

# SOCIAL NETWORKING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT IN TOURISM EXPERIENCE: THE MODERATING ROLE OF ONLINE SELF-PRESENTATION STRATEGIES

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**ABSTRACT.** The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of how tourists' self-presentation is managed on social networking sites (SNS). Specifically, the study investigated the effects of SNS use on social support and tourism experience and the moderating role of the different tourists' self-presentation strategies. The results emphasize the importance of SNS use for tourists to seek support from their social network while traveling. The study clarifies the importance of SNS use for tourism experience, in that the more tourists are engaged in social activities through SNS while traveling, the more social support they will get, which will contribute positively to their tourism experience. Also, it is argued that social support does not always directly result from the intense SNS use, but rather moderated by tourists' self-presentation strategies.

**KEYWORDS.** Positive self-presentation, honest self-presentation, social support, tourism experience

## *INTRODUCTION*

In the age of the social web, people use various online channels to present themselves to the world, which may involve strategic selection of self-related information and images to provide when creating their profile on social media. Self-presentation is considered a form of communication, in that people try to communicate a message about who they are to others. Goffman (1959) argue that one's self is produced through the use of self-presentational performances that are either publicly validated or discredited by interested parties based upon

the context of the interaction that occurs within. In other words, self-presentational performances as well as the feedback and support that follow play a critical role in the formation of self. Indeed, recent research suggests that an active online communication with others in an offline social network enhances people's levels of subjective well-being and works to reinforce the already tangible relationships (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). More recently, it is also suggested that the use of social networking sites (SNS) can serve as a new type of self-presentation and social support (Kim & Lee, 2011; Wright & Bell, 2003).

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However, existing studies have hardly discussed the effect of SNS use and online social support in the context of travel. Nowadays, tourists increasingly share photos and videos as well as write blog and micro-blog posts in order to communicate with and seek support from friends, family, colleagues, and even strangers without any time and space restraints (Huang, Basu, & Hsu, 2010). Indeed, as technological features of SNS are more and more diverse, tourists use SNS for a variety of reasons from seeking travel-related information, maintaining social connections, finding travel companions, providing travel tips and suggestions, to simply having fun by sharing interesting travel experiences with each other (Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002). Thus, SNS provide tourists with additional opportunities to present themselves and exchange social support with others online (Walther & Boyd, 2002; Wright & Bell, 2003). As these processes occur while traveling, self-presentational performances on SNS can be considered inseparable from tourism experience. Hence, it is argued that the value chain of self-presentation within SNS would exert an influence on tourists' experience.

Gibbs, Ellison, and Heino (2006) argue that using SNS presents individuals with new challenges in regard to self-presentation behavior. The two key factors of SNS—namely, the reduced communication cues and potentially asynchronous communication—enable users to engage in selective self-presentation (Walther, 2007). According to the hyperpersonal model of computer-mediated communication (CMC), through online communication, people have the ability to develop relationships that are more socially desirable than in parallel face-to-face interactions by using selective self-presentation and the subsequent highlighting of certain characteristics while masking others (Walther, 2007). Recent studies on the roles of self-presentation in various online contexts—such as online dating (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Gibbs et al., 2006), Avatar creation (Vasalou, Joinson, Banziger, Goldie & Pitt, 2008), and SNS use among students (Kim & Lee, 2011; McLaughlin, Vitak, & Crouse, 2011)—have investigated this tendency. These previous works, however, do not consider

selective self-presentation strategies and SNS use behavior together to draw valuable outcomes.

In the context of travel, tourists may be more inclined to present themselves to others in a selective manner by highlighting the favorable and appropriate images of themselves, while others may prefer to present themselves in a true-to-self manner. This suggests that elucidating selective self-presentation strategies will gain a more profound theoretical understanding about tourists' experience in the social media era. Thus, an examination of how the different self-presentation strategies affect social support and, subsequently, the tourism experience is of a great importance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how tourists' self-presentation is managed on SNS and how self-presentation and social support in SNS influences tourists' experience. Specifically, the study investigated the effects of SNS use on social support and tourism experience and the moderating role of the different tourists' self-presentation strategies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Self-Presentation*

