

Small and Medium Tourist Enterprises and Social Media Adoption: Empirical Evidence from Tanzanian Tourism Sector

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Abstract

The increasing competition and the highly demands of globalization in tourism sector are increasing challenges in the market and operation of Small and Medium enterprises in Tanzania. In order to cope with these challenges, it is evidenced that the adoption of social media networking is an enabler of small and medium tourist enterprises in quest of enhancing competitiveness in their globalized market place. Despite of this benefit offered by Social Media (SM) to SMEs, very little is known on the factors influencing adoption of Social Media in Tanzanian Tourist sector. This paper aims at filling the gap by examining factors influencing adoption of Social Media Networking among SMEs in Tanzanian Tourism Sector. Questionnaire was used to collect data from SMEs owners and employees in Dar es salaam city, Iringa region and Rukwa region where geographical stratified sampling was used to ensure representativeness of the sample from the heterogonous population to form homogeneous group followed by simple random sampling technique which was used to draw a sample of 265 respondents for quantitative data and purposive sampling technique was used to pick sample for qualitative data. Factor analysis was used to ensure construct validity of the proposed conceptual model in this study while Cronbach's alpha was used to test the suitability of research instrument used in collecting data for the study. Structure equation modeling method was used to test hypothesis on the factors influencing adoption of social media networking among SME in Tanzania tourism sector. Findings using SEM revealed that organization context and environmental context are significantly influencing adoption of social media networking adoption while technology context was found to be insignificant factor. This study recommended that in order SMEs to continuously be competitive in this global and dynamic market they should continue to adopt the use of social media networking as a tool to capture more customers worldwide.

Keywords: social media networking, TOE framework, SMEs, adoption model

1. Introduction

The advent of the social networking media marked the beginning of a revolution in the ways people communicate in the market and transact. According to Akram and Albalawi (2016) social media has become a major source of communication and collaboration between individuals and among groups. It has redefined communication and has reshaped the way marketing services are provided. As it is argued by Chmielecki (2014) that, social network media gives marketers a voice and a way to communicate with partners' and potential consumers. It personalizes the brand and helps companies to spread their message in an often relaxed and conversational way (ibid). On the related perspective, Brad (2013) advocate that, social networking media as an extension of the world wide web, it has expanded the opportunities for small businesses to compete with larger, global companies. In a knowledge society like tourism, Dlodlo and Dhurup (2013) argued that organizations need to develop competitive advantages through the effective utilization of electronic marketing in order to succeed in the markets. The adoption and use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), in particular social media, has the potential to strengthen SMEs in tourism, by providing them tools to meet the needs of the domestic market online, enable access to an increasingly global market place and leverage SMEs as a destination for foreign investment.

Despite of these empirical evidences which support the benefit of social media to SMEs, Verheyden and Goeman(2013) on their study of differences in social media usage for business purposes, indicated that most of

internal social media services are mostly adopted by large enterprises compared to small enterprises. Similarly Chmielecki (2014) indicated that, social media marketing especially marketing on Face book is still a relatively new concept for SMEs. In the same perspective, Schaffer (2013) argued that, despite an increasing number of small businesses using social media, many seem limited in their ability to effectively respond in an environment where consumers speak freely to a potentially global audience, leading to a limited understanding of the potential that these platforms can offer to SMEs in tourism sectors. On the other side Esch (2015) argued that social marketing research has used different models/theories of behaviour change, therefore it is not clear which factors can be acknowledge on the study of adoption of social media among SMEs. Given this situation, it is equally important to study the factors influencing adoption of online social networking media among small and medium tourist enterprises in Tanzania. As Brad (2013) argued that, understanding factors that influence the adoption and frequency of use of social media services can assist marketers in selecting the appropriate social media to use and how to best to structure their social media content.

