planning but as a form of social connectivity with friends and relatives. Further, indications showed that motivational characteristics were still strong regarding to helping others (e.g. avoid bad services) and for self-centered motivations, particular in the younger age group. Third, the travelers preferred sharing visual content over narrative content. Those who shared visual content privately (e.g. friends) had a higher motivation to share based on community related grounds such as helping others or help in destination choice than those who published visual content publically for all to see. Regarding narrative content, the main purpose of sharing it were to write reviews of services or products according to the authors. Finally, the authors mention that no social media platform alone was seen as stronger than the other, but a wide use of them all were seen.

The decision to use social media for travel information search depends on the perceived value (i.e. if the benefits can weigh up costs). Chung and Koo (2015) note that perceived value in terms of enjoyment was seen as having a positive impact on travel information search through use of social media, that is, if users find enjoyment by using social media they will use it for travel information search. Parra-López et al. (2011) results of their study show that the most crucial aspect of intentions to use social media for travel information search is the perceived benefits. It is crucial to understand the benefits for people see with social media such as getting increased knowledge about destinations, belongingness to a community and enjoyment of participating. Thus, by maintaining interactivity and the community it will increase the perception of social benefits and leading to an improved relationship. The authors report that by identifying tourists’ contributions of UGC (e.g. photos and comments) the perception of psychological and hedonic benefits will increase leading to increased participation of the tourism organizations’ products and services. It was not shown in the study that perceived costs affected the intention to use social media for travel information search which, according to the authors, could indicate that the perceived benefits outperform
It is highlighted that interactivity with customers is essential for DMOs. There are studies pointing out a lack of integrating online interactivity from DMOs. Bastida and Huan (2014) evaluated four major Chinese tourism DMOs’ websites. Content analysis of the websites shown that the DMO for Hong Kong had the best website since it contained a great interactive travel planner, exhaustive information about the destinations and translation of information to many languages. On the other end, Beijing were scored last since their translations to other languages were badly performed. Further it excluded and lacked such as weather, maps, information of upcoming events and an interactive experience leading to a non-useful website experience. The two DMOs’ website in between scored almost same score, lacking crucial information about hotel booking and less satisfying interactive experience. Míguez-González and Fernández-Cavia (2015) draw some general conclusions of the evaluated destination websites from their study. Overall is interactive tools poorly integrated but the websites offer a wide amount of free information not locked behind payments walls. Consumer to consumer integration on websites is very limited and those who have implemented such strategies tend to rely on redirecting consumers to social media websites, such as Facebook. Further, there is a lack of providing tourists’ recommendation or shared travel stories on DMOs’ websites. The lack of such information could be the fear of insulting the provided destination image according to the authors. Finally, the authors write that the analyzed websites proved a lack of implementing multimedia, trip planners and mobile applications.

2.3.3 Trust

Trust of information sources is an important aspect for consumers, concerning social media as well. No and Kim (2015) mention in terms of trust, the respondents in their study favored personal information (e.g. personal experiences on travel blogs) over messages coming from companies. It was seen though that respondents thought that company websites and personal blogs had more customized travel information than social media websites. Regarding security, company websites are seen as more reliable because respondents saw social media websites as less secure, since the information to be spread there does not have gone through
any security checks before it is shared. The authors note that personal blogs were seen as trustworthy with high personalization of content, public websites were seen as being accessible and trustworthy but lacked appropriate information tailored for the information search. Further, social media websites were best for its interactivity and company websites were seen as less favorable, even though they had high score on security, because of low score in information-trust, interactivity and accessibility (i.e. respondents tend to be less exposed to those websites).

Dickinger and Stangl’s (2013) study pointed out differences between different type of websites, were respondents thought that the measurement trust is more important for transaction websites than merely information websites. Xiang et al. (2015) writes that trust, security and personalized service have increased its value for travelers and travelers are seeing internet useful for destination choice, dining and shopping. Further, the authors report that travelers are fully familiar with using the internet, indicating that usability problems are solved by industry managers, and travelers trust in new experimental ways of travel information search.

Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) do as well point out challenges with trustworthiness regarding UGC from a tourist perspective and how it can be used from a strategic point of view. Munar and Jacobsen (2013) report that their findings indicate that overall does social media sites have low relevance when it comes to make decisions such as choosing hotels or restaurants. Even though trustworthiness for social media sites are relative low it is seen that the tourists generate and share content. But the sharing and contribution of contents vary depending on type of web 2.0 sources where more privately restricted and socially sites have higher degree of it while review sites have very low degree of shared content. Further, the authors note that the trustworthiness for review sites are higher which indicates that those who only consumes social media content perceive trustworthiness as more important than those who contribute with content. It is also seen that those over the age of 35 sees microblogging and DMOs as more trustworthy than younger travelers. The authors note that the use of social media sites is quite equal between age groups even though younger travelers have slightly more preference for using it.

**Hypotheses Web 1.0:**
H5a The presence of DMOs on websites with Web 1.0 elements (high density of information) positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.

H5b Frequent usage of tourism information from DMOs websites with Web 1.0 elements (high density of information) positively affects the intention to choose and visit a destination.

**Hypotheses Web 2.0:**

H6a The presence of DMOs on websites with Web 2.0 elements (interactive elements) positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.

H6b Frequent usage of tourism information from DMOs websites with Web 2.0 elements (interactive elements) positively affects the intention to choose and visit a destination.

### 2.4 Social media strategies

Important to investigate in DMOs’ online presence is as well their strategy for social media. There are different social media strategies that can be applied. By doing an exploratory study of literature within information communication technology and field research of UGC related to travel, María Munar (2011) developed a model for DMOs to maintain strategic analysis of social network sites and UGC. Two strategic models are proposed to demonstrate DMOs’ destination branding possibilities and capabilities with social media and UGC. The first strategic model is twofold, either can the DMO choose mimetic or advertising path. In the mimetic path does the DMO implement social network sites functions into their own website. Example of functions is shared destination experiences and uploading of photos. The benefits for the DMO is that is has control of the content being shared. The negative aspects include the questioning of openness of information which is crucial part of social network sites (since the DMO have the ultimate control of their website). Further, with this mimetic option it is not possible to take advantage of the huge amount of information available on social networks sites and it has limited scalability since users need to use the DMO website. The second path is advertising. In this option, DMOs understands the possibilities with market their campaigns on social network sites. The benefit is that DMOs increase the amount of information from the DMO on social network sites. The negative aspect is that it does not take advantage of the huge amount of UGC. The second strategic model is analytical with two dimensions, prevention and knowledge. Prevention means that the DMO should understand the development of UGC in relation to their brands. By doing so it is possible to
prevent possible crises, maximize damage control and improve marketing capabilities. The second dimension knowledge, is the understanding of how the huge amount of UGC can be transformed into strategic opportunities. For this, companies need good information analysis systems to process and sort out relevant material. As an endnote the author describes that there may evaluate a schism between the traditional destination brand and the one origin from UGC.

2.4.1 DMOs’ implementation of social media

Munar (2012) investigated social media strategies and implementations of María Munar’s (2011) social media strategies for DMOs model. The sample group consisted of the country DMOs from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Scandinavian tourist board Asia / Pacific in the Nordic Region. The advertising and mimetic are most regularly used but they do not come without problems according to the author. All of the questioned DMOs have established themselves on Facebook and Twitter and advertise on websites such as review website Trip Advisor. Main cons with these strategies is how to engage and get involvement from users. The analytical strategy is seen as theoretical interesting but less implemented practically. A reason behind this according to the authors is that there has not been any tradition of measuring the impact of marketing and promotional campaigns, instead focus has been on engaging customers, but there are indications that this will change with more analytical tools being implemented. Further findings were that there emerged a third strategy option, namely, immersion, which could be described as that the DMO in itself develop an own social media platform on their website. Cons with this is the lack of integration with other independent social network sites and the cost of maintaining it, while the pros is that it could be easier to engage users in the DMO and destination brand. Findings also pointed the difficulties with social media compared with traditionally marketing. Since social media is based around a new communication culture the tools to handle it is just not to learn such as a new software. The challenges are to grasp how the users use it and since it is so customized to each users’ habits (which change over time) it is very much based on trial and error instead of clear strategy thinking. Finally, the author write that there are challenges of adopting the globally working social media to local level, so called glocalized innovation process. There are regionals difference of social media use, for example depending on age, which stretches globally.
The aim of Míguez-González and Fernández-Cavia’s (2015) study is to investigate to what degree social media and interactive tools are implemented by DMOs on their destination websites to help communication between consumers, and between consumers and the admins of the website. Content analysis of DMOs’ websites were carried out on provincial destinations in Spain, autonomous community destinations, countries’ DMOs and international cities’ DMOs. Based on metrics from a web quality index with evaluation items two major themes were evaluated. Firstly, it was evaluated in which degree the websites have implemented media such as tourist maps, interactive assets (e.g. games, listening applications, podcasts) but also the availability to be able to comment, share and interact with the content on the website. Here the focus is both on consumer to consumer and consumer to business operators. Secondly, it was evaluated to which degree the website met criteria of implementation of social web tools, functionalities and the use of it.

2.4.2 Challenges

Social media, including eWOM and UGC, can be beneficial for DMOs but comes with challenges. Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) point out concerns about how to measurement success of social media in a quantitative way and how to link this as a cohesive marketing strategy and not a standalone strategy. The investigated DMOs by Hays et al. (2013) did not use social media to its fully potential when it comes to interaction with customers according to the authors. Further, the authors write that social media is not fully understood as a marketing tool by the DMOs and hence neglect it in a higher degree compared with other marketing tools. According to the authors, DMOs could be even more experimental with social media campaigns to differentiate it from traditional marketing. Lange-Faria and Elliot (2012) mean that with social media, DMOs have the possibility to socialize with its customers and adding value to the customer experience. Further, the authors suggest social media as a way for DMOs to pay attention to its customers and there are opportunities for DMOs to let customers be involved. The challenge is to create customer loyalty which is accessible through quality of information and trust. With new platforms for user to user communication customers are now able to look beyond DMOs for other sources if they perceive the DMO source to be overly biased towards marketing the destination in a positive sense. It is a challenge to penetrate and reach customers since it is shown that travelers trust WOM (and eWOM) more than traditional marketing according to the authors.
Hypotheses social media:
H7a The presence of DMOs on social media positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H7b Frequent usage of tourism information from DMOs’ social media channels positively affect the intention to choose and visit a destination.

Hypotheses online communication:
H8a DMOs participating in online communication positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H8b Frequent usage of online communication with DMOs positively affects the intention to choose and visit a destination.

