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**Behavioral Profiles in Sharing Tourism Experiences in Virtual Networks**

This paper analyzes the attributes that influence tourists to share travel experiences in a virtual social network by examining the perceptions of visitors to the 32nd Oktoberfest in Blumenau, Brazil. The empirical survey involved 380 tourists in Blumenau - Brazil during Oktoberfest 2015 and addressed five dimensions relating to the attributes to share in online social networks. Behavioral profiles were traced based on these sharing attributes and highlight four profiles that view the sharing of their experience in very distinctive ways. The results show that there are heavy users, casual users, pleasure-driven users, and identification-driven users. These results contribute to the discussion of how and why tourists share their experiences in virtual social networks. By understanding these profiles, events can shape the way they interact with tourists to have better visibility online. Meanwhile, tourism agencies and firms can use these profiles to classify costumers and direct services to specific profiles.

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## **Introduction**

The internet is a major source of information in the tourism sector and has become an important tool for tourists. The internet allows users to access information about their destinations, making it easier to decide where to travel (Cruz et al., 2012). Virtual social networks, also known as online social networking sites, are the websites that people use to connect through the internet, like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). These websites have contributed to the evolution of the internet and enabled users to create and share information in these environments. The internet makes it possible for tourists to share information about their travel experience, such as photos, videos, and messages (Benvenuto et al., 2011). Travel experiences shared by tourists serve as information to other tourists, influencing opinions, and possible future travel plans (Xiang, 2010).

Virtual social networks and the sharing of tourism experience is a growing topic. Recent research has delved into the motivations for sharing tourism experience (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), online behavior of tourists when searching travel information (Xiang, 2010), sharing of post-trip experiences (Kim & Fesenmeier, 2017) and the implications of the virtual social networks for the tourism businesses (Sotiriadis, 2017). It is important to understand the use of social media by tourists, during and after their travels, because the information they share may influence the behavior of other possible tourists (Parra-López, 2011). The use of social media to share tourism experiences draws the attention of scholars because it can represent implications for managers and theory.

Although several studies investigate the use of virtual social networks by tourists (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Kim & Fesenmeier, 2017), there is a gap in the literature regarding sharing experiences in events. Additionally, current literature pays little attention to the way tourists act when sharing their experiences online. This study's objective is to

identify tourists' behavioral profiles according to the way they share experiences in virtual social networks.

The empirical study that supports this article is based on a survey conducted with 380 tourists while attending the 32nd Oktoberfest of Blumenau - Brazil. Data collection was conducted in the 32nd Oktoberfest of Blumenau in Brazil. The Oktoberfest of Blumenau is the largest festival of German tradition in Brazil and is visited by thousands of tourists every year, as in 2017, when it received 568,027 visitors during the 19 days of celebration. Created in 1984 along the lines of the original version promoted in Munich, Bavaria, the event has become one of the most important tourism products in the national and Latin American calendar. Since its launch, more than 13 million people have participated in Oktoberfest Blumenau. There are many similarities between the two festivals (Blumenau and Munich). Both events are surrounded by beer-themed attractions as parades with Bavarian costumes, large halls full of tourists toasting with beer mugs, traditional German music, and dancing, as well as themed gastronomy.

The choice of collecting data at the Oktoberfest of Blumenau was made for two main reasons. First, it is a large event where tourists from all over the world can be found, making it possible to have a more diverse sample than other national events. The second reason is that the Oktoberfest of Blumenau is held for 19 days and in a mostly controlled and safe indoor environment, contrary to other events as the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. Having a festival that is held for a longer time and in an indoor environment made it possible for a longer and more careful data collection, as attendees could effectively answer the questionnaire without worries and over a longer period of time.

## **Literature Review**

The internet has made it possible for tourists to offer their knowledge to other possible travelers through online mechanisms, where all information is stored, searchable and easily shared, from this collective intelligence, data are recombined in new knowledge and learning forms (Gruber, 2008). With virtual social networks, tourists can record and share content in "real-time" during their travels. Hence creating the possibility of developing personal virtual identities (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Meanwhile, tourists use the internet to gather information before and during their travels to compare services, plan, and perform travel decisions (Parra-López, 2011).