1.1 Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Testing

Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990) developed TOE framework with sufficient predictive power in analyzing and measuring the adoption of technology in organizations setting using three variables namely technological context, organizational context and environmental context. The TOE framework has been successfully used by researchers in technology adoption studies that target users' in organization setting (Bhattacharya & Wamba, 2015; Nkhoma & Dang, 2013). In a meta-analysis study on TOE framework from 22 published studies has showed that the model is robust and valid in the study of adoption of ICT related products within organizations (Arpaci et al., 2012). On the other angle, the suitability of TOE model in studying the adoption of social media among SMEs has been evidenced in the empirical study by (Verheyden & Goeman, 2013). Acknowledging the applicability of TOE on the related literature, this study used the TOE variables; that is, the independent variables are technological context (TC), organizational context (OC) and environmental context (EC); the dependent variable is Adoption (AD) to explain the impact of those independent variables on adoption of social media networking by SMEs in tourism sector and develop the hypotheses.

1.2 Technological Context (TC) and Adoption (AD)

Based on TOE, the technological context relates to the characteristics of technologies available to an organization that SMEs perceive as useful for smooth supporting of the business operation. Its main focus is on how technology characteristics themselves can influence the adoption process (Arpaci et al., 2012). Several empirical studies have evidenced that TC has significance influence on adoption of technology among SMEs (Lian et al., 2014; Simamora et al., 2015). On the other hand Lippert and Govindarajulu (2006) on their study found that technological factors (such as security concerns; reliability; deployability) has significance influence on SMEs adoption of technology. This finding is similar to the results of Al-Zoubi et al. (1999) who found an existence of significant relationship between the technological factor and the businesses e-government adoption. In social media perspective, Sago (2013) examined factors impacting the adoption and frequency of use of various social media services such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google+ among undergraduate university students 18 to 23 years old, findings included the positive relationship between frequency of use of social media and its ease of use, enjoyment, and perceived usefulness. Dlodlo and Dhurup (2013) carried out a study on drivers of e-marketing adoption among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and variations with age of business owners, a random sample of 123 SMEs were drawn randomly within the various municipal areas in the Vaal Triangle using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation five-dimensional structure, pertinent to the understanding of SMEs decisions to adopt e-marketing technology was established. Perceived ease of use (PEOU), external pressure, mission, job performance, resource availability and compatibility were found to be significant drivers of e-marketing adoption. Thus, most findings tend to support this association and the following hypothesis was verified:

H1: There is a significance relationship between technological context (TC) and adoption (AD).

1.3 Organizational Context (OC) and Adoption (AD)

With regard to TOE, the organizational context describes the characteristics of an organization in which each SMEs accommodate to support business operation. Its main focus is on how organizational characteristics themselves can influence the adoption decision. Notably example Arpaci et al. (2012) has identified firm size, degree of centralization, formalization, complexity of its managerial structure, the quality of its human resources, and the amount of slack resources available internally as a common organization characteristics that are used to influence SMEs adoption of technology. On the other angle, Lippert and Govindarajulu (2006) who discovered that organizational factors (firm size; firm scope; technological knowledge; perceived benefits) has significance

relationship with web services adoption. Similar findings were observed in the work of Al-Zoubi et al. (1999) who found an existence of significant relationship between the organization factor and an e-government adoption. In the same room, Simamora et al. (2015) indicated that organizational factor is the most dominant for PT. XYZ to adopt cloud computing in Indonesia. Several empirical studies (Lian et al., 2014; Jamaliet al., 2015) have revealed that organizational context effectively justified the adoption of ICT in organization setting. In social media perspective, Murphy and Nölly (2013) carried out a study on an exploration of the adoption and drivers of Face book using 14 managers in an interview, findings from this qualitative research approach reveal that, general management is vital in adoption which includes manager perception, personal knowledge and attitude which are highly influential to adoption.

Based on previous research findings, hypotheses H2 was developed and tested as indicated below:

H2: There is a significance relationship between organizational context (OC) and adoption (AD).