2.5 Quality of website and appearance

The technology acceptance model (TAM) have influenced much research indirectly and directly with its terminology. Technology acceptance model by Davis (1986) aims to measure users’ acceptance of new technology. It includes two parameters, namely, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use which determine users’ willingness of using the new technology. Perceived usefulness concerns to what degree a person think that the technology will benefit his or her efficiency. Perceived ease of use concerns to what degree a person think that the technology is able to be used without mental or physical struggles. Additionally, perceived ease of use affect perceived usefulness since it is presumed that if it is easier to perform a task the work will be more efficient. Dickinger and Stangl (2013) report results showing that all their eight tested formative measurements (usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, website design, trust, content quality, navigation challenges and system availability) were positive and will affect website performance. By implementing TAM, Kaplanidou and Vogt (2006) researched the influence DMOs’ websites have on intentions to travel to a destination. The authors hypothesized that ease of navigation, content (travel information functions and stimulating graphics) and accessibility (fast download speeds) will positively impact the usefulness of the website. Previous online travel experience, high amount of internet use (hours) and previous visit to DMO’s website will positively impact the perception of website usefulness. Content (travel information functions and stimulating graphics), website usefulness when planning for travel, previous visits of destination and
previous visits of DMO’s website will positively impact the intention of travelling to the destination.

2.5.1 Completeness of website

The measuring of completeness can be good to take into account since it is of importance that the travel information seeking tourist can reach his or her goal even when all elements are not fully ended. The wholeness perspective of the website includes many perspectives. Inversini et al. (2014) did content and functionality analysis to examined the completeness of the DMOs’ websites, such as to what degree events, maps and destination information were included. The 31 best ranked destinations were then picked for scenario evaluation, that is, how easy is it to perform tasks and reach goals through using the websites. These goals could be to find restaurants, offers and excursions. Another aspect is Novabos et al.’s (2015) study results which indicate differences between four destinations and the average importance for potential tourists of each factor, starting with completeness to be most important to be followed by usability and influence. The aim of Inversini et al.’s (2014) study was to evaluate which type of functions and content those websites have and if more of those functions increase the user experience. Results indicated that it was difficult to achieve one or more of these goals in most of the websites. As a conclusion the authors mention that it is of importance to not only measure the quantitative characteristics of DMOs’ websites but also how well the websites perform in terms of accessibility, applicability of information and quality for visitors. Li and Wang (2010) report that their study show that websites had problems with the technical merit dimension from their proposed model, such as lacking site maps, or insufficient information of where to find it, making it difficult to navigate the pages in an efficient way. There were as well gaps to fill regarding the transaction and relationship dimension, where only a few websites could be suggested to fulfill the requirements. DMOs’ websites did not grasp new Internet technology and marketing tools to communicate, stay in contact with customers and enabling sales options, only offering basic information about their destinations. As a result, it is suggested by the authors that the DMOs’ websites should focus on qualitative contents and not on quantitative.

2.5.2 Appearance of DMOs’ websites
Without a user interface that is favorable for the visitor, the website will not attract visitors. Del Vasto-Terrientes et al. (2015) carried out test on 10 European DMOs’ websites. The authors put up some general conclusion of improvements based on the test. The included destination websites should put more focus on having a good home page as it is the entry point for visitors, make it easier to navigate the different elements of the websites (e.g. accessibility for disabled people and from various gadgets) and put stronger focus on brand image (logo and slogan). Kim and Fesenmaier’s (2008) study results showed that the more usable, credible and inspiring a DMO website is the more favorable is the first impression of it. On the other hand, the factors informative, involved and reciprocal were rejected and could not be said to have an influence on favorable first impression. The greatest influence on the first impression did inspiration have and therefore appealing graphics and other stimuli is the greatest predictor of getting tourists to stay longer on the website according to the authors. Further, the authors stress the importance of having a good landing page since it is very easy for travel information seeking consumers to switch to another page if the landing page does not give a good first impression. Based on the content from their study objects, Luna-Nevarez and Hyman (2012) could categorize websites into three clusters. The general trend for the websites were going towards less written text information and more visually appealing content. The most common cluster of DMOs’ websites (134 websites, 51% of the sample) contained websites that are information oriented with lots of text, relatively high number of images and low usage of social media. According to the authors visitors exploring new destinations are likely to be attracted to this cluster of websites. The second most common cluster (94 websites, 35.9% of the sample) contained websites with a modern approach with high usage of social media linkage, an interactive website with lots of images and less verbal information. Visitors for this website are information hungry and want to get more detail from the destination. The third cluster (34 websites, 13% of the sample) contained websites with more advertising and transaction information, integration of social media and higher integration of banner ads than the other clusters. This cluster of websites will benefit for those who are experienced travelers with a pre-knowledge and who turns to the websites to make bookings or find information about transactions.

On the other hand, Kaplanidou and Vogt (2006) results showed that stimulating graphics and travel information functions had an impact on website usefulness while ease of navigation, accessibility, amount of hours surfing the web, previous online travel planning experience and previous visit to website was not supported. Still, the actual intentions are what matters,
to get visitors to the destination. Again, Kaplanidou and Vogt’s (2006) study show that regarding intentions to travel to the destination, only travel information functions of website was not supported, meaning that previous visit to DMOs’ website and to the destination, website usefulness and stimulating graphics had an impact.

2.5.3 DMOs’ website strategies

When designing a website strategy, it is of importance to create a disturbance free experience for users. Perceived intrusiveness of ads is the experience of advertising that feels irritating for the consumers. If a consumer perceives intrusiveness of an ad, it is very likely that the behavior, as a consequence, is avoidance. Additionally, it is not unlikely that negative feelings occur as a result of the avoidance behavior. Perceived intrusiveness can be a measurement of how easy the consumer can reach its’ target goal (e.g. find information on a website) where more intrusive ads will create obstacles to reach this goal and avoidance behavior may occur (Ying et al., 2009). Sass (2011) report that tourists have most positive attitudes regarding search engine advertising and e-mail marketing and most negative attitudes regarding advertising that disturbs their browsing on the web (e.g. banners and pop ups).

Marketers needs to understand which stimuli that are best suited on destination websites to influence travelers’ mental imagery about the destination. With this information is it then possible for marketers to build convincing destination websites that can compete in the tourist information environment. According to the Lee and Gretzel (2012) do mental imagery theory presume that based on previous experience and information available, do we create mental images representing something we have been exposed to. In their study they conceptualize a framework based on mental imagery theory where they hypothesize that website characteristics (narrative text, images and sound) have a positive impact on mental imagery processing. Further they hypothesize as well that consumers’ mental imagery processing leads to stronger attitudes, confidence and higher resistance to attitude change when it comes to forming expectations of the destination. The authors report that their results showed that pictures had significant impact on mental imagery processing while narrative text and sound did not. Further, mental imagery influence communication positive, that is, attitude strength and attitude confidence. The results then show that with stronger attitudes comes a stronger resistance towards negative stimuli according to the authors. The authors mean that this
indicate that once the tourist have created a strong opinion about the destination from mental imagery processing is the tourist more resistant against negative reviews of the destination. As results show, the study demonstrates particularly the importance of pictures when designing destination websites and the authors note that website design should be based on scientific results and less on tourism marketers’ past experience and existing examples.

Further, it is of importance to map people’s perceptions and values of destinations. From Pike’s (2012) study result, 16 destination characteristics were found, together with seven consequences and eight values which could be positioned in a hierarchical value map. As an example the author shows how the personal value happiness links to the consequence refresh/recharge/relax which can be linked to the destination characteristics such as beach, less developed and good shopping. Key results in this study indicated that it is easier for DMOs to build positioning themes around values than destination characteristics since the respondents’ varied responses in the latter made it difficult to build common themes around that. Hence, since values links to characteristics, a positioning theme based on few values will incorporate the more diverse range of described characteristics. As mentioned by the authors the developed method is difficult to generalize between destinations but could be seen as a tool put in context to evaluate specific destinations and their positioning compared with other destinations. According to Xiang et al.’s (2015) study, destination perception did not vary between those who used internet or those who used other sources (DMOs, travel agents and friends and relatives).

**Hypotheses transactions:**
H9a DMOs offering of transactions of services positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H9b Frequent usage of transactions provided by DMOs positively affects the intention to choose and visit a destination.

**Hypotheses advertising:**
H10a DMOs engagement in advertising positively influence tourists’ intention to choose and visit a destination.
H10b Frequent usage of advertising from DMOs positively affects the intention to choose and visit a destination.
2.6 Website evaluation criteria and methods

Techniques for evaluating websites differs among researchers. Law et al. (2010) reviewed articles regarding hospitably websites, destination websites and travel websites in order to sort out website evaluation methods. The first option is counting methods which involves a checklist of attributes which is ticked off. In general, such checklist items are taken from previous models and then either the researchers or an employed person tick off the list to evaluate a tourism websites performance. Using counting methods, is it difficult to measure technical aspects such as download speed since it is hard for users to calculate that. The second option is user judgment methods. With this method user perception or satisfaction with the website is evaluated. Normally, sample group involved is consumers but the level of user satisfaction can also be evaluated by researchers or experts from the industry. The negative aspects with this option include that it is based on users’ own estimation and judgment while it may not give performance in clear numbers for task performed. The third option is automated methods. With this option automated software processes are constructed to cater for the researchers aim of the study. Here the researchers can program the criteria that should be evaluated by the software. Without human involved in the evaluation process, a higher consistency can be met according to the authors. The negative aspect with this option is that the overall experience of the website is difficult to calculate by not including users perceived usability. The forth option is numerical computation where mathematical functions are used to estimate website performance built upon on a number of elements. This method can be difficult for users to grasp. The fifth option is combined methods which is a combination of the previous methods described. A challenge with this option is to what extent each method should be weighted. According to the authors is it of importance for companies and researchers alike to choose a method that match the objectives of its own project since all options have their own strengths and weaknesses. The authors note that while it is now most valuable with combined methods (qualitative and quantitative) the future trend for website evaluation would be to use a sophisticated approach whereas including theories and concepts from other disciplines to evaluate tourism websites.

