Social networking platform and tourism destination evangelism: government regulatory responses

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Abstract

Purpose – This conceptual paper aims to explore government regulatory responses of social networking platforms (SNP) and tourism destination evangelism. This research draws on a two-phase data source review of government legislations that guarantee social media users and empirical papers related to social media platforms. The results revealed that Ghana has adopted specific legislations that manage and control SNP. To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first of its kind that synthesized government legislation and empirical papers on social networking platforms in evangelising destinations which have been missing in extant literature.

Keywords Social network platforms, Google Maps, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Government legislations, Destination evangelism, Ghana

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

Adopting social networking platforms (SNP), also known as "social media use in marketing of tourism destinations has become necessary in the quest to achieve long-term competitiveness in the tourism and hospitality digital space." In this study, the SNP includes TikTok, Google Maps, Facebook and Instagram and their usage in marketing tourism

destinations. Nevertheless, monitoring the content security of these social media messages to rid them of potential misinformation or fabricated content is not an easy task due to the complex nature of internet-related crimes. Therefore, it is relevant for governments worldwide to understand and enact the necessary policies that regulate information (texts, pictures and videos) sharing on these platforms. Although SNP providers might use their algorithms to regulate content or remove hate talks, this is not enough without the support of government legislation. Therefore, this study is guided by these objectives:

Examined government initiatives in building confidence in contents shared or posted on SNP through the promotion of destinations; assessed the roles of Google Maps, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram in evangelising destinations within literature; and examined the key challenges faced by destination evangelists in using SNP to promote T&H sector.

According to these studies (Werthner and Klein, 1999; Butler and Dodds, 2022; Allaberganov *et al.*, 2021), the "tourism and hospitality (T&H) sector" has been identified as an informative-intensive industry which means that the sector should adopt advanced and varied ways of communicating with its customers and consumers. One of these ways is to deploy tourist evangelism (TE), known as destination evangelism in this study. This is contextualised as where loyal tourists will voluntarily use the social media spaces to market a destination through blogging (writing, photography, videos and other media that are self-published online) or one-to-one interactions both online and offline at events. According to the extant literature, the concept of destination evangelism has been extensively covered in the marketing literature (Harrigan *et al.*, 2021; Mansoor and Paul, 2022; Panda *et al.*, 2020; Sohaib *et al.*, 2022). In spite of the importance attached to the development of tourism in societies globally, destination evangelism within the SNP has not received much attention (Mvondo *et al.*, 2022) from scholars on the African continent.

Specifically, destination evangelists market destinations by giving positive reviews and ratings on social media platforms through sharing texts, pictures or recorded or live videos streaming enriching travel stories and experiences via Google Maps, TikTok and Facebook, etc. Although existing studies (Agusti, 2021; Yu and Sun, 2019; Yu *et al.*, 2020; Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Khan *et al.*, 2022) have documented the importance of SNP in the tourism and hospitality (T&H) sector, no study has comprehensively examined government initiatives in building confidence in contents shared or posted on SNP through the promotion of destinations, assessed the roles of Google Maps, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram in evangelising destinations within literature and examined the key challenges faced by destination evangelists in using SNP to promote T&H sector. This is evidenced in Table 1 as previous studies have attempted to study various aspects of SNP. In addressing these issues this study made several contributions to knowledge in the following ways.

One, to the best of authors' knowledge, this research made the first attempt that involves the synthesis of government legislative documents and empirical studies related to the use of social media for evangelising tourism destinations. Thus, this study focuses on an underexplored area within SNP and tourism literature. Two, one of the unique aspects of this research is that it is in contrast with previous investigations on social media regulation (Tsegyu and Inobemle, 2021), which opined that in a democratic nation, excessive regulations of social media are seen as a potential infringement of freedom of expression. Importantly, this study is one of the first attempts that demonstrate that destination evangelists promote sites through text, photos, short video sharing and tourists' comments. This could in turn increase destination traffic.