1.4 Environmental Context (EC) and Adoption (AD)

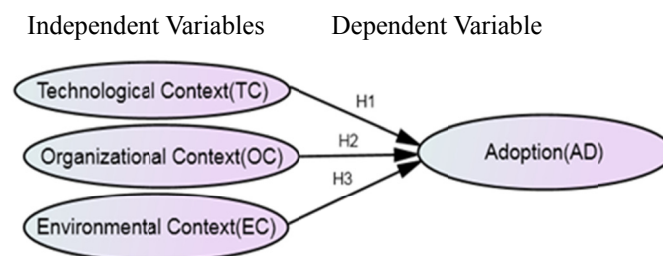
In TOE perspective, the environmental context is an external environmental context in the area in which an organization conducts its business that has significant value for an organization to adopt technology. This includes the industry, competitors, regulations, and relationships with the government (Arpaci et al., 2012). As argued by DePietro et al. (1990) cited in Arpaci et al. (2012) that, these are factors external to an organization that present constraints and opportunities for technological innovations. Al-Zoubi et al. (1999) on their study on businesses e-government adoption has found an evidence of an existence of significant relationship between the environmental factor and the businesses e-government adoption. The findings of previous studies (Gangwar, 2014; Simamora et al., 2015; Jamali et al., 2015) have revealed a significance influence of environmental context on adoption of technology. In social media perspective, Wanyoik et al. (2012) conducted a study of ICT attributes as determinants of internet social network adoption by Formal Small Enterprises in Urban Kenya using questionnaire administered to the owners, results of the research show that small formal enterprises in urban Kenya are positively influenced to adopt Internet social networks by improved customer satisfaction and creation of new business opportunities.

Thus, most findings tend to support the significance influence of environmental context and adoption which has enabled the following hypothesis to be developed and tested:

H3: There is a significance relationship between environmental context (OC) and adoption (AD).

2. Conceptual Framework Development

In this study the conceptual framework was developed based on the discussion of the literature review above. One dependent variable namely Adoption (AD) and three independent variables namely technological context (TC), organizational context (OC) and environmental context (EC) were used to developed a conceptual framework as described in Figure 1 below.



Source: authors developed from the literature review (2016)

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Research Methodology

Mixed method of quantitative and qualitative was used. According to quantitative method collect data about the study object and search for causal relationships and knowledge is developed through objective measurement (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Gray, 2009). As in this study quantitative method was used in testing hypothesis on factors influencing adoption of social media and in the profiling of respondents characteristics. On

the other hand qualitative method is used to provide a researcher with in-depth information that can be used to explain the phenomena (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) in adoption of social media in the context of tourism sector in Tanzania. Data was collected in Dar es salaam, Iringa and Rukwa region, this area was selected because of high concentration of unique tourism activities in Tanzania. Geographical stratification was used to ensure representativeness of SMEs in each three targeted tourism region followed by simple random sampling which was used to draw sample of 231 SMEs owners and employees using questionnaires. Pilot study was done prior the main survey to ensure the suitability of the data collection instrument. Factor analysis was done to ensure construct validity. In testing reliability of the study Cronbach's Alpha was used to test for the suitability of data collection instrument in terms of reliability. Structural equation modelling was used to test hypotheses and to develop a model on factors influencing adoption of social media networking among SMEs. AMOS 20 and IBM SPSS 20 Software were used to support the analysis in this study.

4. Findings

Findings of this study are divided into four areas which are firm characteristics, construct validity results, Reliability Results and hypothesis testing results.

4.1 Firm Characteristics

In this study four firm characteristics were profiled based on their location, size and experience of been in the business as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Firm characteristics

Characteristics	Tourist Regional	Frequency	Percent
Firm Location	Dar es Salaam	129	55.8
	Iringa	68	29.4
	Rukwa	34	14.7
Firm Size	5< Employee	105	45.5
	5-49 Employee	67	29.0
	50-99 Employee	57	25.5
Firm Experience	Less than 5 Years	20	39.8
	5-10 Years	53	43.3
	Above 10 Years	11	16.9
Total		231	100

Based on the findings in Table 1 it was found that out of 231 SMEs contacted, 55.8 % were in Dar es Salaam, 29.4% in Iringa and 14.7% in Rukwa. On the side of firm size, 45.5% comprises of firm with less than 5 Employee, 29.0% comprises of firm with 5 to 49 employees and 25.5% comprises of firm with above 10 years. On the other hand, 39.8% were firm with less than 5 years experience, 43.3% with 5-10 years experience and 16.9% with above 10 years experience. Majority of firm were found in Dar es Salaam this is due to high concentration of tourist firms in Dar es Salaam. These findings imply that in this data at least there was representativeness of the sample in each unique firm characteristic.