2.6.1 Definitions of website evaluation criteria

As stated, attempts have been made to develop a standard definition of website evaluation framework. Morrison et al.’s (2004) framework is based on formative and summative
dimensions. The formative dimension is evaluation of the website as an ongoing process (e.g. measures during a one-year time). The summative dimension is evaluation of the website for the whole process that has been undertaken (e.g. measures for the whole one-year period). Further these two dimensions are matched with efficiency and effectiveness. Formative matched with efficiency measures for example website traffic and number of bookings. Summative matched with efficiency measures the same thing but for a whole period of time. Formative matching effectiveness measure e-commerce transactions, such as sales results. Summative matching with effectiveness measure the same but for a whole period, plus return on investment for website costs and the modified balanced scoreboard points. Beside this, the authors pinpoint that the formative and summative dimensions can be applicable to the perspectives of finance (e.g. monitor costs for website and measure sales), marketing (e.g. monitor visitors), customer service (e.g. compare customer effectiveness with previous periods), competitors (e.g. performance for competitors and industry standards) and website design (e.g. technical effectiveness). Chiou et al. (2010) proposed a conceptual framework based on the literature review which is demonstrated as a model in five steps. First step is the strategic step and based on interviews with senior management the website strategy is settled. Senior management have a word of which importance each website evaluation criteria should have. In the second step, based on the information from first step, objectives and goals are determined and a questionnaire is constructed. In the third step experts are consulted for website evaluation. In the fourth step all website evaluation factors discussed should be transformed into numbers and they are then weighted and scored according to its importance and functionality in relation to the objectives. Data analysis is carried out in the fifth, last step, which means that performance charts should be evaluated and weaknesses and strengths of criteria should be analyzed. Lastly should the criteria be evaluated in relation to its relevance for the web marketing mix. Web marketing mix incorporates the traditional 4P (price, place, promotion and product) and adds customer relationship which means a personalized and interactive experience between buyer and seller according to the authors. Novabos et al. (2015) proposed a framework, called User-Perceived Quality Scale, for evaluating DMOs websites according to how tourists perceived the websites. Their framework includes evaluation of information completeness (existence or non-existence of information), credibility (trust and certainty), usability (ease of use and navigation) and persuasiveness (influence on travel decision). After letting the model be tested by Philippine tourists evaluating four DMO websites in the Philippines, the authors concluded after analysis that credibility and persuasiveness should be merged into influence factor. The
authors matched the importance of factors to the evaluated factors and calculated the scores for each factor, that is, completeness, usability and influence and the overall value for all of them.

Fernández-Cavia et al. (2014) proposed a valuation framework with twelve main parameters measuring the website quality of DMOs. These twelve parameters the authors call web quality index. The twelve main parameters incorporate a certain amount of indicators to calculate each parameter. The twelve parameters are home page (13 indicators), content amount and quality (15 indicators), information architecture 10 indicators), usability and accessibility (17 indicators), web positioning (8 indicators), marketing (7 indicators), languages (6 indicators), branding (12 indicators), discourse analysis (8 indicators), interactivity (9 indicators), social web (13 indicator) and mobile communication (5 indicators). The indicators are given a number based on how well that indicator score, that is, how well the indicator fulfill the requirements. There are different scoring options according to the authors. If a certain thing such as integrated booking system is present or absent it will get a score between 0 and 1 whereas 0 indicates non present information. While other indicators are judged based on poor, standard, good and excellent with matching number 0 to 3 such as the number of non-official languages on a website. Each indicator should also have different weight since some are more important than others, with the judgment done by experts or researchers. Based on score for each indicator it is possible to calculate average for each parameter. With the score it is then possible to compare DMOs’ websites to each other and calculate average score. Del Vasto-Terrientes et al. (2015) implemented web quality index together with the ELECTRE-III-H analytical method with the aim to generalize performance quality of destination websites. According to the authors is web quality index useful since it is a set of parameters evaluating a destination website, both in respect of quantitative and qualitative scale measurements. The measurements included in this study contained in total 123 indicators. The main themes evaluated were slightly different from Fernández-Cavia et al. (2014) framework and contained home page (attractiveness), content amount and quality, information architecture (e.g. search and layout), usability and accessibility (e.g. navigation), positioning, commercialization (transaction processes such as goods and services provided), language (e.g. provided translations), brand image (e.g. slogan and logotype), persuasiveness, interactivity, social web (e.g. social web tools provided) and mobile communication (i.e. if the destination website is considered for smartphone use). The research carried out is statically with the intention to analyze which website has included the
most comprehensive information, for example the presence of a brand (destination) logo and slogan.

### 2.6.2 Common factors for website evaluation

By synthesizing previous literature authors have analyzed website evaluation criteria and methods that could be of interest when investigating tourism and DMOs’ sites. Chiou et al. (2010) introduced a conceptual framework with the aim of improving website evaluation. It emerged that the 83 articles reviewed either contained an information system approach, marketing approach or a combination of both. The information system approach dealt with technical issues such as ease of use and accessibility of website. The marketing approach on the other hand dealt with product information, sales promotion and customer service. By doing content analyze and classification of papers, the most common website evaluation factors were presented. The 12 most common factors for all studies ranked in order were ease of use (e.g. accessibility, structure of website), information quality (e.g. uniqueness, consistency), responsiveness e.g. replies to consumers, help tools), visual appearance, security/privacy, interactivity, trust, fulfillment (e.g. accuracy of information, process of order), playfulness (e.g. flow, fun), advertising/persuasion, personalization and technology integration. According to the authors, within information structure website evaluation and the combined approach, ease of use was the most common factor while marketing website evaluation ranked information quality highest. DMO’s return of investment often look a bit different compared to other tourism companies that directly handle visitors (e.g. hotels) why it is worth looking beyond return of investment measurements for example. Morrison et al. (2004) report that previous research within tourism website evaluation have realized that there need to be frameworks looking beyond evaluation of companies’ website performances relying only on financial measures. Further, the authors write that one attempt by researchers to include other parameters, was the modified balanced scoreboard which includes perspectives of marketing, technical, customer and internal. By reviewing previous studies within website evaluation the authors presented a website evaluation framework. Of 19 previous studies regarding website evaluation, the authors mention that one had experimental design as research method while the other 18 used content analysis as evaluation method. Li and Wang (2010) conclude that there are studies of American DMOs’ websites and hence tries to fill a research gap by investigating the effectiveness of DMOs’ websites in China. Based on tourism literature and in particular tourism development on Internet they
conceptualize a DMOs’ website evaluation framework. The proposed model by the authors includes five dimensions, that is to say, information (how accurate and valuable the information is), communication (tools for communication with with tourists), relationship (keep and maintain tourists), transaction (tools for generating revenue from selling for example services) and technical merit (website must be implemented technically in a useful sense and so impact the other four dimensions). All 31 provincial DMOs in China were evaluated and categorized based on this model regarding its importance.

### 2.6.3 Different approaches to evaluation of DMOs’ websites

Evaluations have also been made with influence from sources outside of tourism literature. Park and Gretzel (2007) carried out qualitative meta-analysis research to define success factors for destination websites. They analyzed previous studies and concept from both non-tourism and tourism literature review to find common themes but also possible gaps. The data were gathered between 1997 and 2006 with 153 academic papers in total. After going through concepts and frameworks from previous literature they could find nine common success factors, namely, information quality, ease of use, responsiveness, security/privacy, visual appearance, trust, interactivity, personalization and fulfillment. The authors could find little evidence in the literature that considered factors such as technological integration between devices (web and mobile use) and the role of integration of persuasiveness (website factors that tempt people to visit the destination). A conclusion by the the authors assert that further research is necessary to understand which factors that are merely interactive and which drives consumers’ attitudes and behavior.

There are those that have focus on the information and style together with usability. It is crucial that visitors to online DMOs feel welcomed and are attracted to stay longer within the realm of the DMOs. Luna-Nevarez and Hyman (2012) carried out content analysis on 262 major global DMOs’ websites and evaluated them based on six quality criteria namely interactivity, visual and presentations style and navigation, textual information, use of advertising, primary focus and use of social media and travel aids. Dickinger and Stangl’s (2013) formative measurement index includes a total of eight measurements (usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, website design, trust, content quality, navigation challenges and system availability) that was hypothesized in their study to be affecting website performance for users of tourism websites. By reviewing information search theory, Kim and Fesenmaier
(2008) did an exploratory study and they conceptualized a model they called factors affecting the persuasiveness of destination websites. The aim with the study is to investigate the influence six persuasiveness factors have on the homepage of DMOs’ websites. The factors were hygiene factors, that is, informative and usability, and potential factors, that is, credibility, inspiration, involvement and reciprocity. The authors hypothesize that the more positive tourists are to each factor the more likely is it that that the factor forms a favorable first impression of the DMOs’ website for the tourists.

2.7 Research model

Figure 1: Research model

The research model (figure 1) aims to investigate the importance ten DMOs’ value creating factors have on the intention to visit a destination. Further, it also aims to investigate if frequent usage of ten DMOs’ value creating factors influence the intention to visit a destination. Interviews are made to investigate tourists reasoning behind the value creating
factors followed by surveys. The model consists of important concepts extracted from the theoretical chapter which is worth exploring for the present study and population.

The research model (figure 1) highlights that tourists may still valuate web 1.0 characterized travel information sources, that is, travel information with high density of information even though web 2.0, that is, travel information sources that is characterized of interactive elements, are the new era of information technology (Chung and Koo, 2015). So and Morrison (2003) and Chung et al. (2015) mean that DMOs’ websites have an influence on the intention to visit destinations. Social media sites are broadly used platforms to access destination information (Sass, 2011) and it is stressed that having a social media strategy for DMOs is important (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014); Munar, 2012). Lange-Faria and Elliot (2012) mean that with social media can DMOs online communicate with users to add extra customer value by and it is stressed that it creates new opportunities for letting tourist be involved in DMOs’ activities. Luna-Nevarez and Hyman (2012) investigation of DMOs showed that a large part offered transaction capabilities. Research show as well that generation Y are more likely to purchase untraditional things (such as tickets for events) online (Xiang et al., 2015) and those who search online have higher travel consumption rate (Luo et al., 2004). There are different type of travel advertising online that engage users (Sass, 2011) and social media advertising is rising (Luna-Nevarez and Hyman, 2012; María Munar, 2011). Still there are research pointing out that non-internet sources (e.g. telephone, brochures) are used as complementary to online alternatives (Xiang et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2012). The trend of visiting tourist information centers is fading though in favor for digital communication (Lyu and Hwang, 2015).

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the process of conducting the research. It explains why a deductive, mixed methods research approach was used and why the specific research design was chosen. It also explains the data collection methods and how it was collected.

3.1 Outline of study

The aim with this thesis is as following. Interviews are held to dig deeper into tourists’ travel behavior and their relation to DMOs (e.g. why they think that DMOs social media presence is
or it is not a good tool or medium for tourism information). Surveys was then used to broader the view, evaluating the importance and frequency of using DMOs for travel information gathering by tourists.

This thesis will apply a combination of exploratory and descriptive research design. It will include interviews in an exploratory manner to further push into interesting areas and to get a more comprehensive picture of it. Exploratory research design is used when the research problem at hand is unexplored, little is known about the dimensions of it (Domegan & Fleming, 2007) and the aim is to gain insights and discover new ideas (Kothari, 2004). It will then include descriptive research to answer the hypotheses. Descriptive research design is implemented when the researchers wants to describe something, for example market features, by establishing specific research questions, hypotheses (Malhotra & Birks, 2006) and seeking relationship between two or more variables (Domegan & Fleming, 2007).