Studies into "social media in tourism is still in its developmental stages", now is the ideal time for business owners, policymakers and tourism practitioners in the sector can take an active role in regulating and promoting destinations through SNP. The choice of Ghana as a

Authors	Area	Findings
Google Maps		
Yang and Hsu (2016)	A location-based service and Google Maps-based information master system for tour guiding	Google Maps provide information on popular tourist attractions, and guide users towards their desired destinations
Mathayomchan and Taecharungroj (2020)	How was your meal?" Examining customer experience using Google Maps reviews	The logistic regression of all restaurants showed that the relationships between the four restaurant attributes and a five-star rating are significant
Lee and Yu (2018)	Perceived service quality based on Google reviews	These results indicate that online reviews provide a good proxy for airport service quality ratings and an effective means to cross-validate the conventional industry standard survey results
Sharma (2021)	Understanding destination evangelism: a social media viewpoint	Destination distinctiveness and information-seeking positively lead to destination evangelism
Sharma *et al.* (2021)	Investigating brand community engagement and evangelistic tendencies on social media	Brand community engagement positively influences brand evangelism and brand defence
TikTok		
Du *et al.* (2022)	Record and share my wonderful journey of Chinese millennials	Create and share short videos of touristic fantasies Harsh tagging e.g. #wonderfuljourney Store tourist experiences in "public" diary
Cao *et al.* (2021)	Destination short video and consumer attitude	A short video on TikTok shows a scene of an emptied glass of wine being smashed on the floor
Zhu *et al.* (2022)	TikTok and celebrity attachment and visit intention	Celebrity attachment positively predicts sense of presence and telepresence
Mohammed *et al.* (2023)	Safety, security, clean air and intention to experience: do TikTok short video narratives matter?	The results revealed that there were significant positive associations between short video narratives about safety, security, clean air and intention to experience
Wang *et al.* (2022)	Visiting intentions towards theme parks: do short video content and tourists' playfulness on TikTok matter?	Social interaction, informativeness and trust had significant and significant predictors perceived usefulness
Wengel *et al.* (2022)	The TikTok effect on destination development: famous overnight, now what?	The findings revealed that the local community struggles to seize the opportunities offered by tourism while forced to manage the tourist flow
Facebook		
Kumar *et al.* (2022)	Tourism destination promotion and Facebook	Facebook as a supplement to traditional marketing tools. Destination marketing organizations (DMO) benefit from the contents of scenic beauty, culture and cuisine which appeal more to engage users on Facebook pages. Inviting tourists to upload their photos, and publishing only correct information

(continued)

Table 1.
Literature review:
SNP as marketing
tools (evangelizing)
in tourism and
hospitality (T&H)
destinations

Authors	Area	Findings
Khan *et al.* (2022)	Social media and empowerment in hospitality and tourism decision-making	Facebook aided Muslim women to have autonomous self-expression, self-disclosure and reciprocity to self-disclosure which positively related to bonding and bridging social capital, which in turn related positively to their empowerment in hospitality and tourism decision-making
Mariani *et al.* (2016)	Facebook as a destination marketing tool	Visual content, (namely, photos) and moderately long posts have a statistically-significant positive impact on DMOs Facebook engagement
Mariani *et al.* (2018)	Determinants of Facebook social engagement	engagement is positively affected by posting visual content, (namely, photos) and posting during the weekends and negatively affected by evening posting
Rahman (2017)	Tourism destination marketing using Facebook as a promotional tool	It revealed that Facebook is used as a tool for promoting a tourism destination
Instagram Agusti (2021)	City images on Instagram: projected and perceived images	Instagram tends to reinforce the image of destinations and promote new tourist attractions
Yu *et al.* (2021)	Colour and engagement in touristic Instagram pictures	The colour blue in photos featuring natural scenery, high-end gastronomy and sacral architectures contributes to user engagement. A red/orange colour scheme enhances pictures regarding local delicacies and ambience, while the coexistence of violet and warm colours is crucial for photographs featuring cityscapes and interior design
Yu and Sun (2019)	The role of Instagram in the UNESCO's creative city of gastronomy: a case study of Macau	Taiwanese cuisine, food from local café and local snacks are the most popular ones. Additionally, local residents believed that the government should develop an official Instagram account to advertise and introduce the uniqueness of Macau and to reach more international tourists
Yu *et al.* (2020)	Colouring the destination: the role of colour psychology on Instagram	Orange, yellow, blue and violet contributed significantly to post-popularity based on different photographic typologies
Fatanti and Suyadnya (2015)	Beyond user Gaze: how Instagram creates tourism destination brands?	Instagram provides a complete communication facility, from tourism branding to user generated content photography
Tešin *et al.* (2022)	Exploring the influence of Instagram on travel destination choice	Instagram is an important source of information and inspiration in the destination selection process