4.2 Construct Validity Results

To ensure construct validity test both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were used as described below.

4.2.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure for the twenty nine items of the social media networking questionnaire. The value of KMO of 0.844 was yield which suggested that the sample was adequate for exploratory factor analysis as suggested by (Hooper, 2012) who argued that KMO should be either .6 or above. On the other hand Bartletttest in this study yield p-value =0.00 which signify that the variables are correlated highly enough to provide a reasonable basis for factor analysis as suggested by (Hooper, 2012) that the value for Bartletttest should be significance value of less than .05 as describe below in KMO and Bartlett test Table 2.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.844
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2188.678
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

During analysis out of twenty nine (29) items only seventeen (17) items were retained with four factors based on the fact that the items were designed to index four constructs: Technological Context (TC), Organizational Context (OC), Environmental Context (EC) and Adoption (AD). These items namely TC_5, TC_6, OC_1, OC_7, EC_3, EC_6, EC_7, AD_4 and AD_6 which were removed did not fit well to their construct and the model in general. After rotation, the OC accounted for 19.00% of the variance, the TC accounted for 15.333%, the EC accounted for 12.762% and AD account for 11.954% as displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Rotated component matrix

	Component			
	OC	TC	EC	AD
OC-2	.770			
OC-4	.743			
OC-6	.707			
OC-5	.678			
OC-3	.675			
TC-1		.835		
TC-2		.801		
TC-4		.780		
TC-3		.777		
EC-1			.799	
EC-4			.795	
EC-2			.558	
EC-5			.442	
AD-1				.860
AD-5				.705
AD-2				.608
AD-3				.545
%Variance	19.000	15.333	12.762	11.954

Despite of these findings from exploratory factor analysis, further analysis was done using confirmatory factor analysis. This was due to the fact that exploratory factor analysis lack the power of accounting measurement error as described below in section 4.2.2 Confirmatory factor analysis.

4.2.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After exploratory factor analysis, then confirmatory factor analysis was done in order to test an existing theory to examine if underlying structure of the model fits the data adequately by accounting a measurement error (Matsunaga, 2010) as displayed in the output Figure 2 below:

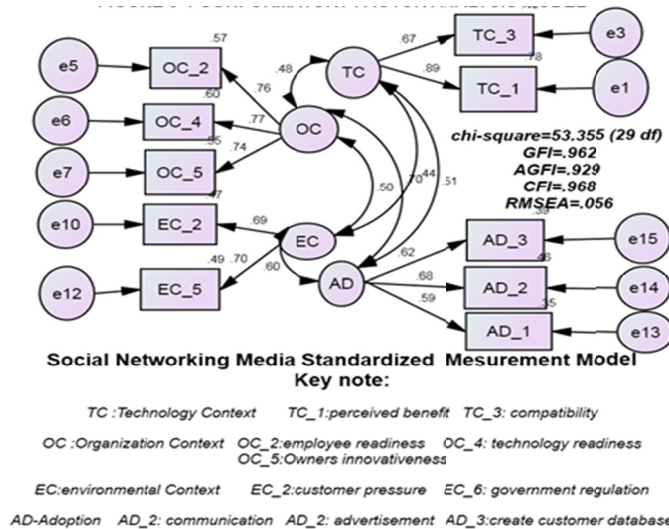


Figure 2. Conformatory factor analysis model

The SEM results of the measurement model indicate a good model fit ($\chi^2 = 53.355$, $\chi^2/df=1.839$, AGFI = .929, GFI = .962, CFI = .968, RMSEA = .056) with two indices (CFI and AGFI) that go beyond the cutoff value of 0.90. The RMSEA value decreases to between 0.03 and 0.08, which is the proposed range of adequate values (Hair et al., 2010). Since the model has displayed a good fit for the data in this study, the findings of hypothesis testing can now be considered with confidence. In this study factor loading were greater than 0.55 hence the variable in the measurement model demonstrated adequate internal and convergent validity. Falk and Miller (1982) recommended a loading should be at least 0.55 which explains at least 30% of the variance in the variable.