According to Lee et al. (2010), sharing information with others through social media is an important source of entertainment and a primary mechanism for social media users. Recent studies showed important developments in what is known about sharing tourism experiences. Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) show that sharing positive tourism experiences raises overall positive about the trip while diminishing negative views. Hence, travelers that share their experience are more prone to having good sentiments about their experiences later and returning to the destinations.

The sharing of information on social networks has been the basis of different studies in tourism. Inversini and Eynardt (2011), when analyzing images shared by tourists in a social network, confirm the possibility of grouping similar travel destinations and their recommendation. Wilson et al. (2012) investigated the nature and consequences of information sharing about a trip and its influence on the tourist image. Lee and Paris (2013) suggest a technology acceptance model that assesses how confidence, the strength of social relationships, and perceived pleasure interfere with future intentions of participation in an event. Nusair et al. (2013) conducted a study in a travel scenario to assess how Generation Y

users relate to online social networks. They have achieved a positive result through innovation, perceived utility, and information sharing.

Sotiriadis and Sotiriadis (2017) highlight several strategies that firms related to tourism can use to use shared tourism experience at their advantage. This highlights the importance of sharing experiences for firms and the practical contribution of these works. Bae et al. (2016) showed that consumers use experiences shared by others to plan and perform tourism purchases online. Hence, events need to nurture an experience that is both positive and sharable. Wang et al. (2016) investigated the motivations and intentions of Chinese tourists and the relation to the sharing behavior of travel experiences. They found that both the intrinsic and the extrinsic motivations positively impacted the sharing action of travel experiences. In the intention of sharing, the intrinsic motivations are more significant than the extrinsic motivations for the sharing behavior.

The internet allows users to create and share information and gather opinions, which allows the comparison of contents (Alves, 2011). The social network has its focus on social structure, where it is not possible to isolate the social actors nor their connections (Recuero, 2009). Radcliffe-Brown coined the term "social network" in the 50s, featuring the social structure as a network of relations institutionally controlled or defined (Acioli, 2007). Also, Tomaél et al. (2005) pointed out that social networks can be used to advise the strategies used by the company to share information with the relationships between actors who create them.

Virtual social networking sites are services that enable the construction of a public profile or semi-public set in a limited system and building a list of other users who is shared content (Boyd & Elisson, 2010). According to Alves (2011), the growth of social networks is not only linked to technological development but also the human need to socialize.

The consumer's main motivations to interact with an online brand community are brand influence, brand passion, connection, help, discussion about similar opinions, hedonic rewards, utilitarian rewards, search for self-expression, information updating and validation (Baldus et al., 2015).

Zanetti (2011) affirms that, as in other technological revolutions, the advent of digital media spurred new patterns of understanding communication processes and new forms of sociability that incorporate the notion of culture. The pioneering media interaction on the internet was chat rooms, forums, and blogs. After 2004, social networking sites with more specific objectives began to emerge (Ciribeli & Paiva, 2011). Social media platforms are built on the internet to enable collaborative content development, social interaction, and sharing of information in various formats (Telles, 2010).

For Pérez-Nebra and Torres (2010), tourism is very abstract, and consumption is presented to potential consumers with descriptions, stories, media, and photos of places. The authors also point out that the tourists, before traveling, make predictions of experiences they want to have, based on emotions that shape the destination memory, either by stories of friends, for reading, advertising and others.

The image of tourist destinations has been the subject of much research as a result of their influence on the tourism consumer behavior, as well as the important role it plays in the choice of a destination process, satisfaction and probable repetition of the experience (Chagas, 2009). The perception of the tourist destination will influence both the choice and satisfaction of the trip. The better the relationship between expectations and reality, the stronger the image of the city and the tourist experience will be on-site (Smith et al., 2013)

The consumer of tourist services is demanding and careful when making choices; hence, information technology allows unique possibilities both to consumers and as entrepreneurs (Vieira, 2007). For Matos et al. (2012), the target image is formed as a result of

knowledge acquired on the cognitive component of destiny, feelings or attachment that the individual develops to the destination, and its intention to return in the future. In short, it is a global image that involves psychological and functional characteristics of the target is developed.

Wang et al. (2017) interviewed tourists who shared food experiences in virtual social networks and found important implications for marketers. Since food is an important part of the tourism experience, the way travelers share information about the food they eat during a trip is significantly important for the image of the destination.