In his classic work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Goffman suggests that people are concerned with the way others perceive them, in that presenting favorable and appropriate images to impress others are the motivating actors that guide and control people's behavior. Higgins (1987) approaches the same concept from a broader perspective. He conceptualizes three types of self domains based on the standpoints of the actor and/or an imagined audience: the ideal self, the ought self, and the actual self. The ideal self is composed of qualities that the actor or others wish for him/her to possess, while the ought self comprises qualities that the actor or others expect him/her to possess due to an obligation. The actual self is composed of stable qualities the actor or others believe s/he possesses. Goffman and Higgins' frameworks are useful to

assist in an understanding of self-presentation activities. The process of “packaging and editing the self” involves choices about what information to include, what to leave out, and whether to engage in a more positive manner or to remain honest with one’s audience (McLaughlin et al., 2011; Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008, p. 1024). This selective process of self-presentation is essential for social support.

On most SNS, users have a greater control over their self-presentational activities, in that SNS allows them to manage their online interactions more strategically (Ellison et al., 2007). One of the relevant theoretical approaches to understand this self-presentation mechanism in SNS context is the hyperpersonal model (Walther, 1996). It suggests that the unique features of SNS—namely, the reduced cues environment and the asynchronous communication—allow users to selectively self-present themselves (Walther, 1996). Thus, an individual can manage the information about him/herself in order to earn the approval of others and to give positive impressions about him/her. Furthermore, recent research suggests that people’s effort to idealize their positive parts is experienced in accordance with the need to present their true self to others (Kraut et al., 1998; Ellison et al., 2007). Although the high visibility of displayed positive behavior may easily lead a SNS user to pursue a positive self-presentation (Kimmerle & Cress, 2008), users anticipating long-term and/or pre-existing relationships with their SNS friends may choose to present themselves honestly without selectively putting their highly desirable images (Gibbs et al., 2006; Kim & Lee, 2011). In other words, the experience of SNS users can be optimized through selective self-presentation as this self-presentation will affect responses from their peers.

Aligned with the hyperpersonal model, the interaction among the performers and the audience plays an important role in self-presentation (Goffman, 1959). Research shows that users are acutely aware of the criteria needed to achieve social support from peers on SNS. For example, people are quite deliberate in choosing photos to represent themselves on their SNS profiles that

fit these standards (Hine, 2001; Siibak, 2009; Valkenburg et al., 2006). As such, self-presentation can be seen as a product of discourse between the audience and the performing tourist who tries to achieve a certain goal (Hine, 2001; Pearson, 2009). Depending on his/her objective and goal, a tourist may actively search for further input from the audience in order to create a suitable performance on SNS. In summary, it can be suggested that a tourist may choose a certain level of positive or honest self-presentation strategies on SNS while traveling in order to attain social support from their friends (Kim & Lee, 2011).

### ***Social Support***

Social support can be defined as “verbal and nonverbal communication between recipients and providers that reduces uncertainty about the situation, the self, the other, or the relationship, and functions to enhance a perception of personal control in one’s experiences” (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987, p. 19). According to social psychology literature, social support is often seen as critical in making social environments less stressful, healthier, and more conducive to effective adaptation to stress in one of three ways: (a) socio-emotional coping refers to esteem support and social companionship in times of stress; (b) informational support refers to the transfer of pertinent information designed to help cope with a particular stressor; and (c) instrumental support involves the transfer of goods or services (House, 1981; Mikal & Grace, 2012).

With the development in information and communication technology (ICT), the boundary of social support is expanding from traditional face-to-face communication context to computer-mediated communication context. Specifically, it is suggested that SNS can facilitate social interactions and social support (Walther, 1996; Kim & Lee, 2011) and that SNS characteristics make them an alternative to the traditional support networks within the face-to-face environment (Turner, Grube, & Meyers, 2001; Walther & Boyd, 2002). Through participating in online groups, some people found means to deal with various life problems.

As SNS can eliminate barriers related to time and distance and draw more number of participants than the traditional face-to-face communication (Chen & Choi, 2011), SNS may significantly enhance existing forms of social support (Kim & Lee, 2011; Mikal & Grace, 2012).