Source: Compiled by the researchers (2024)

Table 1.

case study is grounded on the evidence that there are 8.8 million users of social media of 17 million Ghanaians (53% of the population) who have access to the Internet (Sasu, 2022). In 2022, Ghana has also launched the "Internet of Good Things 2.0", which helps to access critical online information regarding lifesaving and life-improving information (UNICEF, 2022). The study is constructed into three sections. The *Literature review* section includes introduction and literature review, while in *Methodology* section, we explain the methods used for the study. The last section deals with the discussion of results, conclusion, implications and future research directions.

Literature review

Tourist evangelism and social media marketing of destinations

A consumer who actively participates in developing a lasting impression of a brand and who voluntarily invests resources in its promotion is an evangelist (Kumar and Nayak, 2018; Sharma *et al.*, 2021). Similar to brands, tourism sites can benefit from being recognised and distinguished, but regrettably, marketing these places continues to be difficult for their managers (Chen *et al.*, 2021). Thus, it is crucial to market and evangelise about various aspects of destinations (Kumar and Nayak, 2014), through TE. TE is considered among the effective ways to obtain destination currency and mileage (Mvondo *et al.*, 2022). Sharma *et al.* (2021) described TE as the process of generating cues, fuel excitement, persuade, convince, articulate reviews, engage, support and sometimes defend tourism destinations.

Evangelising a destination might help tourists shape the mindset of likely or potential tourists about such destinations even though they are yet to visit the destinations. Interestingly, TE is considered as destination marketing orientation marketing strategy available to destination managers to use in increasing exposure in the competitive context. In other veins, TE is a purely voluntary act on the part of tourist to share their experiences on social media platforms. However, regulating the contents of social media has become important to all nations due to the influx of misleading as well as fabricated information that undermines confidence in accessing credible information online. In all, technological advancement has provided tourist access to various platforms which offer them the opportunity to freely share their experiences. Notably, such platforms are TikTok, Google Maps, Facebook and Instagram. We have reviewed and presented a literature matrix of how these SNP are used in evangelising destinations (Table 1).

Google Maps

This platform is known to provide users with detailed information about destinations ranging from the exact location via a global positioning system to the opening and closing times of the destinations affiliated with the platform (Arain *et al.*, 2017). It is arguably the number one platform used globally by internet users in the quest to locate destinations and know more about them (Speake *et al.*, 2021). It provides potential tourists with digital images or videos showcasing the various amenities and features the destinations have to offer which in turn promotes the destinations. Moreover, the platform provides its users the opportunity to review the destinations they might have visited because it detects the destinations they have once visited and the exact time they did. Users are given the opportunity to rate these destinations using a star rating system, where they can choose to give a destination a rating that ranges from one star to five stars depending on their experience while visiting those destinations.

Also, users can share reviews using text, images or videos which are very popular on the platforms. Notably, some users are described as tour guides on the platform due to how they travelled and the reviews they provided; reviews of such users are highly valued by tourists

interested in visiting those destinations. Tourism destinations can be registered on Google Maps and provide detailed information about destinations using texts, images and videos. So, people who visit can be persuaded to share their reviews on the platform as an act of evangelising for potential tourists to know more about the destinations. Notwithstanding the importance of using Google Maps reviews in literature, there is still limited study on government regulations of SNP contents, therefore calling for a comprehensive study of government initiative reviews of content sharing and posting.