According to Matos et al. (2012), the target image influences the generated expectations and anticipated before, during, and after returning home, where the experience of the trip is reviewed. At this point, the image is re-evaluated, and a new target image can also be developed. This assessment can be positive, where the satisfied individual may recommend the destination to friends and family, but also negative (Matos et al., 2012). Brea and Cardoso (2011) propose that the affective and emotional components are seen as reasons why each tourist chooses a particular destination and determines what tourists want to get in the destination, to rely on the effective evaluation of the destination. The motivations and desires of tourists often change, and touristic firms need to reorganize new desires quickly to meet the new expectations (Dionyssopoulou et al., 2014).

### **Virtual social networks and destinations**

According to Ghazali and Cai (2013), destination image is widely discussed in the literature. Although the number of significant meanings, the models are outdated in the context of globalization. In their study, the authors' synthesis of the literature noted the role of social actions in forming the destination image. As a basis was the seminal work of Gartner, Tasci, and Gartner, the chapter extended the existing exercise with the conceptual model.



As a means of consumer to consumer communication, social media has grown considerably in the tourism industry as a platform in search of information (Kang & Schuett, 2013). The internet is the largest channel of dissemination of tourism products, standardizing the language on every continent and determining a new relationship between businesses and consumers, tourism, and tourists (Quevedo, 2007). For Cruz et al. (2012), the use of social networking to publicize a particular location is also very important.

Kang and Schuett (2013) point out that tourist share of experiences as an important source of information that can influence the travel decisions for potential future tourists. They concluded that tourist organizations, marketers, to recognize social media as a platform where travelers share experiences and search for independent and credible information for planning trips. "Social media plays a significant role in the search for information and how that information is used is influenced by age, gender, culture, and other demographic characteristics" (Lange-Faria, 2012).

All these changes impact tourism and alter not only how people research, plan, and consume in tourism, but also to change the processes of the organization, planning, management and promotion of public and private tourism organizations (Thomaz, 2014). With the use of social media, potential tourists can get firsthand information from other tourists, thus influencing their decision-making. The collection of information is feasible through blogs and social networking, sharing experiences, and opinions of tourists (Thomaz, 2014). Shared experiences in social media are one of the aspects of the most important behavior for clients and tourism organizations, so it is common to see that users are active and engaged in the development, editing, and sharing experiences on social media (Kang & Schuett, 2013).

## **Identification**

The expansion of new media and technologies increases the possibilities of experiences in real-time exchange and encourages the timing of the communication types for recording real-time sharing of experiences (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). According to Recuero (2009), the connections in a social network are formed by social interactions between actors, which, in turn, are the raw material of social relationships on the internet. "Through online social interaction, there is the emergence of signs and themes that acquire an ideological format" (Couto, 2013, p. 200). Identification occurs when the individual accepts some influence and, especially, wants to maintain or form any satisfactory self-defining relationship to another person or group (Kelman, 1958).

According to Kang and Shuett (2013), individuals feel a sense of belonging or fitting into a certain group for sharing travel experiences on social networks. This reciprocity is confirmed by Munar and Jacobsen (2014) by sharing experiences account for the collective, which will be useful for something that contributed and helped in the actual planning of the trip is generated. To Recuero (2009), the relational bond comes from the desire to belong to a group for identifying, using the association and interaction to be formed. The author points out that the groups are formed based on interaction for dialogue; the feeling of belonging appears resulting from reactive social interaction. Also, association communities seem to gather around common interests turned to the identification, hence being more dependent on mutual social interaction between the actors (Recuero, 2009, p. 28).

### **Internalization**

A more ideological concept of social network encompasses the idea of allowing many users to access the internet for sharing, collaboration, and updating web content. This ideology is rooted in the community, where members can participate, collaborate, and share with others in real-time, without the restriction of time or geography (Lange-Faria, 2012). For

Kang and Schuett (2013), internalization is characterized by increasing the level of psychological and emotional attachment to technology, which is expected to directly influence extrinsic motivation with external individual origins. Internalization occurs when the individual accepts certain influences because the induced content is intrinsically rewarding and congruent with their values (Kelman, 1958).