Some scholars point out the differences between perceived social support and received social support, and also that these two can be differently accessed (Bambina, 2007; Prati & Pietrantonio, 2010). Perceived social support can be defined as an individual's beliefs about the availability of various types of support from his/her network associates; whereas received social support is defined as the actual support received (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). For example, if a person has a large number of online friends on SNS, s/he may perceive some friends whom s/he would be able to rely on when facing problems. On the other hand, received social support is the actual social support that s/he receives through SNS—such as comments, likes, and trackbacks. Most importantly, perceived social support can differ from received social support, which may cause a dissonance about the relationships involved on SNS.

In the travel context, social support is known to moderate the relationship between stressful travel experiences and psychological outcomes (Berno & Ward, 2005; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Ward, 2001). Cross-cultural research has revealed that those with more avenues for support experience better physical and mental health (Ward, 2001). Social support for tourists could be provided from either weak ties, such as other tourists (Huang & Hsu, 2010); or close ties, such as friends and family (Klooster & Go, 2006). Social support during the initial phase of travel can also be derived from those undergoing a similar experience. Close ties can provide tourists with a sense of place. On the other hand, weak ties may extend resources to information needed to reduce possible fears about the new environment or provide an advice in the preparation for the trip. Ong and Ward (2005) argue that instrumental social support (i.e., informational and tangible support) is particularly effective in fostering positive psychological outcomes

for tourists. Such support is routinely afforded by the tourism infrastructure, including tourist information centers and tour guides (Berno & Ward, 2005).

### *SNS and Tourism Experience*

Since tourism experience has a direct impact on tourist's satisfaction and revisit intention, it is a critical issue for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to examine the main construct of tourism experience and how to enhance a positive tourism experience. Even though tourism experience concept has been noted as pivotal by both academics and policy makers, the disparity in the central meaning of the concept remains obscure (Jennings et al., 2009). Moreover, the development in ICT has transformed tourism globally (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005) and the belief that tourism is an escape from the mundane of everyday life has been challenged (Uriely, 2005). In the current era of mass media, tourism experiences are more than gazing at distant sights and engaging in the facets of other cultures; rather, they are an integration of the interaction and reflection among tourist, places, others, and social networks (Uriely, 2005; Urry, 1990). Many studies (Huang & Hsu, 2010; Uriely, 2005; White & White, 2007) suggest that the social dimension of tourism can attribute the essence of tourism experience. In this sense, using SNS helps to meet tourists' social needs by allowing "the emergence of a mobile and network sociality," which is a "complex intersection of face-to-face interaction and mediated communication, co-presence and virtual proximity, corporeal travel and virtual motilities" (Mascheroni, 2007, p. 527).

Furthermore, it is argued that the process of narrating can be considered the process of making sense of people's lives (Gabriel, 2000; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Also, drawing from the work of Giddens (1991), Desforges (2000) indicates that narratives and story sharing are important for tourists because through sharing their experiences, tourists can probe experiences that (re)produce their sense of self. According to Giddens (1991), self-identity is not something that is just given as a result of the continuities of the individual

action-system, but is something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual. It is through narration that allows tourist to reflect on their travel experiences and form self-concept (Desforges, 2000).

As tourists are expanding the space-time boundary through the use of ICT, the dynamics of ICT open a whole new set of experience for them. Hence, tourists' use of SNS and their self-presentation can generate an enjoyable tourism experience by stimulating the receiving of social support (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Indeed, this adds to the complexity of tourism experience, as it can occur in an infinite range of places and is not limited to one specific place or encounter (O'Dell, 2005). Therefore, it can be argued that tourists' SNS use can provide the better experience, especially in terms of social and affective dimensions, by encouraging social interaction and providing reflective cues of their travel.