4.3 Reliability Test

In this study reliability test was done using Cronbach alpha, customarily values above 0.5 of Cronbach alpha coefficients are considered significant even though Cronbach alpha coefficients that range from 0.6 and above are considered more acceptable in scientific research although lower values can be used as well and accepted (Hair et al., 2003). The values obtained in the current study in Table 4 meet this rule of thumbs and thus shows that the items used measures what it is purported to measure. Otherwise, low Cronbach alpha values (less than 0.5) suggest lack of internal consistency of the measures, with items measuring different things for a given factor.

Table 4. Reliability test

Construct	Manifest Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach'sAlpa Coefficient
Technological context	Perceived benefits, Compatibility	2	0.756
Organizational Context	Employee readiness, Owner innovativeness, Technology readiness	2	0.800
Environmental Context	Customer pressure, Government support	2	0.646
Adoption	Communication , advertisement create customer database	3	0.657

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was used to test the hypothesized relationships as described in Figure 3 below.

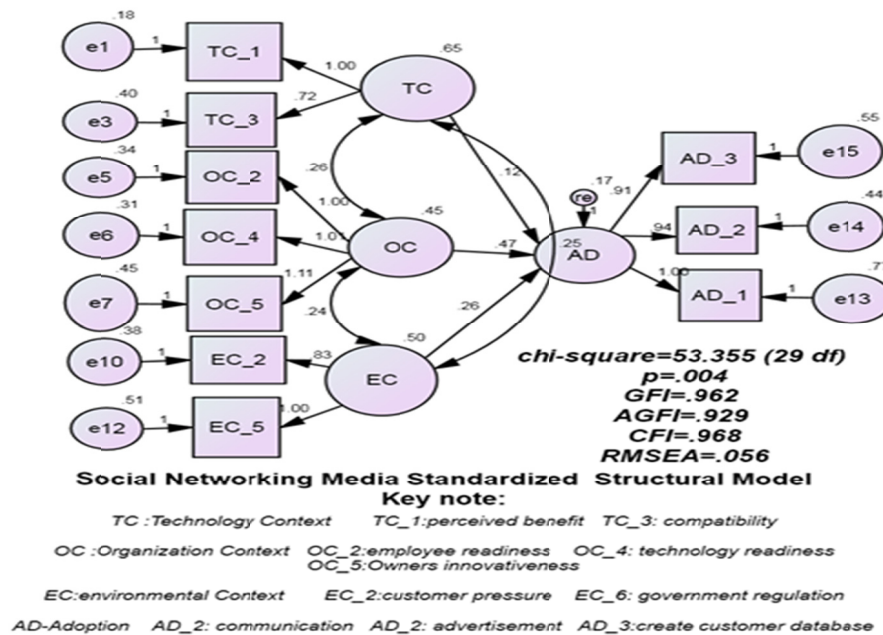


Figure 3. Structural model for social media adoption

The SEM results of the structural model indicated a good model fit ($\chi^2 = 53.355$, $\chi^2/df = 1.839$, $AGFI = .929$, $GFI = .962$, $CFI = .968$, $RMSEA = .056$) with two indices (CFI and AGFI) that go beyond the cutoff value of 0.90. The RMSEA value decreases to between 0.03 and 0.08, which is the proposed range of adequate values (Hair et al., 2010). The hypothesized relationships are examined against various coefficients and scores obtained from the analysis as indicated in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Regression weights

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
AD	<----TC	H1	.118	.074	1.608	.108	Rejected
AD	<----EC	H3	.265	.100	2.645	.008	Accepted
AD	<----OC	H2	.468	.103	4.524	***	Accepted

From this analysis it is confirmed that only two hypotheses H2 and H3 are accepted while hypothesis H1 is rejected.