When the source of the action of sharing is internal, "people feel more autonomous and set their own goals and actions" (Alcara, 2009). Therefore, sharing travel experiences comes from within the person, not depending on external incentives. The image of a tourist destination can vary from perceptions based on common characteristics for the sole and exclusive, that is, each destination has common and similar characteristics to other destinations, but are the only attributes that distinguish it from other and where it is necessary to develop strategies and differential and competitive positioning (Brea & Cardoso, 2011). People gather or share some experiences by sharing the same interests and ideas, but for this functional collaboration system, they need to trust in what they do and what others do and share with them (Parra-López, 2011).

### **Acceptation**

When a new photo is published, a new comment is added to the given publication, so people interacting end up creating new meanings for each image (Guerra et al., 2015). Thus, Recuero (2009) points out that users gain reputation by sharing relevant content on social networks. Because of this, people end up investing time searching for information to generate content on their social networks. However, they are fully practices for individual interest (Recuero, 2009). The tourism experience is a subjective mental state and receives attention from researchers because of its sociological significance, anthropological, and psychological (Otto & Richie, 1996).

Acceptance, or compliance, is when the individual accepts any influence by waiting for a positive reaction from some other group or person, especially when he hopes to gain some reward or specific approval and not believe in its content (Kelman, 1958). For Kang and Schuett (2013), acceptance is characterized by the behavior to make an effort to provide information on social networks, because there is a kind of pressure to do so in order to achieve personal, meaningful and rewarding goals that may arise as a result of internalization and identification. Therefore, acceptance is a mixture of internal and egocentric characteristics generated by how the user is entered and want to influence the group on the internet. Extrinsic influence is fundamental to achieve the results because that is how the activity and effort are perceived (Kang & Schuett, 2013). There is a sense of importance in sharing information, and on the other hand, information is generated to achieve return and recognition in the community. Tourists tend to expect positive results in their actions on social networks (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

### **Perceived pleasure**

Tourists travel for reasons such as social and personal fulfillment, regardless of influence, tourists search for moments and unique experiences (Santos et al., 2012). Social networking sites intend to bring people together, where users can expose their profile with personal data, and interact with other members, creating lists of friends and communities (Telles, 2010). The sharing of experiences during or after the travel depends on the degree of satisfaction as the attractions available on-site end up being a stimulus for the tourist (Dias & Cassar, 2005).

In the study of Kang & Schuett (2013), social factors (internalization, identification, and acceptance) influence the sharing of experience of the trip as mediation of perceived satisfaction. This satisfaction or pleasure is a consequence of social influence, determining in

this experience on social networks. Sharing can also occur by the desire to maintain ties with friends on social networks. Trust, friendship, kinship, harmony interfere with the content sharing in social networks because they promote positive and collaborative behavior among users (Alcara, 2009).

According to Cavalcanti (2011), photography is one of the key elements shared by tourists on the internet, creates needs and satisfactions, when combined with the new media. The share of the trip on the Internet photos becomes increasingly natural among people, as anyone with a digital camera in hand stores photos in an environment that brings several possibilities of sharing and dissemination information in their network (Cavalcanti, 2011).

## **Motivation**

Sharing means to participate in something, take part in something, and share with others. Santos et al. (2012) show that people are increasingly looking for new feelings present in intangible and emotional values, with the aim of quality of life, searching for new sensations and moments of pleasure, or experiences documents that provide travel.

Jacobsen and Munar (2012) state that searching for information is considered crucial to the choice of tourist destination. Information sources are external and internal, the latter being on the cognitive system. The authors also point out that Facebook became more popular among tourists, as they provide richer information than on other platforms. The trend is that travelers' decision-making will leave much of the shared experiences in new media than traditional forms of information of tourist products, such as brochures or travel ads (Kang & Schuett, 2013).

In their study, Munar and Jacobsen (2014) analyze the motivations of the online community, where tourists make decisions that ultimately affect the sharing of travel experiences on social networks. The authors point out that altruistic motivations provide

practical recommendations in order to improve the experience. Many factors affect the tourist behavior, one of the most important psychological factors is motivation, which are the forces that arise from an unmet need and induce behaviors to please, which is also influenced by the experience process (Dias & Cassar, 2005).

To Munar and Jacobsen (2014), tourists share visual content to generate greater recognition of their travel experiences. In their study, the authors showed a clear preference for visual content sharing (photos) compared with the narrative content (text). For sharing experiences, content creators may want to help other tourists minimize the risk in decision-making during the trip, especially for non-routine decisions, such as tours or more expensive items (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

## **Methodology**

This research was based on a survey conducted with 380 tourists that attended the 32nd Oktoberfest of Blumenau in Brazil. Data were collected between October 7th to 25th, 2015. An interpretivist approach was adopted because behavioral profiles, although quantitatively obtained, must be interpreted by the observer to make sense, hence making it impossible to use a purely positivist approach.