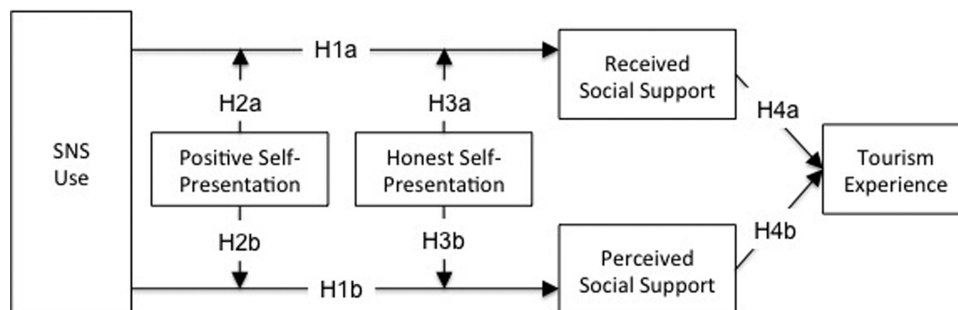
### Research Hypotheses

The aim of this research is to examine the positive relationships among tourists' use of SNS, social support, and tourism experience. Further, this research also examines whether or not the relationship between SNS use and social support is moderated by self-presentation strategies. The hypothesized model is illustrated in Figure 1. It is suggested that since users have the power to control the exchange of messages on SNS, SNS can facilitate social

interactions and social support (Walther, 1996; Kim & Lee, 2011). According to Ellison and colleagues (2011), "[it] is unlikely that individuals use *Facebook* to discover large numbers of new close friends, but the site effectively facilitates the ability to ask for emotional support from strong and weak ties and supports acts of 'social grooming' (p. 139). Previous study has also found that participating in an online community can provide useful information and emotional support; and greater involvement with an online community was predictive of lower perceived life stress (Mikal & Grace, 2012; Wright, 2000). Hence, SNS communication typically consists of interactions between users and their SNS friends (including actions such as photo tagging), in which one friend directly identifies another. Wall posts and messages are strong predictors of and are associated with an increased social support as well as reduced loneliness (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2010; Kim & Lee, 2011).

Also, to better understand the social support mechanisms, scholars have described social support as a "meta-construct" consisting of several subconstructs (Bambina, 2007; Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, 1981; Prati & Pietrantonio, 2010). The present study focuses on two of these subconstructs: received social support and perceived social support. Measures of received social support are designed to assess the specific supportive feedback that is provided to tourists by their SNS friends. On the other hand, measures of perceived social support assess tourists' general perception and belief toward their SNS

FIGURE 1. The Hypothesized Model



friends. Hence, the following hypotheses are posited:

*H1a: There is a positive relationship between tourists' SNS use and received social support.*

*H1b: There is a positive relationship between tourists' SNS use and perceived social support.*

However, there are contradictory views on the relationship between SNS use and social support. Vitak, Ellison, and Steinfield (2011) argued that an active SNS use is not enough for predicting social support, which contrasts previous studies showing a positive relationship between the two variables (Manago et al., 2008; Siibak, 2009; Valkenburg et al., 2006). One of the possible reasons for the failure to find a consistent relationship between SNS use and social support may be the existing moderating factor. It is argued that a tourist's perceived social support does not always directly result from the intense self-presentation on SNS *per se*, but rather from his/her self-presentation strategies. Given the effort associated with the adjusting of self-presentation, the interaction between the performer (i.e., the tourist) and the audience is important. Therefore, when tourists post their experience on SNS, they may actively search for further input from the audience in order to create a suitable performance (Goffman, 1959). In other words, the tourist may choose some level of self-presentation strategies, which can be positive or honest self-presentation (Kim & Lee, 2011). Positive self-presentation may strengthen the relationship between tourists' SNS use and the social support. On the other hand, honest self-presentation may weaken the relationship between tourists' SNS use and social support. Therefore, the following hypotheses are posited:

*H2a: Tourists' positive self-presentation strategies moderate the relationship between SNS use and received social support.*

*H2b: Tourists' honest self-presentation strategies moderate the relationship*

*between SNS use and received social support.*

*H3a: Tourists' positive self-presentation strategies moderate the relationship between SNS use and perceived social support.*

*H3b: Tourists' honest self-presentation strategies moderate the relationship between SNS use and perceived social support.*