As a result of purpose and research design of the study, a mixed method is applied, with both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research seeks to test hypotheses from statistical data while qualitative research wants to discover deeper knowledge from individuals with addressing open ended questions (Creswell, 2012). The research is mainly quantitative with elements of qualitative research hence the research approach is deductive whereas the theory will be tested (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The chosen population is the generation Y. The generation Y, also called the N generation, as in net generation, are an emerging generation individuals who have grown up in the digital era and are very familiar with computers and new technology (Minkyung et al., 2010). Researchers have slightly different time spans for this generation of individuals but to be coherent the generation Y is defined to those born between 1982 and 2000 (Hills et al., 2013). Generation Y is of interest to focus on since they are experienced travelers, growing up in an economy providing lots of tourism and travel opportunities. Further, they have knowledge and interest of today’s broad range of travel opportunities (Glover, 2010). Students from Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden is chosen to target this population. Today’s generation of students are mainly part of the generation Y and hence is good for research within this generation group (Moscardo and Benckendorff, 2010).
The chosen sample selection method is non-probability that includes limitations which the researchers decide, for example time, cost and access to population (Domegan & Fleming, 2007). Due to limited access of population and time to gather such data, the population in this research is not going to have the equal chance of being selected such as it is in a random sample. Instead the researcher chooses the sample from the population of generation Y from students studying at Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden. Given this, it is of interest to see how this generation Y adopt tourism information search behavior and the influence DMOs have on their travel decisions.

3.2 Data Collection

An interview guide was created based on the theoretical framework. Ten persons from the population was chosen to answer it. Since the researcher wanted representations of respondents from a variety of cities in Sweden, interviews was made via Skype which provides video chat and voice call services. The interviews lasted 20-30 minutes and was recorded. At the end of each interview, a quick review was done with each interviewed person to check if all answers were understood correctly from both parts.

Data collection method consisted of surveys and interviews. Surveys was sent to students at Linnaeus University via their student e-mail. In total 982 students were chosen to answer the survey. Two follow up e-mail reminders was also sent. 58 responses were collected with a response rate of 5.9%. The low response rate is further discussed in chapter 7.4 Limitations.

3.3 Data analysis

The qualitative data (interviews and website evaluation) is first transcribed before it is summarized under each heading in the empirical chapter. Thematic analysis (i.e. to look for common patterns and themes) is carried out for the qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

For the quantitative analysis, descriptive analysis will be evaluated first followed by a factor analysis. The factor analysis will be an attempt to simplify the theoretical model and reduce the constructs. After that will regression be carried out to see which independent factors that influence the intention to visit a destination.
Quality criteria for quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview guide) research are evaluated with the help of validity and reliability tests. First, it includes control questions to confirm that all valid responses fall under the age limitations of generation Y. The survey and interview guide underwent pre-tests for content-validity (face validity) through four sample representatives and two professional researchers from the field of study. Corrective measures were taken according to the feedback received.

Further, the quantitative constructs are going to be validity tested as well with Pearson’s correlation where the aim is to have low values between the constructs to make sure that they measure different things. Results closer to 1 shows a robust relationship while closer to 0 prove looser the relationship and values under 0.8 are considered valid (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Reliability for surveys is tested with Cronbach’s alpha and constructs with the valid measure of 0.6 or above is seen as reliable (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Reliability of interviews is about if researchers can repeat your study (just as in quantitative research) (Bryman & Bell, 2015) and the research have strived to enable such settings by having described how the interviews were made.

### Table 1: Research overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Quantitative and qualitative with deductive approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Descriptive and Exploratory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sample and population                         | Interviews: n=10 (Generation Y - university students in Sweden)  
|                                               | Survey: n= 58 (Generation Y - university students in Sweden)  |
| Data collection method                        | Interviews and surveys                               |
| Data collection instrument                    | Survey – Interview guide - Operationalization + Pretest from four sample representatives and two professional researchers |
| Data analysis method                          | Descriptive analysis, factor analysis, Multiple linear regression, thematic analysis |
| Quality criteria for quantitative and qualitative research | Validity test: Four sample representatives, two professional researchers from the field of study. Pearson’s correlation test for quantitative research  
|                                               | Reliability test: Repeatability. Cronbach’s alpha for quantitative research |

3.4 Definitions of the survey
In order to test the stated hypotheses, a survey was developed based on the theoretical framework found in chapter 2. Table 2 below explains the conceptual and operational definitions of the constructs that have been used in this study. The Likert scale is used in this study, in which respondents answer to what degree they agree or disagree with a statement, and typically a seven-point rating scale is used as measurement (Saunders et al. 2009). The items and questions for the survey can be found in appendix 9.1.

### Table 2: Definitions of the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs (Variables)</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Operational definition</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web 1.0 – Importance</td>
<td>Web 1.0 is websites with focus on high density of travel information (Chung and Koo, 2015).</td>
<td>To what degree it is important that DMOs are presence on websites with Web 1.0 elements (high density of information) for the intention to visit destination. A website can have elements of both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.</td>
<td>Likert Scale 1-7 Strongly disagree – Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 1.0 – Frequency</td>
<td>Web 1.0 is websites with focus on high density of travel information (Chung and Koo, 2015).</td>
<td>How frequently websites with Web 1.0 elements (high density of information) are used for searching DMO tourism information for the intention to visit destination. A website can have elements of both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.</td>
<td>Likert Scale 1-7 Never - Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0 – Importance</td>
<td>Web 2.0 is interactive websites enabling visitors to socialize, share and communicate with other persons and the destination marketing organization (Chung and Koo, 2015).</td>
<td>To what degree it is important that DMOs are presence on websites with Web 2.0 elements (interactivity) for the intention to visit destination. A website can have elements of both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.</td>
<td>Likert Scale 1-7 Strongly disagree – Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0 – Frequency</td>
<td>Web 2.0 is interactive websites enabling visitors to socialize, share and communicate with other persons and the destination marketing organization (Chung and Koo, 2015).</td>
<td>How frequently websites with Web 2.0 elements (interactivity) are used for searching DMO tourism information for the intention to visit destination. A website can have elements of both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.</td>
<td>Likert Scale 1-7 Never - Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website - Importance</td>
<td>A DMOs website act as a gateway to information about the destination (WTOBC, 1999).</td>
<td>To what degree DMOs websites are important for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>Likert scale 1-7 Strongly disagree – Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website - Frequency</td>
<td>A DMOs website act as a gateway to information about the destination (WTOBC, 1999).</td>
<td>How frequently DMO website are used for searching DMO tourism information for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>Likert Scale 1-7 Never - Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media - Importance</td>
<td>Social media is the concept of a new communication era whereas people can interact socially online, powered by information and communication</td>
<td>To what degree DMOs presence on social media (DMO activity on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram) are</td>
<td>Likert Scale 1-7 Strongly disagree – Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Likert Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media - Frequency</td>
<td>Social media is the concept of a new communication era whereas people can interact socially online, powered by information and communication technology both via desktop and mobile (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014).</td>
<td>How frequently DMOs’ social media sources are used for searching DMO tourism information for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online communication - Importance</td>
<td>Online tools for communication with tourists (Li and Wang, 2010).</td>
<td>To what degree it is of importance to be able to communicate through social media with DMOs for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online communication - Frequency</td>
<td>Online tools for communication with tourists (Li and Wang, 2010).</td>
<td>How frequently online communication through social media is made with DMOs to get information for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine - Importance</td>
<td>Search engine optimization is important for destinations so users can find them when they search for destination information (Ho et al., 2012).</td>
<td>To what degree DMOs presence on search engines are important for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine - Frequency</td>
<td>Search engine optimization is important for destinations so users can find them when they search for destination information (Ho et al., 2012).</td>
<td>How frequently search engine results for DMOs are used for searching DMO tourism information for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction - Importance</td>
<td>Tools for generating revenue from selling for example services (Li and Wang, 2010).</td>
<td>To what degree it is of importance that the DMOs provide online transactions for such as events, hotels and restaurant on their platforms for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction - Frequency</td>
<td>Tools for generating revenue from selling for example services (Li and Wang, 2010).</td>
<td>How frequently transactions for such as events and hotels provided through DMOs are used for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising - Importance</td>
<td>Advertising in online mediums (Luna-Nevarez and Hyman, 2012; María Munar, 2011).</td>
<td>To what degree DMOs online advertising through banners, sponsored search engine ads and sponsored social media ads is found to be important for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising - Frequency</td>
<td>Advertising in online mediums (Luna-Nevarez and Hyman, 2012; María Munar, 2011).</td>
<td>How frequently DMOs advertising are used for searching DMO tourism information for the intention to visit destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-internet sources - Importance</td>
<td>While internet for travel searching is the number one source, other sources are now complementary according to research (Xiang et al., 2015).</td>
<td>To what degree non-internet DMO sources (e.g. brochure / leaflet, tourist information center, calling telephone) are important for the intention to visit the destination.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-internet sources - Frequency</td>
<td>While internet for travel searching is the number one source, other sources</td>
<td>How frequently non-internet DMO sources (e.g. brochure / leaflet,</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Semi-structured interviews

In order to understand potential tourists’ travel information search behavior and the role travel information from DMOs have in tourists’ search progress, an interview guide was developed based on theoretical framework found in chapter 2.

3.5.1 Travel information search behavior

The travel information search process has been explained in various ways (Ho et al., 2012; Xiang et al., 2015; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010; Choi et al., 2007). Therefore, the interviews begin with two questions where the interviewees shall explain their travel information search behavior freely in their own words and by thoughts. As such, it is possible to get an insight of the interviewees searching behavior without the researcher’s own valuations (e.g. asking leading questions).

1. Imagine you were to visit an, for you, unknown Swedish destination that you have not visited before, how would you search for travel information? Where would you get this information? Would you contact someone to get the information?
2. Imagine that you were to visit an, for you, known Swedish destination that you may as well have visited, how would you search for travel information? Where would you get this information? Would you contact someone to get the information? Would you act differently from the example in question 1?

3.5.2 Access of travel information / layout of travel information

Research point out that sources with high density of information is valuable (Chung and Koo, 2015) but that social media is widely used for travel information search and travelers prefer visual content over narrative text (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014). Given this, it is of interest to see the reasoning behind. This question relates to how the interviewees prefer to access travel information, that is, in what type and form the information should be like. The answers given from this question can also reveal what type of content DMOs should use in their online channels.

3. How do you want to access travel information; for example, short and briefly, with longer texts, through images and descriptions, or only via minimal info? Develop your reasoning.