## **Sample**

The empirical research was conducted as follows. First, a skilled and experienced fieldworker was selected and received training to conduct the questionnaire during the event correctly. The fieldworker was also trained to identify the tourists that were able to be part of the sample. In order to be eligible to answer the questionnaire, the tourist should have at least 16 years of age, should also be from a city from outside of Blumenau's metropolitan area, and

should not have signs of inebriation. The fieldworker was instructed to first visually identify age and ability to answer the questionnaire and then ask the city of origin and age of the tourist to confirm eligibility. The fieldworker administered the questionnaire individually to each respondent, verbally asking each question, and marking the corresponding answer. The questionnaire was never handed over to the respondent.

Considering that the event received 458550 people in its 2014 edition, simple sample calculations were used to set the number of collected questionnaires. A sample of around 380 respondents would be enough to maintain error ratios lower than 5%. The responses were collected over the 18 days of the event, following a goal of 21 responses a day. The first day of data collection was October 7th, and the last day of data collection was October 25th. The fieldworker managed to reach and surpass the established goal in every day of data collection. The sample, in total, had 380 respondents. Table 1 below shows the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents.

**Table 1: Sample profile**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Men	190	50%
	Women	190	50%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>	16 – 19 years	32	8%
	20 - 24 years	88	23%
	25 - 29 years	119	31%
	30 - 34 years	81	21%
	35 - 39 years	29	8%
	40 or over	31	8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Income</b>	Less than R\$ 1,356	15	4%
	from R\$ 1,356 to R\$ 2,034	38	10%
	from R\$ 2,034 to R\$ 6,708	157	41%
	from R\$ 6,708 to R\$ 16,950	120	32%
	over R\$ 16,950	50	13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research data, (2016).

Based on the profile pointed in quantitative research, half of the public is formed by women (50%), which leaves the sample of balanced research. Most of the sample consisted

of young respondents, determined by the age group between 20 and 34 (76% of respondents). The age group of 16 to 19, 35 to 39 years, and 40+ each represent about 8% of the sample, respectively.

Most of the respondents have household incomes between R\$ 2,034.00 and R\$ 6,708.00, and 120 respondents (32%) had a higher income between R\$ 6,708.00 and R\$ 16,950.00. Therefore half of the sample has a family income ranging from R\$ 2,034 to R\$ 16,950. Also, 13% of respondents pointed to income above R\$ 16,950. Finally, the income of R\$ 1,356 to R \$ 2,034 with 38 respondents (10%), and less representative, salary up to R\$ 1,356, with 15 respondents (4%).

## **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was structured in two sections. First, a set of questions intended to collect data on the constructs used in our research (identification, internalization, acceptance, perceived pleasure, and motivation) received answers in five points Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). According to Malhotra (2006), respondents quickly understand how to use and require the individual has a certain degree of agreement or disagreement of a given statement. The first section of the questionnaire used questions from previous works of Munar and Jacobsen (2014), Parra-Lopez, (2011) and Kang and Schuett, (2013), these questions were translated and back-translated. The second section of the questionnaire exclusively contained questions to characterize the sociodemographics of the sample.

To analyze the possibility of common method bias due to response styles (see MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012), we used Harman's single factor score. To calculate Harman's single factor score, we loaded all the items that constituted our latent variables into one score



through exploratory factor analysis. The result accounted for less than the threshold of 50% variance, thus indicating no common method bias.

## **Constructs**

The first construct in the questionnaire was identification, which is characterized in need of self-setting derived from another person or group. According to Kang and Shuett (2013), individuals feel they belong to a group sharing experiences on social networks. The authors also pointed out that the experiences are common for people who are part of the online social life because of the sense of belonging with a group.

The second construct in the questionnaire was internalization, where the value of sharing some experience is defined by the preferences of individual characteristics of the inserted group. According to Kang and Schuett (2013), the main feature is the psychological and emotional attachment to the share that comes from external and internal influences values. For Parra-Lopez (2011), the tourist realizes that use social media generates social, functional, psychological, and hedonic benefits.