Through various self-presentation activities, tourist may have a chance to reflect on their travels, share their own experience, and form their sense of self through social support. Traditionally, tour guide, local residents, and other tourists have been considered providers of social support (Huang et al., 2010). However, with ICT development and SNS use, tourists can seek social support not just from other tourists (i.e., weak ties) in the destinations, but also from friends and family (i.e., strong ties) back home. Incorporating the concepts from customer experiential value, Keng and Ting (2009) found the relationship between SNS interactivity and perceived similarity between blog readers and the others. Further, Toma (2010) suggests that SNS users can emotionally benefit from self-affirmation through social support. That is, positive feedback and social support for their travel-related posting or photo sharing may generate an enjoyable tourism experience (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Hence, the following hypotheses are posited:

*H4a: There is a positive relationship between received social support and tourism experience.*

*H4b: There is a positive relationship between perceived social support and tourism experience.*

## METHODOLOGY

### Measurement Items

To test the hypothesized model, measurement items were adapted from previous studies (see the Appendix for measurement items).

The items measuring SNS use were originally developed by Ellison et al. (2007) to gauge user engagement in activities on *Facebook* based on the number of “friends,” the amount of time spent on the network on a typical day, and the level of agreement with several statements gauging users’ emotional attachment to the site. The scale was modified for tourism context in this study. Items measuring self-presentation were originally developed by Kim and Lee (2011). They categorized one’s self-presentation into two groups: positive self-presentation and honest self-presentation. For positive self-presentation, they tested six items to assess the extent to which participants selectively show positive aspects of themselves through *Facebook*. For honest self-presentation, they used four items to assess the extent to which participants honestly share their thoughts, feelings, and life events through *Facebook*. This study uses 12 measurement items that were modified for tourism context.

Social support is conceptualized in two constructs: received social support (i.e., actual communication and feedback from SNS) and perceived social support. For the actual communication and feedback, directed communication scale originally developed by Burke and colleagues (2010) was used. The scale includes interactions between the focal user and another friend, which include text exchanges and non-text feedback (e.g., clicking the “like” button and photo tagging). In their original research, they collected activity data from server logs of the participants’ activity. However, due to the technical difficulty, this study used the self-survey method by asking the extent to which users are getting various types of communication and feedback from their SNS friends. For perceived social support, items adapted from the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) scale developed by Kim and Lee (2011) was reworded to specifically reflect the contexts of SNS use. Finally, items measuring tourism experience, which is defined as the evaluation of the overall travel in this study, were adapted from measurement items developed by Tussyadiah and Zach (2012) in their recent study on the impact of technology use on tourism experience.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through an online survey targeting young professionals in Korea who had travel experience within the past six months and are familiar with mobile and internet technology. The survey was conducted from December 18 to December 31, 2011 and from April 1 to April 10, 2012. At the first stage, respondents were recruited on a self-selection basis, whereby initial invitations to take part in the online survey were posted on a researcher’s *Twitter* feed, blog, and *Facebook* status updates. In order to increase the response rate, another invitation was posted on Korea Tourism Organization’s *Facebook* status updates. The invitations included a shortened *bit.ly* URL pointing to the online survey. The URL received 252 responses, 217 of which were completed and used for further analysis. In terms of demographics, 56.2% of the respondents were male. Most respondents were in their 30s (53.5%), followed by 20s (34.6%). About 82% of the respondents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. Also, over 97% of respondents use the Internet every day. These results reflect the typical characteristics of young professionals in Korea (National Internet Development Agency [NIDA], 2012).

## **RESULTS**

### **Reliability and Validity**

First of all, the test of the factor structure of the study model included the examination of reliability for internal consistency. Internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficients and the overall internal consistency coefficients of the questionnaire were over .90, which are higher than the minimum cut-off score of .60, as shown in Table 1. Through literature review, questionnaire used in this research was designed with reference to the dimensional questions proposed by the scholars of the specialty. Hence, the items of questionnaire are in accordance with content validity (Cooper & Emory, 1995)

Principal component analysis was adopted to proceed with the construct validity.