3.5.3 Social media in general and destination marketing organizations’ activity on social media.

Researchers see the potential for DMOs to interact with customers in and through social media (Hays et al., 2013; Lange-Faria and Elliot, 2012) so this question aims to investigate if potential tourists use social media for travel information search and if they are interested in DMOs engagement in social media.

4. Have you ever used social media for inspiration or to search for travel information?

8. How important do you think it is that destination marketing organizations market their destinations on social media (for example Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)? Do you actively search for them or add the destination marketing organizations’ social media accounts?
3.5.4 Communication

The question aims to investigate the preferred way for tourists to communicate with DMOs. Existing research indicate that tourists prefer digital channels instead of visiting tourist information centers (Lyu and Hwang, 2015) and that there are new communication channels such as through social media which have gain popularity (Míguez-González and Fernández-Cavia, 2015), something the question also is set out to investigate.

5. If you would contact a destination marketing organization to get travel information, how would the contact look like? Which channels would you have used (for example contact via email, phone and social media)? Which channels do you prefer?

3.5.5 Destination marketing organizations’ websites

Chung et al. (2015) mean that the usage of DMOs’ websites have a positive impact on the intention to visit destination. Question number six aims to investigate in which way websites are important to the tourists.

6. Do you believe that it is essential that destination marketing organizations have websites with travel information? What do you consider that destination marketing organization can contribute respective not contribute with in aiding with travel information alternatively inspiration?

3.5.6 Destination marketing organizations’ online advertising

As Sass (2011) point out, disturbance of advertising can be annoying and interrupt the browsing experience. The seventh question aim to investigate how DMOs’ advertisings are perceived.

7. How important do you think it is that Swedish destinations are marketed by online advertising (for example banners, sponsored search results on Google and sponsored posts on social media)? Do you think that advertising online from destination marketing organizations
can influence your decision to visit a destination? Do you think that the destination marketing organizations are visible enough in advertising on social media today?

3.5.7 Tourist information centers

Lyu and Hwang’s (2015) findings suggest that new information technology have a negative impact on the use of tourist information centers. Therefore, it is of interest to see what role tourist information centers have for tourists.

9. How important are tourist information centers for your travel information search? Do you think that they have a legitimate place or are other digital channels preferred for travel information search?

4. Empirical findings

This chapter will first start by presenting findings from the ten interviews with Swedish potential tourists from the chosen target group, generation Y-.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the interviewees

Table 3: Demographics of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Uppsala</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Markaryd</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Studying &amp; working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Örebro</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gothenburg</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Hässleholm</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Studying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Varberg</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Findings from the interviews

4.2.1 Travel information search behavior
In a situation where the destination is unknown for the interviewees, all but one would start off their search for travel information by visiting the most well-known search engine Google. A typical response was like man (born 1985; lives in Hässleholm) expressed it by saying “I would search Google first and ask around in the friend circle as a second method.” Woman (born 1989; lives in Malmö) mentioned instead that her search would start with going through the information from the the public review site TripAdvisor. By using search engines, are the interviewees looking for results regarding destination websites (destination marketing organizations’ websites), attractive activities to do, travel advices and other information that provides information about the destination. The second most used source for travel information is to find friends and relatives that have knowledge about the destination. According to the interviewees, was it preferred to ask friends that had been at the destination or lived there.

If the destination is known for the interviewees, the travel information search process is typical the same as if it was unknown, where search engines, social media and friends and relatives are important sources. The difference lies in what the interviewees want to achieve with the search. Interviewees want to get deepen knowledge about the destination with recommendations of activities that go under the radar, that is, secret or hidden recommendations not well-known for the big masses. The interviewees do not casually seek for information if the destination is known. Instead they are up for more planned information searching.

Woman (born 1988; lives in Örebro) summarize the interviewees travel information search process regarding known destinations well: “I would think about what I would like to achieve with my visit since I may have visited the destination before. I would find out the facts about the destination in the same way as if the destination was unknown.”

4.2.2 Access of travel information / layout of travel information

In general, was the preferred type of travel information pictures with a short descriptive text. Man (born 1987; lives in Gothenburg) expresses it as “Short and concise information. I do not manage to read a lot of text about something I have not decided upon yet. It may sound strange but I prefer pictures with some text like it is on Instagram.” A reason why the interviewees preferred pictures with short descriptive text was to get a f a t the destination.
Pictures with short descriptive text worked as an appetizer and many of the interviewees said that they want access to longer articles or informational text if they found the appetizer to be interesting. It seems like it is important to catch both those who are actively seeking for information and those who are more casually searching for information.

Man (born 1989; lives in Malmö) describes it as: “In a scenario where I am actively looking for information would I prefer images and longer texts because I want to read more about the destination. If I am not actively looking for information would I love to get inspired by images and short texts.”

4.2.3 Social media in general and destination marketing organizations’ activity on social media.

It is clear that social media is used to get destination information and be inspired to visit destinations. The interviewees mention the two biggest of them, Facebook and Instagram, as the most used ones. Many of them points out that they get information in their social feed by what others have shared and comment about (social media sites have algorithms that detects what is trending in terms of likes, shares and comments). Nevertheless, this information and inspiration that they get in their feed are still valuable since it may raise their interest of a destination. Hashtags is also used and as an example, woman (born 1991; lives in Uppsala) say “I often check Instagram pictures via the destinations’ hashtag such as #visby.”

DMOs’ social media accounts on the other are not popular and interviewees do not actively add their accounts to their social media feeds. According to the interviewees relies very much DMOs visibility on the efforts they make to get them noticed in people’s social media feed through hashtags, shares, comments and likes. A couple of the interviewees stress that it is still important for DMOs to be active in social media to attract different target groups. Woman (born 1983; lives in Stockholm) says “The success of it (social media) requires that destination marketing organizations have skilled administrators and a clear social media strategy. Many companies (in general) have a rather poor and unengaged social media presence.”

4.2.4 Communication
The interviewees clearly preferred e-mail and telephone for communication, depending on the situation and the amount of time they had on hand to solve the problem or question. E-mail is preferred if it is no rush to solve the questions while telephone is preferred if it is more of an emergency case. E-mail is good to get answers on both simple questions and to get deepen knowledge while telephone is preferred to get more exact answers, such as about bookings. Woman (born 1989; lives in Markaryd) summarized it very well by saying “I use phone maybe more to get direct answers while e-mail is used when I have plenty of time to get answers and perhaps would like to have comprehensive answers.”

The use of social media for communication divided the interviewees in two camps. One camp mean that it is as good as e-mail, especially if you can get in contact through private chat atmosphere such as Facebook messenger. For example, does man (born 1988; lives in Varberg) say “social media is a great contact forum for events happening in the near future”. The other camp is agreeing with woman (born 1983; lives in Stockholm) who says “Communicating via social media is not something I am comfortable with since it is a bit too open for others to read for my liking.” These interviewees agreeing with this mean that using social media for contact is uncomfortable and too public if the questions are not dealt through private chats.

4.2.5 Destination marketing organizations’ websites

All of the respondents think it is essential that DMOs have official websites for their destination. They think it is essential since the DMOs through their websites advertise and highlight the things worth seeing. Further, it is of importance according to the interviewees that DMOs show events and happenings that will occur on the destination. DMOs’ websites are seen as a possibility for the interviewees to explore the destination on their own since DMOs’ websites offer up to date information which cannot be guaranteed through brochures or similar. The websites work both as inspirational page and for finding more serious facts according to the interviewees. Woman (born 1989; lives in Malmö) summarize the interviewees opinions well by saying “Yes, I think this is important. I want to be able to find information online without the of need to call or e-mail.”

Some interviewees think it is as important with DMOs’ websites as it is to be active on social media. In short they mean that DMOs’ websites work as the face of the destination and
therefore needs to be taken care of with seriousness. They express that there are great opportunities to market the destination through websites. Woman (born 1983; lives in Stockholm): “An awesome website contributes tremendously, it becomes the hub of a campaign, the goal of all marketing. A bad website is the complete opposite and it also shows that the destination does not keep up with progress, or are not interested in receiving any visitors.”

### 4.2.6 Destination marketing organizations’ online advertising

Overall, the interviewees feel blunted when it comes to DMOs’ destination advertising. Advertising in form of banners and similar are expressed as being intrusive. Sponsored search results or sponsored social media ads work better. Man (born 1987; lives in Gothenburg) says: “Ad blockers are very common so advertising need to be less of ‘advertising’ and more of sponsored type.” Many of the interviewees mean that they notice destination advertising on Facebook and Instagram unconsciously and if the ads have caught them in the right time, for example when they are planning for vacation, is it very likely that they are affected and consider the destination as a place to go. Social media advertising is especially good according to the interviewees since it can get you thinking of destinations and activities you would not have thought of otherwise and get you inspired. If you on the other hand know the destination you are exposed for, can it act as a reminder of the destination or activities to do according to the interviewees. Such reminders of destinations may also lead to recommendations for friends and relatives. Man (born 1988; lives in Varberg) put it like “when I am out and about I am often very spontaneous and if a recommendation then pops up when I am in a certain area is it very likely that I stop by this recommended place.”

There are concerns raised regarding advertising overload, that is, there are so much information to process. The interviewees think that DMOs need to be cleverer when it comes to advertising, such as engaging in TV series, travel programs, movies and smart social media campaigns. Woman (born 1983; lives in Stockholm) says: “As an example, I want to demonstrate the Destination Gotland’s advertising on bus stops and similar locations. They advertise with a nice picture and ask something like ‘Caribbean? No, Blue Lagoon on Gotland’. It is simple yet clever. The message is clear and I get hooked and start googling.”
4.2.7 Tourist information centers

None of the interviewees were any frequently visitors of tourist information centers. Instead it was clearly that the interviewees are not dependent of them and prefer other digital channels to get travel information. Man (born 1988; lives in Varberg) says: “It is more important to me that they (DMOs) have a well updated website.”

It was clearly as well that the general opinion from the interviewees was that they saw a need for tourist information centers for other people than themselves, for example elderly. Some even saw tourist information centers as relics such as woman (born 1989; lives in Malmö) expressed herself: “Have extremely rarely visited a physical tourist information center. But it is fun that they still exist after all.”

5. Analysis

This chapter will begin with factor analysis followed by the presentation of a new research model together with new hypotheses. Then, demographic information will follow, continuing with reliability test, validity test and linear regression to test the new hypotheses.

A factor analysis is carried out with the aim of simplify the research model (see figure 1) and reduce the number of hypotheses. The 20 constructs found in the research model (see figure 1), which are hypothesized to influence intention to visit destination, are used in the factor analysis to investigate constructs that can be grouped together. With other words, the 20 hypotheses found in chapter 2, Literature review and hypotheses, are behind the factor analysis results and the factors that came out of the analysis. A new proposed model (see figure 2), with new constructs hypothesized to influence the intention to visit destination, will be provided.