The third construct was acceptance, which occurs when it is expected to gain some kind of reward or approval of one organ or group without necessarily believing or practicing certain content. According to Kang and Schuett (2013), it is characterized by an effort in providing information to generate reward, caused by pressure in performing it.

The fourth construct was the perceived pleasure or emotional happiness with shared content. According to Kang and Shuett (2013), the sharing of experiences in social media may have the objective of generating sympathy and empathy with the network of friends determined by social media.

Finally, the last construct in the questionnaire captured direct motivation for sharing travel experiences in social media. To Munar and Jacobsen (2014), tourists share visual

content to generate greater recognition of their travel experiences and end up motivating others to travel. Table 2 shows each dimension, its variables, and the authors that gave rise to measurement. A Cronbach's Alpha test was used in order to check if the constructs had internal reliability. All constructs resulted in an alpha higher than 0.7 hence, reliable. A single-factor score of the dimensions was used to have a more balanced gradation of each construct. The single-factor score was calculated using a factor analysis on the variables that form each of the constructs, forcing only one factor. The resulting factors were reliable, having KMO higher than 0.8, Bartlett's test lower than 0.001. The result is z-scored, hence has negative values.

**Table 2: Dimensions and research variables**

Dimension	Variables	References
Identification	Usually I give importance to what my friends think about what they share on social media.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	I feel that I belong to a group when I share my experiences with them.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	I identify with my Internet group when I share my experiences in social media.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
Internalization	I use social media because my life values can be represented in social media.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	The reason I prefer social media to other communication tools is because of the characteristics of my group.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	When I'm traveling I prefer to share photos than just text.	Lo et al. (2011)
	Before coming to the OKTOBERFEST, I researched the experience of others in social media.	Parra-López, et al. (2011)
Acceptation	I usually post photos of my travels in social media.	Munar; Jacobsen (2014)
	Unless I am rewarded to share my experiences in social media, I will spend some time sharing information.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	The more I use social media more I am personally rewarded.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
Perceived pleasure	I express my behavior and attitudes in social media in order to have the answers you desire (likes, comments).	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	I often share my experiences in social media to be nice.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
Motivation	I share my travel experiences to maintain social connections and friendship.	Kang, Schuett (2013)
	The motivation for me to share my experiences of OKTOBERFEST is to help others.	Parra-López, et al. (2011)
	I like to share my travel experiences on the internet to motivate others to travel.	Munar; Jacobsen (2014)
	I want to be recognized by my travel experiences.	Munar; Jacobsen (2014)
	When I share travel photos I intend that my friends know where I am.	Munar; Jacobsen (2014)

Source: Research data, (2016).

### Findings

Table 3 depicts the descriptive statistics of the variables. In this table, we depict the frequency of each response in our 5-point scale for every. We indicate the number of respondents as Low, answering 1 and 2 in the scale, medium, for answers in the number 3 and high for answers in the numbers 4 and 5. Results indicate that variables from the Identification construct showed very balanced results between respondents who responded Low, Medium and High. The Internalization variable presented the question, "When I'm traveling, I prefer to share photos than just text" with the highest scores. The Acceptance construct presented the lowest scores and the variable "The more I use social media more, I am personally rewarded," the lowest of all. In the Motivation construct, the highest-scoring variable was "I like to share my travel experiences on the Internet to motivate others to travel."

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics**

		Low 1 and 2		Medium 3		High 4 and 5	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
<b>Identification</b>							
V1	Usually I give importance to what my friends think about what they share on social media.	123	32%	135	36%	122	32%
V2	I feel that I belong to a group when I share my experiences with them.	148	39%	103	27%	129	34%
V3	I identify with my Internet group when I share my experiences in social media.	119	31%	129	34%	132	35%
<b>Internalization</b>							
V4	I use social media because my life values can be represented in social media.	225	59%	81	21%	74	19%
V5	The reason I prefer social media to other communication tools is because of the characteristics of my group.	164	43%	99	26%	117	31%
V6	When I'm traveling I prefer to share photos than just text.	42	11%	58	15%	279	73%
V7	Before coming to the OKTOBERFEST I researched the experience of others in social media.	241	63%	51	13%	88	23%