TABLE 1. Reliability and Validity Test

Factors	Item	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	Explanatory variance	Cronbach's $\alpha$
SNS use (KMO = .869; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 1051.375$ ; $p = .000$ )	1	.877	4.577	76.286	.937
	2	.816			
	3	.900			
	4	.870			
	5	.905			
	6	.870			
Positive self-presentation (KMO = .881; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 1051.179$ ; $p = .000$ )	1	.875	4.614	76.905	.939
	2	.873			
	3	.895			
	4	.827			
	5	.910			
	6	.881			
Honestself-presentation (KMO = .842; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 860.256$ ; $p = .000$ )	1	.680	4.111	68.516	.906
	2	.687			
	3	.869			
	4	.915			
	5	.873			
	6	.905			
Received social support (KMO = .923; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 1228.397$ ; $p = .000$ )	1	.907	4.960	82.665	.958
	2	.922			
	3	.904			
	4	.913			
	5	.898			
	6	.911			
Perceived social support (KMO = .937; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 1505.194$ ; $p = .000$ )	1	.928	5.172	86.202	.966
	2	.944			
	3	.942			
	4	.952			
	5	.949			
	6	.852			
Tourism experience (KMO = .761; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 576.477$ ; $p = .000$ )	1	.947	2.720	90.682	.948
	2	.965			
	3	.944			

As suggested by Hair and colleagues (1998), the eigenvalue had to be greater than 1. Moreover, each item's absolute value of factor loading had better be greater than .60 after an orthogonal rotation by using varimax method. As represented in Table 1, the factor loading of each item was higher than .6 (ranging from .680 to .965) and the eigenvalues were all greater than 2. Overall, the questionnaire used in this research has reached relatively good construct validity.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

To achieve the research goal, simple regression and hierarchical regression analyses were adopted utilizing SPSS 19.0 (SPSS, Inc.,

Chicago, IL, USA). Hypothesis 1 predicted that a tourist who is highly engaged in SNS use would be more likely to acquire social support. The results show that a tourist's SNS use was significantly related to their received social support ( $R^2 = .512$ ,  $\beta = .716$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived social support ( $R^2 = .432$ ,  $\beta = .657$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported by the data. This finding is consistent with some previous studies and lends credibility to the notion that tourists' SNS use does play an influential role in acquiring feedback and social support from their social network.

To test the moderating effects of positive self-presentation and honest self-presentation on the linkages between SNS use and social support



(Hypotheses 2 and 3), hierarchical multiple regression analyses were employed (Sheeran & Abraham, 2003). Significant main effects of the predictor and moderator on criterion variable can be found, but these effects are not directly related to the testing of the moderation hypothesis (Baron & Kenny, 1986). To do so, the scales for positive self-presentation, honest self-presentation, and SNS use were centered at their means before computing the interactions and conducting the analyses (Aiken & West, 1991).

To test Hypotheses 2, the moderated regression analysis of both positive self-presentation and honest self-presentation for received social support appears in Table 2. Step 3 on Table 2 indicates that the inclusion of the interaction between the moderator variable and SNS use was associated with a significant increment in the variance explained in received social support. It also shows that the interaction term of SNS use and both positive self-presentation ( $\beta = .072, p < .01$ ) and honest self-presentation ( $\beta = -.134, p < .01$ ) were significant. Significant positive coefficient reflects that the SNS use–social support linkage becomes stronger as the positive self-presentation increases. On the other hand, the coefficient of the honest self-presentation and SNS use interaction effect was negative; indicating that as honest self-presentation increases, the positive link between relationship SNS use and their received social

support becomes weaker. Thus, Hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported.

Hypotheses 3 also suggested that positive self-presentation and honest self-presentation would moderate the relationship between tourists' SNS use and perceived social support. As shown in Table 3, the interaction term between SNS use and perceived social support was not significant. Apparently, both positive self-presentation and honest self-presentation have no interaction effects on tourists' perceived social support at  $p > .10$ . Thus, Hypotheses 3a and 3b were not supported

Finally, Hypothesis 4 predicted that a tourist who received social support would be more likely to have a positive tourism experience. Results show that both received and perceived social support were significantly related to tourism experience ( $R^2 = .670$ , received social support  $\beta = .283$ , perceived social support  $\beta = .575, p < .001$ ). That is, the higher social support through SNS has a positive effect on tourist's experience. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is strongly supported.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study tested the hypothesized relationships between tourists' use of SNS, social