TikTok

TikTok platform plays a key component in promoting destinations by sharing experiences through short videos and images (Cao *et al.*, 2021). Tourism destination entrepreneurs might provide some incentives in the form of mobile data for tourists who have visited the destinations to aid them in uploading short videos and pictures about the destination. They should look for extremely knowledgeable tourists who are familiar with the applications to enable them to share their experiences. TikTok has editing, filming and options such as "like", "share" and "comment" tailored for varied scenarios for tourist evangelists to use. Similarly, videos created on TikTok can be reposted across other social media platforms including Instagram, WeChat and others.

TikTok has lately been noticed as a wide range of "information sources" for destinations (Zhu *et al.*, 2022; Mohammed *et al.*, 2023). Destination managers are also missing out on a unique possibility to attract the wider population to regular trips by not fully using the actual contact created by TikTok through tourist evangelists. Thus, to reach these target natives, tourist evangelists must be advised to create new content that "excites and ignites engagement" of visitors for tourism purposes. Although earlier studies have highlighted (Cao *et al.*, 2021; Du *et al.*, 2022) the relevance of TikTok to destination marketing, this present study has likewise added to the literature by examining the importance of government regulations available in managing social media content.

Facebook and Instagram

Facebook and Instagram provide extra features for social media networks that allow tourists to share live videos of travel-related details, personal experiences, photographs and opinions in texts through their travelling process (Domínguez-Navarro and González-Rodríguez, 2020; Tešin *et al.*, 2022). The SNP Facebook and Instagram provide opportunities for tourists and destination managers to exploit the travel market. It has the potential to improve visitor experience during visitations by sharing live videos in a form of evangelism (Khan *et al.*, 2022), especially for individuals who are visiting a new destination. Facebook and Instagram live videos could be a good tool for projecting a destination. Facebook and Instagram are one of the promising ways that tourist evangelists can use to market destinations due to their advantage in allowing users/tourists to share and post key pieces of information among friends and followers in real-time (Mariani *et al.*, 2018; Kumar *et al.*, 2022). In all, research on Facebook and Instagram is still early stages (Du *et al.*, 2022; Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015) within the T&H sector; thus, more attention is needed from scholars. Specifically, understanding government regulations in managing the contents of these SNP.

Methodology

Guided by the specific objectives of this study, we targeted two data sources: a review of specific legislations or laws and published papers related to SNP. The following inclusion criteria guided the selection and review of materials for this study. In phase 1, we conducted

a Google search from 2 June 2022 to 25 August 2022, using the Boolean operator "AND", "OR" and "NOT" (Zohuri and Moghaddam, 2017) to search for words such as "legislative instruments" OR "government regulation" OR "acts" OR "laws of electronic" AND "social media" legislations that regulate and guarantee electronic contents (information) sharing and posting on SNP (see Table 2). We used these legislative instruments because they

Electronic Communications Act	Cybersecurity Act	Data Protection Act, 2012
Under Sections 74, 75 and 76 of the ECA, an individual can be jailed for "false and misleading" content online. The law defines "false or misleading" content as that which is sent by a person who "did not take reasonable steps to find out whether the communication was false, misleading, reckless or fraudulent". Internet users who communicate such content to the NCA can receive a fine of up to 12,000 cedi ($2,000) and up to three years' imprisonment, while those whose content is deemed a false distress signal or is likely to endanger the safety of a person or vehicle face a fine of 36,000 cedi ($6,100) and up to five years' imprisonment	The Cybersecurity Act, 2020 also criminalizes the use of electronic platforms for the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and sexual extortion, with penalties of one to three years' imprisonment for the former charge and 10–25 years for the latter	The Data Protection Act also established the Data Protection Commission (DPC), which regulates the processing of personal information. All companies and organisations that process data are required to register with the DPC, which maintains a register of entities that are qualified as data processors under the law
Internet users have also been prosecuted for their online activities under Section 208 of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960, which criminalizes the publication of statements "likely to cause fear and alarm to the public or to disturb the public peace" when the person who publishes it is "knowing or having reason to believe that the statement, rumour or report is false"	The government's legal authority to control the provision of encryption technology. Section 49 requires a license issued by the CA to provide cybersecurity services, as well as a fee to be determined by the authority	
	Under Section 76, a high court may compel a network operator to acquire tools and equipment necessary to decrypt information of a subscriber who is being investigated, at its own expense	
The ECA mandates all telecommunications operators keep the data of their subscribers for disclosure to the NCA		
Under Section 99(3) of the Electronic Transactions Act, 2008, security forces with a court warrant may require a telecommunications operator to provide necessary information and access to facilitate the decryption of customer data in connection with the investigation of an offense		