		Low		Medium		High	
		1 and 2	3	4 and 5			
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
V8	I usually post photos of my travels in social media.	67	18%	61	16%	252	66%
<b>Acceptation</b>							
V9	Unless I am rewarded to share my experiences in social media, I will spend some time sharing information.	215	57%	92	24%	73	19%
V10	The more I use social media more I am personally rewarded.	281	74%	64	17%	35	9%
V11	I express my behavior and attitudes in social media in order to have the answers you desire (likes, comments).	235	62%	77	20%	68	18%
<b>Perceived pleasure</b>							
V12	I often share my experiences in social media to be nice.	155	41%	95	25%	130	34%
V13	I share my travel experiences to maintain social connections and friendship.	115	30%	101	27%	164	43%
<b>Motivation</b>							
V14	The motivation for me to share my experiences of OKTOBERFEST is to help others.	127	33%	95	25%	157	41%
V15	I like to share my travel experiences on the internet to motivate others to travel.	92	24%	88	23%	200	53%
V16	I want to be recognized by my travel experiences.	194	51%	98	26%	88	23%
V17	When I share travel photos I intend that my friends know where I am.	121	32%	79	21%	180	47%

Source: Research data (2016).

Table 4 presents the results of our cluster analysis. The cluster analysis was performed the dimensions.

**Table 4: Behavioral profiles**

	Profiles							
	Profile 1		Profile 2		Profile 3		Profile 4	
	Identification-driven	High	Heavy users	High	Pleasure-driven	Low	Casual users	Low
Identification	0,731	High	0,694	High	-0,389	Low	-1,126	Low
Internalization	0,100	Medium	0,941	High	-0,221	Medium	-1,009	Low
Acceptation	-0,207	Medium	0,988	High	-0,350	Low	-0,563	Low
Perceived pleasure	-0,779	Low	0,920	High	0,426	High	-0,952	Low
Motivation	-0,323	Low	0,883	High	0,201	High	-1,074	Low
n.	85		103		112		80	

Source: Research data, (2016).

Results indicate four distinct behavioral profiles. The values shown for each dimension in each profile indicate the mean dimension score for that profile. The profiles were named Identification-driven users, Heavy users, Pleasure-driven users, and Casual users. The first, identification-seeking users, is characterized by high value in Identification, medium values in Internalization and Acceptation, and low values on Motivation and Perceived pleasure. High scores in all variables characterize the second profile, heavy users. The third profile, named pleasure-driven users, presents low scores in Identification and Acceptation while medium in Internalization and high in Perceived pleasure and Motivation. Low scores in all dimensions characterize the last profile, hence named casual users. The first profile signalizes tourists who, although having high identification with sharing and like to internalize the activity and accept the experience into their lives, have low perceived pleasure and motivation in sharing. Hence, it is possible to conclude that this group has a major focus on the experience and less focus on the results from sharing their experience. The second profile contains a group that has high scores for all variables. These are mostly heavy-users that enjoy the experience and enjoy the outcomes from sharing their experience. This profile represents the most important tourists for online strategies of touristic firms.

The third profile represents tourists with mixed feelings. They do not care so much with identification, or internalization and acceptatance, but do feel pleasure by sharing and are motivated to share. This profile represents those who will share about any experience, even if they do not really relate to that, feeling high rewards by sharing the experience, but do not feel the need to build rapport with a community. The fourth profile is represented by those who do not feel much of an urge to share their experience. They do not seek rapport with communities and do not see rewards by sharing their experience. These are mostly tourists who use social networks to share, but share a limited amount of their experience and are not highly involved in virtual social networks.

## **Conclusion**

This paper is intended to identify the behavioral profiles of content sharing in social networks that influence the tourists to share their experiences of a tourist event on social networks. The results showed that there are distinct profiles of tourists regarding social media. That is, tourists are stimulated by different factors to share these experiences and share content over social networks, reaching their friends and followers. Thus, touristic events can develop ways to reach specific sharing behavior profiles of tourists.

This study's results indicate important empirical and theoretical contributions to tourism and the sharing of tourism experience online. Although we recognize that there are different studies about the sharing of tourist experiences in social networks in the literature, our study expands previous research to identify specific profiles. We find that there are four distinct types of tourists regarding the motivations that lead them to share their experiences in virtual social networks. The first behavioral profile is strongly motivated by a need for belonging. The second discovered profile is motivated by perceived pleasure and extrinsic motivations. The third profile corresponds to users strongly motivated by all dimensions, representing heavy users; the fourth profile represents users who are not motivated to share experiences in virtual social networks. These results show that in addition to the study of sharing motivations, the formation of behavioral groups should be considered since it is linked directly to the image formation of a destination in the online environment.