5.1 Factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Factor analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency online communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Web 2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Web 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency non internet sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency search engines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency tourist information centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance advertising</th>
<th>.750</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance Web 1.0</td>
<td>.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance search engines</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance transaction</th>
<th>.795</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance Web 2.0</td>
<td>.687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance website</td>
<td>.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance social media</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance online communication</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance tourist information centers</td>
<td>.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance non internet sources</td>
<td>.716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Factor loadings < .5 are suppressed.*

All the twenty variables were analyzed using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation in order to identify which variables that could be grouped together. Corrections of the factor analysis results (see Table 4) have been made according to guidelines by Hair (2010). This means that the analysis revealed five factors with eigenvalues over 1, which is required according to the author, and those five factors were used for further evaluation.

Further, these five factors explained a 69% of the variance in the entire set of variables, which is over the required 60% level according to the author. All variables within these five factors with results under 0.5 were deleted as well since it is the recommended level of significance according to the author.

The first factor explains 29.3% of the variance and has ten factor loading variables. All of them regards frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors with high loadings on all the frequency variables. It can be interpreted that the intention to visit destinations is influenced by tourists’ who frequently use DMOs’ value creating factors. Therefore, factor 1 is named frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors.

The second factor explains 17.52% of the variance and has three factor loading variables. Importance advertising has the highest loading followed by importance web 1.0 and importance search engines. It can be interpreted that the intention to visit destinations is influenced by tourists’ who think DMOs’ advertising (high density information advertising and search engine advertising) is important. Therefore, factor 2 is named importance DMOs’ advertising.
The third factor explains 82.7% of the variance and has three factor loading variables. Importance transaction has the highest factor loading followed by importance web 2.0 and importance website. It can be interpreted that the intention to visit destinations is influenced by tourists’ who think DMOs’ offering transaction in their digital channels is important. Therefore, factor 3 is named importance DMOs’ online transactions.

The fourth factor explains 7.43% of the variance and has two factor loading variables. With highest factor loading on the variable importance social media followed by a factor loading on importance online communication, can it be interpreted that the intention to visit destinations is influenced by tourists’ who think DMOs’ social media activity and online communication with customers is important. Therefore, factor 4 is named importance DMOs’ social media activity.

The fifth factor explains 6.24 % of the variance and has two factor loading variables. The fifth factor has high factor loadings on the variables importance non-internet sources and importance tourist information centers. It can be interpreted that the intention to visit destinations is influenced by tourists’ who think DMOs’ offline activity is important. Therefore, factor 5 is named importance DMOs’ offline sources.

5.2 New proposed model and new hypotheses

The factor analysis findings suggest that certain constructs can be grouped together. The research model (figure 2) shows a new and simplified proposed model with the new constructs that was generated through the factor analysis. It shows how the new set of constructs DMOs’ advertising, DMOs’ online transactions, DMOs’ social media activity, DMOs’ offline sources and frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors are hypothesized to be related with the intention to visit destination (for summary of new hypotheses see table 5).
**Figure 2: New research model**

![New research model diagram](image)

**Table 5: Summary new hypotheses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Frequent usage of DMOs’ value creating factors positively influence the intention to visit a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>DMOs’ advertising positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>DMOs’ online transactions positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>DMOs’ social media activity positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>DMOs’ offline sources positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.3 Demographic statistics**

In total 58 survey responses were recorded in the empirical investigation which is a response rate of 5.9% (58/982), which is considered as low. Of those, 87.9% (51 persons) are Swedish, and the remaining 12.1% (7 persons) come from other countries. 37.9% (22 persons) are
males and 62.1% (36 persons) are females. A demonstrative portion of the sample, 94.8% (55 persons), report that they study Business Administration and the remaining 5.2% (3 persons) respondents report that they study Social Sciences. 10 persons of the sample group responded that they are born in the eighties (between 1982-1989), and the remaining 48 responded that they are born in the nineties (between 1990-1996).

5.4 Reliability

With the help of Cronbach’s alpha, reliability tests are carried out (see table 6). All constructs were tested successfully with the valid measures of above 0.60 which is considered to be reliable (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Table 6: Cronbach’s alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting destination</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMOs’ advertising</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMOs’ online transactions</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMOs’ social media activity</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMOs’ offline sources</td>
<td>.849</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Validity

A validity test is carried out by performing a Pearson’s correlation test (see table 7). The aim is to have low values between the constructs to make sure that they measure different things. The correlations’ values are checked and they show sufficiently low values under .8 between each construct meaning that the correlation between the constructs is accepted as measuring different things.

Table 7: Pearson’s correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Visiting destination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Frequency of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.358**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
using DMOs’ value creating factors

3. DMOs’ advertising
   1  7  5.37  0.97  .493** .065  -

4. DMOs’ online transactions
   1  7  5.67  0.91  .368** .134  .532**  -

5. DMOs’ social media activity
   1  7  5.01  1.15  .203  .213  .332*  .370**  -

6. DMOs’ offline sources
   1  7  4.93  1.32  .263*  .286*  .322*  .226  .287*  -

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2–tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

5.6 Regression

Table 8: Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
<th>Model 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.385</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of study</td>
<td>.419</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.446</td>
<td>.626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent Variables

| Frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors | .004* |
| DMOs’ advertising                              | .000* |
| DMOs’ online transaction                       | .001* |
| DMOs’ social media activity                    | .088* |
| DMOs’ offline sources                          | .042* |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R2</th>
<th>0.025</th>
<th>0.168</th>
<th>0.285</th>
<th>0.199</th>
<th>0.078</th>
<th>0.100</th>
<th>0.428</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R2</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>0.216</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in R2</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.260</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error of Estimates</td>
<td>1.329</td>
<td>1.240</td>
<td>1.149</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>1.305</td>
<td>1.289</td>
<td>1.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F value</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>2.102</td>
<td>4.148</td>
<td>2.576</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>1.156</td>
<td>3.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of freedom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstandardized Beta</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.647</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.1

Linear regression is implemented to test the relationship between tourists’ intention to visit a destination. Linear regression is also implemented to test the effect of the control variables country, gender, field of study and date of birth (year) on the model. The regression model shows significant result in ANOVA (p<0.1).
Model 1 investigate the effect control variables have on the intention to visit destination and all of the control variables are insignificant. Model 2 indicates that the variable frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors is significant. Total variance explained by model 2 is 17.1 %. The R square change is 14.6%, which means frequent usage of DMOs’ value creating factors could explain a large amount of the variance in intention to visit destination. Consequently, H1 is accepted. Model 3 indicates that the variable DMOs’ advertising is significant. Total variance explained by model 3 is 28.5 %. The R square change is 26%, which means importance of DMOs’ advertising could explain a large amount of the variance in intention to visit destination. Consequently, H2 is accepted. Model 4 indicates that the variable DMOs’ online transaction is significant. Total variance explained by model 3 is 19.9 %. The R square change is 17.4%, which means importance of DMOs’ online transaction could explain a large amount of the variance in intention to visit destination. Consequently, H3 is accepted. Model 5 indicates that the variable DMOs’ social media activity is significant. Total variance explained by model 5 is 7.8 %. The R square change is 5.4%, which means importance of DMOs’ social media activity could explain a small amount of the variance in intention to visit destination. With significant result, H4 is accepted. Model 6 indicates that the variable DMOs’ offline sources is significant. Total variance explained by model 6 is 10%. The R square change is 7.5%, which means importance of DMOs’ offline sources could explain a small amount of the variance in intention to visit destination. With significant result, H5 is accepted. Model 7 shows all variables added together and model 7 explains the total variance of the regression model by 42.8%. The R square change is 40.3%, which means variables could explain a large amount of the variance in intention to visit destination. Consequently, H5 is accepted.

With Unstandardized Beta (B) is it possible to explore how much the accepted hypotheses influence intention to travel. The larger the increase on intention to visit destination for each point of a hypothesis, the more influence the hypothesis have on the intention to visit destination. The highest influence has DMOs’ advertising with 0.699, meaning that for each point increase in DMOs’ advertising, intention to visit destination would increase with 0.699. The second highest influence have DMOs’ online transaction with 0.647. The third highest influence have frequency of using DMOs’ value creating factors with 0.474. The fourth highest influence have DMOs’ social media activity with 0.275. Lastly, the fifth highest influence have DMOs’ offline sources with 0.274.
The findings of the regression are summarized in table 9.

### Table 9: Summary of the regression results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Supported / Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>DMOs’ advertising positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
<td>Supported*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>DMOs’ online transactions positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
<td>Supported*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>DMOs’ social media activity positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
<td>Supported*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>DMOs’ offline sources positively influence tourists’ intention to visit a destination.</td>
<td>Supported*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Frequent usage of DMOs’ value creating factors positively influence the intention to visit a destination.</td>
<td>Supported*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.1

### 6. Discussion

This part discusses and interpret the empirical findings, analysis results and the theoretical framework.

#### 6.1 Travel information search behavior

Importance frequent usage of DMOs’ value creating factors showed a significant positive relationship with intention to visit destination implicating that DMOs are used for travel planning and travel information gathering with the intention to visit destination. Empirical findings show that travel information from DMOs are to some extent used in tourists’ travel information search processes. Destinations’ websites are one of those things that the interviewees are looking for when they are using search engines in their travel information search process. When the interviewees described their own travel information search behavior, none of them said that they use DMOs as a source for travel information directly such as going to DMOs’ websites or DMOs’ social media channels. Instead their search processes start from search engines and the search engines’ results influence the websites and social media sites the interviewees visit to get travel information. This finding is confirmed by Choi et al. (2007) whom report that search engines are the base for the majority of travel information search. Therefore, it is of importance for DMOs to be visible on search engines’ top results to make their destination visible when the user search for the destination and key words attached to it (e.g. shopping or nature) just as Xiang and Gretzel (2010) demonstrate in their article. In this context, Sass (2011) results should be taken positive, since the author’s
results showed that tourists have most positive attitudes towards search engines advertising, which is one way for DMOs to be seen among the search engines results.

The empirical findings clearly demonstrate that the interviewees ask friends and relatives (eWOM and WOM) for travel information. With new technology, WOM is not only taken place face to face or over telephone but also online as eWOM (Tham et al., 2013) which enables the interviewees to get recommendations easily from friends and relatives via for example social media as well. Further, this study’s results correspond to the search process proposed by Ho et al. (2012) who mean that the search process start with searching online and then continues to offline sources. Xiang et al. (2015) mean that offline sources are now complementary to online sources and that it is important for travelers to contrast and compare information sources which can be related to the group of interviewees. The empirical findings suggest that friends and relatives are a primary source and not only a complementary source.