Source: Compiled by the researchers, 2024

focused on information inflow and management within the public domain. In phase two, we used the Google search to find or track specific relevant published articles demonstrating how SNP is used in marketing (evangelizing) destinations and challenges associated with SNP promotion of destinations. We gathered data in phase 2 to address the limitations in phase 1 and to meet objectives two and three that focused on the roles of SNP and challenges associated with the promoting of destination through SNP. Through the initial search, we found three legislative instruments that addressed the government regulation of electronic or social media content. In terms of the journal articles, our search produced a total of 40 academic papers, where only 23 papers (see Table 2) were useful due to these reasons. Firstly, these articles were associated with globally recognised as a social citation index and Scopus source list. Secondly, the selected articles focused on the application of SNP within the hospitality and tourism context. Thirdly, the articles reviewed were published between 2016 to 2022 signifying the current literature used for this study. One of the main challenges of the Google search is finding information that is specific and relevant to the search query (Toms *et al.*, 2005). This study overcome this challenge by deploying the advanced search using the Boolean operators [AND, OR, NOT, ()] which were useful in saving time by focusing searches for more on-target results (Lowe *et al.*, 2018). Evidently, using Google search for secondary data analysis has been valuable and used by earlier studies in the hospitality and tourism literature (see Allaberganov *et al.*, 2021; Höpken *et al.*, 2019; Kajzar *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, we used these steps for the data extraction and context analysis for both data sources. Firstly, the downloaded materials were uploaded into Nvivo software. We used the "text search" function of the NVivo software to look through the uploaded documents using the keywords "social media", "Facebook", "Instagram", "Google Map" and "TikTok." The "text search" function in NVivo is the same as the "find command" (ctrl+f) in Microsoft Word (see: Silver *et al.*, 2014). This function enables researchers to quickly find the keywords that need to be elaborated in response to the objectives of the study. Secondly, the researchers used a systematic approach by independently reading all the documents to guarantee familiarity with the keywords used and the applications. Thirdly, we grouped the key findings into laws that the tourism sector leverage for SNP regulation and specific ways that SNP is used in evangelising destinations.

Findings and discussion

This study assessed legislation initiated by the government of Ghana in building confidence in information sharing and posting on SNP in marketing and promoting destinations within the tourism sector. The findings of this study are presented in Table 3. Our first finding evidenced that Ghana has adopted specific legislations that manage and control information flow on the SNP. Among the legislations were the Electronic Communication Act, 2008 (775), Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038) and Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act, 843) which are available to regulate information regarding all sectors of the economy including the tourism sector. Ghana's initiatives in espousing these legislative instruments evidenced that the country is dedicated to bringing sanity in information or content sharing and posting on SNP which supports the guideline offered by UNHCR (2021) on using social media protection. This guideline emphasised that social media are associated with risks and there is the need for protection concerns by nations to pave the ways for the benefits of media usage.