5. Discussion and Implication

The influence of both technological context, organization context and environmental context on adoption of technology among SMEs have been confirmed in prior adoption studies (Lippert & Govindarajulu, 2006; Angeles, 2013). Thus SMEs in tourism are influenced by technological context, organizational context and environmental context to adopt social media networking. In this study three hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 were designed to determine the influence of technological context, organization context and environmental context on adoption of social networking media among SMEs. Findings confirmed that, only hypothesis H2 and H3 are significant while H1 was rejected as described below:

H1: There is a significance relationship between technological context (TC) and adoption (AD).

This hypothesis was developed in order to examine the influence of technology attributes on adoption of social networking media among SMEs in tourism sector. Findings using SME revealed a critical ration (C.R.) < 1.96 which confirms that there is no significance relationship between technological context (TC) and adoption (AD). The result of this hypothesis is not supporting prior studies (Angeles, 2013; Arpaci et al., 2012) on SMEs adoption of ICT related products. Surprising all two dimensions namely perceived benefit and compatibility which were used to measure technological context were found to be significant on influencing SMEs adoption of social media

network. The possible explanation of this is that there might be other dimensions of technology context other than perceived benefit and compatibility which were not included in this study that can influence the adoption of social media networking among SMEs in tourism sector. This implies that there other attribute of technological context that were not included in this study when combined they can help to explain the influence of technological context of adoption of social media networking.

H2: There is a significance relationship between organizational context (OC) and adoption (AD).

This hypothesis was developed in order to examine the influence of organizational attributes on adoption of social networking media among SMEs in tourism sector. Findings from SEM analysis revealed a Critical ratio (C.R.) value > 1.96 which confirm that there is a significance relationship between organizational context (OC) and adoption (AD). Prior studies (Lian, et al., 2014; Simamora et al., 2015) have supported these results by reporting a significance relationship between organizational context and adoption. The significance value of organization context on adoption of social media networking in this study is explained in the interview respondent who advocate that “While the use of Face book and blogs on mobile phone has found almost all SMEs are using mobile phone and they have knowledge of operating mobile phone hence employee and SMEs owners were ready for social media networking for their business”. On the other hand the respondent from the interview said that “. The ability of mobile phone to offer internet services has enabled SMEs to access social media network such as face book, blogs, etc on their phone...this has created technological readiness and employee readiness for every SMEs simply because at the time of the integration of mobile phone with social media every SMEs had knowledge of using mobile phone”. Therefore these findings implies that organization context is significance simply because the SMEs and their employee technological readiness which was created by the inclusion of social media on mobile phone services is high for them to adopt social media for business purpose.

H3: There is a significance relationship between environmental context (EC) and adoption (AD).

This hypothesis was developed in order to examine the influence of environmental attributes on adoption of social networking media among SMEs in tourism sector. The findings from SEM analysis on this hypothesis revealed a significant critical ratio (C.R.) value > 1.96 which confirm that there is a significance relationship between environmental context (OC) and adoption (AD). This finding from quantitative phase has concurred with findings from respondent in interview who said that “In tourism where customers’ communication and advertisement need to reach customers who are found worldwide ...social media such as face book save the purpose”. On the other hand on the interview the respondent said that’ due to the nature of our customers who demand tourism information using services like blogs and face book.....the use of social media now enable us to convey business information and reach those customers despite of the geographical distribution”. This finding is similar to work by Oliveira and Martins (2011). Given this justification finding from this study implies that the significance value of environmental context is due to high pressure arising from customers’ demands that are found worldwide.

6. Conclusion

This study has tested hypothesis on the influence of technological context, organizational context and environmental context on adoption of social media networking among SMEs in tourism sector with the purpose of developing and adoption (adopting) model. Using context factors adopted from TOE framework and modified to fit the social life of SMEs in tourism sector. This study have confirmed on two factors namely organizational and environmental context out of three factors that are significance to the adoption of social media networking among SMEs in tourism sector. The results from this study will assist and stimulate the adoption of social media networking in tourism sector and will provide viable import to policy makers and planners in designing and implementation of policy and planning. This study was done in eastern and southern part of Tanzania. In future, additional research is needed to be conducted in other parts of Tanzania.

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