6.2 Social media

The results of this study found a significant positive relationship between importance of DMOs’ social media activity and intention to visit destination which is not seen from the empirical findings. DMOs social media accounts is not important according to the interviewees and there are none of them who actively add DMOs’ accounts to their social media feeds or actively look for them. This study’s findings are similar to Parra-López et al.’s (2011) results, meaning that the benefits with adding DMOs’ accounts for the interviewees do not overpower the costs of doing so (the interest for following DMOs on social media is too low).

Since there is a very small interest of adding DMOs accounts, is it a challenge to get noticed. One way to create interest from potential tourists is to create a feeling of that the destination expose similarity in interest with the potential tourists according to Ayeh et al. (2013). The authors mean that similarity in interest have a strong connection towards trustworthiness indicating that known sources are of importance regarding the intention to use UGC for travel information search. DMOs need to create a familiarity that corresponds to potential tourists’ interest and feelings. According to Munar (2012) is it a question of learning how users use social media and learning users’ habits if the DMOs want to be successfully. Findings from
the interviewees made clear that hashtags are used to search for pictures on Instagram, which means that to meet this habit, DMOs need to hashtag their uploaded pictures with correct hashtags so users will find them.

The interviewees said that they used social media to get destination information and get inspired. The interviews revealed that Facebook and Instagram was used most of the times. Xiang et al.’s (2015) findings suggest that social media are widely used for travel planning. The authors report that travelers like to share, comment and read recommendations in social media about tourism related products such as destination choice and shopping options. Just as the authors’ findings suggest, the interviewees mention that they often get travel information in their social media feed by what others have shared, commented and liked. This may explain why this study found a significant positive relationship between importance of DMOs’ social media activity and intention to visit destination. In other words, tourists do not actively add DMOs’ social media accounts but if they come across travel information and inspiration from DMOs in their social media feed, do it impact on destination decisions.

Regarding the constructs that were covered by the construct importance DMOs’ social media activity, had the construct social media higher loading than online communication. This may explain tourists’ online communication behavior and Munar and Jacobsen (2014) mean that tourists who use social media are readers and not posters which correspond to the empirical findings. The interviewees were not positive to communicate openly on social media so others can see it. Hays et al. (2013) mean that social media is not used to its fully potential when it comes to interaction with customers but according to this study’s results, are customers not ready for communication in public yet. Munar and Jacobsen (2013) mean that the trustworthiness for social media is relative low and this study’s empirical findings indicate that DMOs need to highlight trustfully communication with its customers such as private chats.

6.3 Transactions

Importance DMOs’ online transactions showed a significant positive relationship with intention to visit destination. The constructs importance website, importance web 2.0 and importance transaction, which got the highest factor loading of those three, are gathered
under the construct importance DMOs’ online transactions. This implicates the importance for DMOs to offer online transaction on their websites and on websites with interactive elements.

Research have shown that DMOs’ websites influence the intention to visit destinations (So and Morrison, 2003; Chung et al., 2015). The empirical findings confirm this picture by reporting that interviewees found it important for DMOs to have a website for the destination since it highlights and advertise the things worth seeing there at the destination. The interviewees stress the importance of DMOs’ website as a hub were you as tourist expects to find serious updated facts about the destination. Pike et al. (2011) report that destinations tend to be reactive instead of proactive. Further, the authors write that DMOs who are active online are more likely to have a good visitor orientation. Findings from the interviews indicated namely that DMOs who do not keep up to date with trends and the changing market environment are seen as outdated and these DMOs impose a feeling for users that they do not care about their visitors.

By directing users to DMOs’ websites through search engines, can the DMOs provide transactions for services relating to the destination. But to make transactions for services possible must DMOs first attract visitors to their websites which they can do by being visible on search engines, according to the empirical findings.

6.4 Advertising

The results of this study found a significant positive relationship between importance of DMOs’ advertising and intention to visit destination indicating that it is worth investing in advertising for DMOs. The empirical findings indicated that acceptable advertising from DMOs are sponsored search results and sponsored social media posts while banner ads are seen as highly intrusive for the interviewees creating an avoidance behavior (Ying et al., 2009) for the DMOs. These two type of advertisings, sponsored search results and sponsored social media posts, could make the interviewees interested of a destination. The empirical findings are in line with Sass’s (2011) findings suggesting that most negative attitude are against banner ads and most positive attitudes are for search engine advertising. This makes sense since importance search engines is gathered under DMOs’ advertising.
Further was the constructs importance web 1.0 (high density of information) gathered under the construct importance DMOs’ advertising, implicating that inspiration and advertising from DMOs are preferred including high density of information. This is to some extent confirmed by the empirical findings. The interviewees responses made clear that pictures with short descriptive text is preferable as inspirational source, or appetizer, but they want to have access to longer articles with more information if they find the first picture with short descriptive text interesting. By such a finding, Chung and Koo (2015) also have right in their analysis that web 1.0 sources, with high density of travel information, still have their valuable spot when it comes to travel information.

The interviewees described that pictures made them feel that they were there at the destination. Lee and Gretzel (2012) findings suggest that once tourist have created a strong opinion about the destination (from pictures they have seen of the destination) they are much more resistant to negative information about the destination (such as reviews). This together with that the interviewees feeling of “being there” by looking at destination images, indicates that DMOs need to work with pictures to create a positive, yet true, destination image. By so, it increases the will for tourists to visit even when negative opinions of the destination arise.

DMOs need to do clever advertising in a time were many feel an overload of advertisements according to the interviewees. Pike (2012) suggests that the advertising should be tied to personal values in first place and then link those to destination characteristics since it is easier for DMOs to build themes around personal values than destination characteristics.

### 6.5 Offline sources

The results of this study found a significant positive relationship between importance of DMOs’ offline sources and intention to visit destination which is to some extent confirmed by the findings from the interviews. DMOs’ offline sources cover the items non-internet sources and tourist information center. The interviewees described telephone as a good way to contact DMOs on, especially in emergency cases regarding bookings or similar. The empirical findings go hand in hand with the studies by Xiang et al. (2015) and Ho et al. (2012) whom write that not all non-internet sources are dead in favor for internet. Even for
generation Y, telephone is seen as important in some cases. Tourist information centers have less impact. The interviewees mean that they are not dependent on tourist information centers and do not visit them. Still, interviewees see a need for tourist information center for others than themselves. This can explain why DMOs’ offline sources have a positive significance.

Since it has been mentioned earlier that the interviewees use social media for information search, can it be noted that Lyu and Hwang’s (2015) finding, meaning that those who use social media would be more likely to visit tourist information centers, is rejected. Further, Ho et al. (2012) mean that there are useful replacements for tourist information centers, for example hotels.

7. Conclusions

This chapter will provide a graduate conclusion grounded on the theories and analyses seen in earlier chapters. Further, it will address the research questions presented in chapter 1.

This study has investigated tourists’ travel information search behavior and to what extent DMOs are involved in their search behavior. It is of interest to investigate the generation Y’s travel information search behavior both online and offline. From this understanding is it easier to conceive how DMOs can infiltrate in tourists’ travel information process. With more communication channels than ever, DMOs face difficulties to reach out to potential tourists and especially the generation Y who have grown up in the digital arena with all possibilities to get information from several and different sources.

One of the most used source for travel information is friends and relatives which can be difficult to approach with marketing directly for DMOs. Instead, a good destination experience providing good reviews is the way to spread positive word of mouth. Just as the literature presented, the results in this study also points out that the need for tourism information centers are gone. Information gathering when at the destination is better done by asking the hotel reception or even more preferably picking up your own smartphone and search for information. In such case, looking for restaurants and similar is done via search engines or review sites such as TripAdvisor.
What has changed with the use of internet as a travel information source is that people can much easier can get inspiration and knowledge about a city and its attractions before the visit. Surely guidebooks had that role before today, an advantage however with information online is that it can provide much more up to date information and interactivity where tourists can get recommendations from other visitors as well. A tourist information center is however only used when being on the destination.

Just as most of the literature points out, this study also confirms that generation Y, solely and mostly use internet as the main source for travel information search. The study shows that people prefer to search for information on their own as long as they can. They do not prefer to contact for example DMOs, instead they want all information available online (DMOs’ information as well) for themselves to discover.

Without doubt the best way for DMOs to be visible to tourists is to be visible on search engines. It is of importance not only that the search for the destination name provides DMO top search results but also that, for the tourist, relevant keywords is included with the destination name and provide the tourist with DMO top search results. According to the results, is it acceptable and even appreciated to create sponsored search engine advertising.

Which leads to the conclusion that DMOs’ websites are still very important for the decision to visit a destination. It is seen from the empirical findings that people want the DMOs’ websites to be even more the hub of the destination. Integrate the local nightlife and shopping and their social media channels to the website. Users appreciate that the DMOs both can provide serious down to the earth facts about the destination, but also provides information about what is hot and trendy and what is not at the destination. DMOs have the potential to improve it and use it as their hub for all their marketing and transactions of services.

All this should be integrated with DMOs’ own social media channels. Even though the respondents on one hand dismissed DMOs’ social media accounts they got influenced by what was showing up in their social media feed. So it is of importance that DMOs create articles, pictures and events, having in mind that people should recommend, like and share what they publish. By letting published posts go viral, the destination gets more attention, to a very small cost. According to the results, this way of being seen in social media, through
viral posts and sponsored social media ads, is not to be understand as disturbing. In other words, to be seen in this context is only positive for the DMOs.

In general, DMOs need to be cleverer today, especially to reach out to generation Y. While it back in the days was enough to produce a brochure, it is today more challenging to reach through the information overload many people feel in this generation. The content must feel less like advertising and more like a “buddy”.

7.1 Theoretical contributions

This study sought to enrich the theoretical understanding of travel information search behavior. Within tourism studies, many researchers have made an effort to understand DMOs behavior and effectiveness (Hays et al., 2013; Li and Wang, 2010) but there was less of consumer research regarding use of DMOs and the actual behavior from tourists, which according to (Dolnicar and Ring, 2014) needed to be evaluated in future research something this study attempts to do. This study has expanded the understanding of the role DMOs have in the travel information search process for generation Y tourists. The study contributes to the exploration of tourists’ actual behavior when searching for travel information, indicating that search engines together with friends and relatives are the most used sources in the travel information search process. Further, the study stresses, contrary to the literature, that tourists do not actively communicate with DMOs in social media or add their social media accounts. Instead, generation Y’s tourists in this study are found to be passively navigating social media. To use Munar and Jacobsen (2014) terminology, generation Y in this study are readers and not posters of social media content. In line with the literature, it is confirmed that DMOs’ destination websites are important to get travel information and make transactions through. Further, this study found that subtle advertising from DMOs works for the population of generation Y.