Furthermore, our finding is consistent with similar initiatives adopted by developed countries in regulating the contents of social media. Examples include Enhancing Online Safety Act, 2015, Criminal Code Amendment (Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Act, 2019) in

Specific objectives	Findings
Objective 1: to examine government initiatives in building confidence in contents shared or posted on SNP through the promotion of destinations	Ghana has adopted specific legislations that manage and control information flow on the SNP in destination evangelism: • Electronic Communication Act, 2008 (775), • Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038) and • Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act, 843) • Ghana's initiatives in bringing sanity in information or content sharing and posting on SNP support the guideline offered by UNHCR (2021) on using social media protection • It revealed that social media are associated with risks and there is a need for protection concerns by nations to pave the ways for the benefits of media usage
Objective 2: to assess the roles of Google Maps, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram in evangelising destinations within the literature	SNP is used in evangelising through text, photo and video of location-based services, experiences (e.g. uploading destination short videos sharing, image projection, visual content and posting of touristic fantasies, harsh tagging of wonderful sites, sharing tourists' comments posted on Google Maps review and TikTok)
Objective 3: to examine the key challenges faced by destination evangelists in using SNP to promote	• Government's readiness to enforce the necessary laws accordingly, when the SNP space is being abused; • inadequate legal support from the state; • compliance and managing data privacy by the state institutions in-charge of the promotion of technology; and • misinformation shared might affect the trust and confidence level of tourists

Table 3.
Research objectives
and findings

Source: Compiled by the researchers, 2024

Australia, Communication Decency Act of 1996, in the USA, Digital Markets Act (Regulation 2022/1925), Digital Services Act (Regulation 2022/2065) in EU, Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG), 2017 in Germany, Communication Platforms Act, 2021 in Austria among others. On the African continent, Ugandan has passed "Misuse of Social Media and Hate Speech" in 2022, Nigeria has introduced the "Anti-Social Media" bill in 2019 and Kenya has also amended the Information and Communication Act to regulate the contents of social media platforms. Reflecting on the Afrobarometer study of Conroy-Krutz and Koné (2020), on changing media landscape in Africa showed that 72% of Ghanaians said that the social media in Ghana is too free to be accessed and should be regulated. This signifies that content sharing and posting that threatens and intimidates the entire society should be regulated according to the laws of the land.

Interestingly, our second finding highlights the role of SNP in evangelising destinations in the literature. The empirical review of the literature found that SNP is used in evangelising through text, photo and video of location-based services and experiences (e.g. destination short videos sharing and posting of touristic fantasies, harsh tagging of wonderful sites and sharing tourists' comments posted on Google Maps review and

TikTok). Tourists are also invited to upload photos or visual content posting of destination sites on Facebook. The Facebook pages are used in evangelising "content of scenic beauty, culture and cuisine that appeals to tourists' emotion." Furthering, the review emphasised the role of Instagram in city image projection, sharing of photos featuring natural scenery, photos of gastronomy and posting popular sacral architectures. According to Du *et al.* (2022), TikTok has increasingly promoted and shaped the destination image through tourist experience texting and sharing of photos and videos.

Notably, the SNP has now served as a varied source of information for tourists' decision-making (Speake *et al.*, 2021). Apart from the business gains associated with SNP, it is clear that these platforms have significant relevance to the tourism sector. This suggests that Ghana has the opportunity to tap into these numerous offers provided by SNP in evangelising destinations. However, it remains a question whether Ghana can gain from related benefits of using SNP in tourism. These benefits can only be maximised by T&H businesses and tourists in context when the government can regulate content sharing and posting to build tourist confidence within and outside Ghana. Choi *et al.*'s (2019) study proved that trustworthiness of tourism information is important for tourists' decision-making which enhances smooth businesses in the travel and hospitality sector.

Furthermore, our finding on the third objective projected the challenges in using the SNP in evangelising destinations in context. Notwithstanding, there are different types of social media and their usage with their associated challenges. The first set of challenges is considered as the government's readiness to enforce the necessary laws accordingly when the SNP space is being abused. Given that some users consciously or unconsciously may be abusing the platforms by sharing irrelevant content or false messages rather than promoting businesses. It is also important to note that inadequate legal support, compliance and managing data privacy by the state institutions in-charge of the promotion of technology and information might affect trust and confidence level of information shared or posted on any of these platforms. According to one of the findings of the Afrobarometer, 2020 report titled "double-edge sword. Ghanaians see pros, cons of social media, want access but not fake news" indicated that social media is less trusted as a source, only 39% said they somewhat trust it (Appiah-Nyamekye and Selormey, 2020).