TABLE 2. The Moderating Effects on SNS Use and Received Social Support

Independent variables	Dependent variable: Received social support		
	$\beta$ (Step 1)	$\beta$ (Step 2)	$\beta$ (Step 3)
SNS use	.644***	.495***	.531***
Positive self presentation (SP)		.237***	.031***
SNS use * Positive SP			.072**
$R^2$	.512***	.553***	.569*
$\Delta R^2$		.41***	.015*
F	202.881***	119.005***	89.913***
SNS use	.644***	.516***	.518***
Honest self presentation (SP)		.083	.006
SNS use * Honest SP			-.134**
$R^2$	.512***	.521	.556***
$\Delta R^2$		.008	.036***
F	202.881***	104.230***	79.855***

Note.  $N = 195$ . The coefficients are unstandardized  $\beta$  weights.  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 3. The Moderating Effects on SNS Use and Perceived Social Support

Independent variables	Dependent variable: Perceived social support		
	$\beta$ (Step 1)	$\beta$ (Step 2)	$\beta$ (Step 3)
SNS use	.645***	.456***	.471***
Positive self presentation (SP)		.301***	.299***
SNS use * Positive SP			.031
$R^2$	.432***	.488***	.490
$\Delta R^2$		.56***	.002
$F$	146.873***	91.451***	61.222***
SNS use	.645***	.634***	.636***
Honest self presentation (SP)		-.235**	-.238**
SNS use * Honest SP			-.087
$R^2$	.432***	.461**	.471
$\Delta R^2$		.029**	.010
$F$	146.873***	82.176***	56.689***

Note.  $N = 195$ . The coefficients are unstandardized  $\beta$  weights.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

support and tourism experience, and the moderating effects of self-presentation strategies on the relationships between SNS use and social support. The results show that there are positive relationships among tourists' use of SNS, social support, and tourism experience. The more tourists are engaged in social activities through SNS while traveling, the more social support they will get, which will contribute positively to their tourism experience. Considering the lack of research in this particular area, results such as these articulate more clearly the importance of SNS use for tourism experience. ICT has the capacity to allow tourists to maintain their everyday life while traveling (Bergami, 2008). As a result, their real-time travel-related posting or photo sharing and its consequential social support may generate a more enjoyable tourism experience.

Furthermore, as shown in this study, social support does not always directly result from the intense SNS use, but rather moderated by tourists' self-presentation strategies. Specifically, positive and honest self-presentation strategies moderate the relationship between SNS use and received social support in the opposite ways. Tourists' positive self-presentation reflects the use of SNS as a channel to highlight the positive aspects of their travel and these positive aspects generate stronger attention and feedback from their SNS

friends. On the other hand, tourists' honest self-presentation weakens the relationship between SNS use and the visible social support. The results demonstrate that tourists' SNS use and self-presentation activities enhance social support especially when they selectively present their travel stories. These findings are consistent with Walther's (2007) hyperpersonal model and suggest that the process of selective self-presentation makes SNS a unique awareness-enhancing stimulus for both tourists and their social network.

However, it was identified that self-presentation strategies do not moderate tourists' perceived social support. Consistent with the findings from previous studies, tourists' received social support through SNS are often not exactly the same as what they believed it would be (Bambina, 2007; Eastin & LaRose, 2005). Since this study examined both the "weak ties" and "strong ties" of social support, the findings are, therefore, not conclusive to present the precise role of either of those ties. Future research is needed to investigate more about these discrepancies between received and perceived social support.

The results from this study provide a significant implication regarding the agents of tourism experience; SNS could be a powerful channel for tourists to communicate with others. While presenting their travel stories, tourists who

upload photo and edit information in a selective manner potentially will have more social interaction and attention. The other side of it is that people who follow friends' journey on SNS might be able to indirectly experience the travel and, simultaneously, influence their experience by giving them social support. Furthermore, the finding in this study provides an empirical evidence to support the important role of online social support in shaping tourists' experience. People use SNS not only for exchanging information, but also dispelling their loneliness and seeking social support (McKenna & Bargh, 1999; Wellman & Gulia, 1999). Hence, this study opens the possibility to apply an expanded social support concept for tourists. A practical implication that emerges from this finding is that destination marketers should be attentive to foster online social support activities for tourists. More specifically, destination marketers should concentrate on developing efficient communication methods to allow for social feedback for tourists. Thus, it is important for DMO and other tourism agents to find ways to increase social interactions among tourists and their social support network.