7.2 Managerial Recommendations

Destination marketing organizations may not be in the direct eyesight of the users in social media, but it is easier to come across them if DMOs buzz their destination. Buzz can be for example:
• Highlighted posts
• Viral marketing
• Correct and important hashtags for the destination

The study results indicate that the preferred way of getting travel information and inspiration is through pictures with short descriptive texts. So to get the first good impression and create a sense of persuasiveness of visiting the destination, pictures from the destinations are important as inspiration. By working actively with different kind of pictures is it easier to attract potential visitors. It should be mentioned though, as the study results points out, once the potential visitor found an interest for the destination, they want to have the ability to deepen their knowledge independently and get more thoroughly travel information. It is also of importance to be seen in search result lists. DMOs’ destinations need to be associated with relevant keywords. Such key words could be for example “shopping” or “outdoor” depending on their special features.

DMOs should really focus on having a workable and easy to navigate website. As this study points out the DMO website work as the hub for all marketing and transactions relating to a destination. So if campaigns are run in social media, it is easy to address people to the website. Once people land there on the website, it is crucial that the DMOs have a website that reflects something the users both want to use and find appealing.

7.3 Limitations

A small sample for both survey and interviews were available for this study leading to that the results may not be generalizable for other populations. Instead, results should be seen as a guidance for the population of generation Y.

As a result, to use Skype for interviews it may give different answers compared to face-to-face interviews depending on how comfortable interviewees felt with this communication channel. Still, the main purpose by using Skype was to conduct interviews with potential tourists from different cities which was seen as difficult to do face-to-face due to delimitations of resources (i.e. time and money).
Because the response rate was low for the surveys, it may not accurately reflect the opinion from all members of the chosen population. There are several reasons that could explain why the response rate for the survey is low. First, the only chosen data collection method was students’ e-mails, hence other data collection methods have been neglected. Second, not all students check their e-mail regularly and may have missed the e-mails (including the follow up e-mails). Third, only students from Linnaeus University were targeted in this survey, excluding data from other sources of generation Y.

The intention is that the results shall be possible to generalizable to greatest extent. The chosen sample of the population generation Y is from Sweden however and it cannot be neglected that this makes it difficult to generalize the results to other countries due to language and cultural differences.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

Tourist offices are usually seen as a generation divider. Those in younger generations does not see the need of it but some interviewees raised concerns that for example elderly have a need for them. So when generation Y is growing older, there may still be a need for tourist information centers. What could possible replace them, if they need to be replaced?

As previous literature has pointed out, generation Y prefer international destinations and it is a challenge for domestic DMOs to attract these tourists. This study has covered one part of understanding this population’s domestic travel behavior by focusing on domestic DMOs and how they can be involved in potential tourists’ travel information search processes.

Further research could investigate why generation Y visit a destination, as the answer of this question has not emerged out of this study. By investigating generation Y’s destination interests (e.g. activities and events) and visitation behavior (how they travel to destinations), is it easier to understand generation Y in the context of domestic tourism.

Other methods could also be applied to deepen the knowledge about domestic tourism for generation Y. A method that is worth exploring, that this study has not done, is to do in depth interviews with participants from the population.
8. References

Articles


**Books**


**Internet sources**


9. Appendix

9.1 Design of the survey

Table 10: Design of the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control questions:</th>
<th>Which country are you from?</th>
<th>What is your gender?</th>
<th>What is your field of study?</th>
<th>What year were you born?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web 1.0 - Importance</strong></td>
<td>W1.0-1 – Presence</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs are presented on web 1.0 sources (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W1.0-2 – Up-to-date</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have up to date information on web 1.0 sources (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W1.0-3 – Reliability</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have reliable information on Web 1.0 sources (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Web 1.0 - Frequency</strong></td>
<td>WF1.0-1 – Use</td>
<td>- Do you regularly use DMOs’ web 1.0 sources? (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WF1.0-2 – Visit</td>
<td>- Do you regularly visit DMOs’ web 1.0 sources? (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WF1.0-3 – Read</td>
<td>- Do you regularly read DMOs’ web 1.0 sources? (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Web 2.0 - Importance</strong></td>
<td>W2.0-1 – Presence</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs are presence on web 2.0 sources (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W2.0-2 – Up-to-date</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have up to date information on web 2.0 sources (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W2.0-2 – Reliability</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have reliable information on web 2.0 sources (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Web 2.0 - Frequency</strong></td>
<td>WF2.0-1 – Use</td>
<td>- Do you regularly use DMOs’ web 2.0 sources? (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WF2.0-2 – Visit</td>
<td>- Do you regularly visit DMOs’ web 2.0 sources? (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WF2.0-2 – Read</td>
<td>- Do you regularly read DMOs’ web 2.0 sources? (Chung and Koo, 2015)</td>
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<td><strong>Website - Importance</strong></td>
<td>W1 – Accessibility</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have an accessible website (Chiou et al., 2010)</td>
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<td>W2 – Useful</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have a useful website (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2006)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W3 – Ease of use</td>
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<tr>
<th>Website - Frequency</th>
<th>WF1 – Use</th>
<th>WF2 – Visit</th>
<th>WF3 – Read</th>
<th>- It is of importance to me that DMOs website is easy to use (Dickinger and Stangl, 2013)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media - Importance</td>
<td>SM11 – Experimental</td>
<td>SM12 – New ways</td>
<td>SM13 – Add value</td>
<td>- I find it positive that DMOs are experimental on social media (Hays et al., 2013)</td>
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<td>- I find it positive that DMOs find new ways to communicate with tourists on social media (Hays et al., 2013)</td>
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<td>- DMOs presence on social media add values (e.g. pictures, text, interaction) to the customer experience (Faria and Elliot, 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social media - Frequency</td>
<td>SMF1 – Use</td>
<td>SMF2 – Visit</td>
<td>SMF3 – Interact</td>
<td>- Do you regularly use DMOs’ social media sites? (Hays et al., 2013)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly visit DMOs’ social media sites? (Hays et al., 2013)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly interact with DMOs’ social media sites? (Hays et al., 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online communication - Importance</td>
<td>OCI1 – Interactive</td>
<td>OCI2 – Communication</td>
<td>OCI3 – Recommendations</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs are interactive on social media (No and Kim, 2015)</td>
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<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs actively participate in communication (Miguez-González and Fernández-Cavia, 2015)</td>
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<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs actively share recommendations (e.g. activities, events) to me on social media (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online communication - Frequency</td>
<td>OCF1 – Interactive</td>
<td>OCF2 – Communication</td>
<td>OCF3 – Communicate</td>
<td>- Do you regularly use DMOs for online communication? (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly visit DMOs for online communication? (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly communicate with DMOs online? (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Search engine - Importance</td>
<td>SEOI1 – Top results</td>
<td>SEOI2 – Key words</td>
<td>SEOI3 – Home page</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs are top results on search engines (Choi et al., 2007)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- It is of importance that searching for destination + key words on search engines links to DMO search engine results (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010)</td>
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<td>- It is of importance that the DMO homepage are listed on search engines (Ho et al., 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Search engine - Frequency</td>
<td>SEOF1 – Top results</td>
<td>SEOF2 – Key words</td>
<td>SEOF3 – Home page</td>
<td>- Do you regularly use search results from DMOs? (Choi et al., 2010)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly visit search results from DMOs? (Choi et al., 2007)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly read search results from DMOs? (Choi et al., 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transaction - Importance</td>
<td>TI1 – Book</td>
<td>TI2 – Purchase</td>
<td>TI3 – Reserve</td>
<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs offer the ability to book services online (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs offer the ability to purchase services online (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs offer the ability to reserve services online (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>Transaction - Frequency</td>
<td>TF1 – Use</td>
<td>TF2 – Visit</td>
<td>TF3 – Communicate</td>
<td>- Do you regularly use DMOs online for transactions? (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly visit DMOs online for transactions? (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<td>- Do you regularly communicate with DMOs online for transactions? (Xiang et al., 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising - Importance</td>
<td>AI1 – Influence</td>
<td>AI2 – Up-to-date</td>
<td>AI3 – Reliability</td>
<td>- DMOs advertising influence my intention to visit a destination (Sass, 2011)</td>
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<td>- It is of importance to me that DMOs have up to date information in their advertising (Sass, 2011)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Title</th>
<th>Table Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Advertising - Frequency | ABF1 - Click  
ABF2 – Visit  
ABF3 – Watch  
- I regularly click on DMOs’ advertising (Sass, 2011)  
- I regularly visit DMOs based on their advertising (Sass, 2011)  
- I regularly watch DMOs’ advertising (Munar, 2012) |
| Non-internet sources - Importance | NIS1 – Presence  
NISI2 – Up-to-date  
NISI3 – Reliability  
- It is of importance to me that DMOs are presented on non-internet sources (Ho et al., 2012)  
- It is of importance to me that DMOs have up to date information on non-internet sources (Lyu and Hwang, 2015)  
- It is of importance to me that DMOs have reliable information on non-internet sources (Ho et al., 2012) |
| Non-internet sources - Frequency | NISF1 – Use  
NISF2 – Visit  
NISF3 – Read  
- Do you regularly use DMOs’ non-internet sources? (Ho et al., 2012)  
- Do you regularly visit DMOs’ non-internet sources? (Lyu and Hwang, 2015)  
- Do you regularly read DMOs’ non-internet sources? (Ho et al., 2012) (Ho et al., 2012) |
| Tourist information center - Importance | TICI1 – Presence  
TICI2 - Up-to-date  
TICI3 – Reliability  
- It is of importance to me that DMOs have a physical tourist information center (Ho et al., 2012)  
- It is of importance to me that DMOs have up to date information on tourist information centers (Lyu and Hwang, 2015)  
- It is of importance to me that DMOs have reliable information tourist information centers (Ho et al., 2012) |
| Tourist information center - Frequency | TICF1 – Use  
TICF2 – Visit  
TICF3 – Communicate  
- Do you regularly use DMOs’ tourist information center? (Ho et al., 2012)  
- Do you regularly visit DMOs’ tourist information center? (Lyu and Hwang, 2015)  
- Do you regularly communicate with DMOs’ tourist information center? (Ho et al., 2012) |
| Intention to visit destination – Dependent Variable | VD1 – Importance  
VD2 – Likeliness  
VD3 – Regularity  
- Travel information from DMOs are important for the intention to visit a destination (Strongly disagree – Strongly agree) (Pike and Page, 2014)  
- How likely is it that you will visit a destination based on travel information from DMOs? (From not likely at all to very likely) (Pike and Page, 2014)  
- How regularly do you visit destinations based on travel information from DMOs? (Never to always) (Pike and Page, 2014) |