Social networks are currently one of the main tools of tourism marketing strategies in Brazil, as the leading provider of the information is tourists, through the sharing of experiences. The internet allows the tourist to create links with the experience of travel, landscape integral becoming the point of being important to be seen as experience (Cavalcante, 2011). Given this context, this study aimed to analyze the attributes for sharing

travel experiences in social networks, from the 32nd Oktoberfest of Blumenau, the largest Germanic fest of the Americas that attracts tourists from Brazil and worldwide.

Cluster analysis found four profiles of tourists behavior in sharing experiences on social networks. The first and third profiles have mixed results, having high scores in some variables and low scores in others. The first profile represents those who have been willing to share their experiences in order to feel integrated into a group. The third profile represents the contrary, they do share, but instead of feeling belonging to a group, the third profile feels pleasure in sharing and is highly motivated to share. The second and fourth profiles are the most distinguished out of the four. The second represents heavy-users, and the fourth, very low users of virtual social media.

The existence of a casual user and a heavy user, people that are mildly and highly motivated by all attributes, is somewhat predictable. There have always been a number of heavy users of technologies, which are highly motivated to use them. On the other hand, it is predictable that some of the users of technologies will have a more casual approach to them, not being so motivated to use them.

The main results of this paper are the pleasure-driven and identification-driven users. Both profiles of users have strong determinants for their motivations to use virtual social networks, but each profile is determined by something entirely different. Identification-driven users share their experiences online because they want to fit in; in other words, their motivation is to show that they belong to a group and to be accepted by this group. The group could be determined, for instance, by social status as those who want to be perceived as part of the high society, or specific groups, as homebrewers that find Oktoberfest of Blumenau an important event to be. On the other hand, pleasure-driven travelers share their experiences online because it makes them feel good. The pleasure-driven profile seems to be more focused on their actions than their identification-driven peers.

This paper also expands and brings contributions to previous works. Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) shown that sharing positive tourism experiences raises overall positive effects about the trip while diminishing negative affect. On the other hand, our paper shows that there are profiles of travelers that are more prone to sharing the content of their travel. Hence, it is possible that not every tourist is affected by the effects presented in Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) since not all profiles are motivated enough to share their travel experiences. Paulauskaite et al. (2017) found that tourists are more likely to share experiences that they consider more authentic, more true to the locals' experience, and their connection to the locals. Hence, the more travelers interact with locals, the better and more shared their experience will be.

On the other hand, our study points out that different profiles have different motivations to share. One of the profiles, the "Casual Users" are not highly motivated by any dimensions. Hence, it is not possible to determine that if these travelers relate to the local experience, they would be more prone to share.

The results of this research represent important implications for researchers, events, and firms related to tourism. The first results demonstrate that there are, in fact, distinct profiles when it comes to sharing experiences in events. These profiles are significantly different, considering what motivates the travelers to share their experiences. These results can help researchers better understand how travelers share experiences and conduct future research in minding these different behavioral profiles.

The results of this paper can be important for events. Events can use the principles that motivate each of the behavioral profiles to shape the experiences tourists have and therefore have more impact on virtual social networks. Additionally, firms can use the behavioral profiles discovered in this paper to shape their online interactions with travelers.



## **Limitations of the study**

There are two important limitations to this research. First, results must be taken with a grain of salt because only one event has been used in this research. Hence, similar events can have similar behavioral profiles, while events that are significantly different, such as medical conventions, could have very different results. A second limitation is due to the country of the event. Since the Oktoberfest of Blumenau is held in Brazil, some aspects of behavior may apply to Brazilian travelers and not to other travelers because national culture can shape how people behave. Extensions of this work can conduct the same questionnaire in other events and in other countries for greater generalization.

As future research, researchers could explore a broader sample, tourists traveling to many places around the world, and social networks. In-depth studies on specific dimensions could contribute to tourism marketing in an understanding of the ways to encourage tourists to share travel experiences on social networks, given that the travel planning under views and experiences of people who have visited the site (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

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