The second challenge is allied to the poor education and awareness creation; and strict adherence to the rules among citizens on the functionalities (sharing, learning, interacting and marketing) of SNP and its relevance to businesses and the country at large. This ought to be initiated by state organisations responsible for information management and dissemination to bring fairness in protecting tourists/customers from seeing harmful content. The third constraint is related to regulating citizens conduct in spreading rumours, authenticity of content, accuracy and relevance information on the SNP in a developing country is constrained by technological advancement in identifying and applying the law accordingly is of a challenge. This is due to the absence of a single national data or recognised national identification card of citizens in the registration of sim cards in most African countries. This makes it difficult to overcome the inherent challenges in detecting fabricated or misleading information by their perpetrators.

To conclude, our study has showcased the progress efforts made by the government of Ghana to encourage and safeguard the use of the SNP by providing the necessary legislative acts that regulate the conducts and behaviours of social media users, that support best practices in the advanced world, where the SNP is largely used in promoting and

advertising goods and services. Additionally, our study has revealed the significant ways that SNP is used in evangelising destinations. This knowledge gained will help in encouraging destination evangelising in context by tourists, tourism businesses and practitioners at large. We have made a significant contribution that fills a research gap by researching into synthesising government legislative instruments and empirical literature of social media in evangelising tourism destinations among the deserted field in SNP and tourism literature. One of the novelties of this study is that our findings differ from prior studies of social media regulation (Tsegyu and Inobemle, 2021), who found that in a democratic state overregulation of social media is regarded as a threat to freedom of speech. Two, one of the most important results from this study demonstrated the specific ways destination evangelists volunteering to promote destinations through text, photo and destination short videos sharing and sharing tourists' comments. In other words, sharing and posting of favourable texts, photos and videos of a destination might increase tourism traffic to a destination.

Our findings have some policy and managerial implications for the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Ghana, Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) (2021) and allied agencies like the Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF), Ministry of Information, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice. All these institutions have collective responsibilities to work effectively in regulating content published by enforcing the laws. This will make information flow in context authentic and credible for tourism consumption, making Ghana to be branded among the best tourism destinations on the globe for trustworthy tourism information sharing. In short, there is a need for a strong collaboration between the tourism industry and the government of Ghana to have a clearer understanding of the intricate nature of the relationship between governmental legislation and SNP providers. Also, the country has the task to institute state agencies or committees that can educate citizens on the appropriate usage of SNP and also block illegal or fabricated information online. Examples are the Australian National Online Strategy Committees and Discover Slovenia, whose responsibilities include content management of social media and education on tutorial packages for social media users on fundamental know-how of the platforms and step-by-step use of various social media platforms.

Failure to pay attention to content sharing and posting might undermine trust and confidence in accessing social media information. With the managerial implication, our findings echoed the various ways that one can use the SNP in evangelising destinations which are available for individual tourists and tourism businesses such as GHATOF; a tourism umbrella body that consists of all tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses to adopt. Overall, our study with focus on government regulation of the SNP would help in integrating the findings of this paper into the planning and management of social media content in Ghana, notwithstanding some limitations of this paper. Admittedly, this research may be fraught with some inherent conceptual limitations that could impact on the generalisation of its findings due to the lack of empirical research of this study. Furthermore, studies can also empirically explore the understanding of government regulation of SNP among business owners, T&H practitioners, tourists and SNP providers. It is also important that future research should empirically examine SNP evangelism on intention to patronise with the moderating role of government regulations. Examining SNP (i.e. Google Maps, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram) on destination attractiveness from the perspective of tourists might enhance the arguments in this domain.

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