This study is a preliminary step toward understanding how selective self-presentation and social support, which have been previously discussed in the context of impression management and communication context, may influence tourists' perceived experience. The theoretical implications of these results suggest a number of important streams for future research. First, research should focus on the influence of SNS use and social interaction as a cocreator of tourism experiences. Embracing different self-presentation strategies on SNS will expand the concept of postmodern tourists who exercise the use SNS for different motivation and results. For some tourists, the act of posting photos and comments may be considered as an effort to overcome their stressful situation associated with being away from home, while for some others it is to exaggerate their pleasant events under the social context. Moreover, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how the different self-presentation strategies on SNS affect tourism experience. Today's postmodern tourists can use SNS and manage information

about him/herself by presenting a profile and displaying connections with others. Through various self-presentation activities, tourist may have a chance to reflect on their travels, share their own experience, and form their sense of self through social support from others. Positive self-presentation activities may serve as a tool to enable tourists to maximize their received social support. Thus, it should be of a great utility to a multitude of tourism providers to facilitate tourists' self presentation that may enhance their overall tourism experience.

The present study does have some limitations. First, the limitations of samples acquired from the self-reported Internet survey should be noted. Since the respondents in this study were recruited from online communities, generalizations of any findings should be made with caution. The second limitation deals with measurement issues. Aggregated and remembered social support and tourism experience used in this study cannot capture the dynamics of experience throughout the travel period. Indeed, it is very likely that tourism experience changes along the stages of travel and over time. For future research, a tool designed for eliciting rich experience narratives is suggested. Third, the survey of this study was conducted among Korean tourists. However, SNS usage and motives have been found to differ across cultures (Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011). Therefore, contrasting results might be expected in different settings or over different periods of time. Future studies could expand this model by examining the model in different cultural and contextual setting. Finally, the different types of travel might serve as different contexts for self-presentation, social interactions, and social support on SNS. Future studies should investigate these relationships among different types of travel.

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SUBMITTED: May 1, 2012  
FIRST REVISION SUBMITTED:  
September 8, 2012  
FINAL REVISION SUBMITTED:  
October 2, 2012  
ACCEPTED: October 3, 2012  
REFEREED ANONYMOUSLY

APPENDIX  
Measurement Items

Construct	Literature	Measurement items
SNS use	Ellison et al. (2007)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using SNS is a part of my travel activity.</li> <li>2. I am proud to tell people I'm on SNS when I was traveling.</li> <li>3. I dedicate a part of my travel schedule to SNS (e.g., status update, photo upload, comment check).</li> <li>4. I feel out of touch when I haven't logged on to SNS when I was traveling.</li> <li>5. I feel I am part of the SNS community.</li> <li>6. I would be sad if SNS shut down.</li> </ol>
Self-presentation	Kim & Lee (2011)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I post photos that only show the happy side of my travel on SNS.</li> <li>2. I post photos that show the true side of my travel on SNS.</li> <li>3. For my SNS page, I selectively post photos in which I look good on my travel.</li> <li>4. I don't mind posting photos in which I do not look good on my travel.</li> <li>5. On my SNS page, I only write messages that portray me as a happy tourist regardless of my actual feelings.</li> <li>6. When I use SNS, I use smiling emoticons/smiles such as J, :) , or :- ) in the messages I write regardless of my actual feelings.</li> <li>7. I don't mind writing about bad things that happen during my travel on my SNS page.</li> <li>8. I freely reveal negative emotions I feel on my SNS page.</li> <li>9. I avoid writing about negative things that happen to me when I update my status on my SNS page.</li> <li>10. When I update my status on SNS, I only reveal positive feelings; I do not show negative feelings.</li> <li>11. I freely reveal negative emotions I feel when I update my status on my SNS page.</li> <li>12. I don't mind writing about bad things that happen to me on my SNS page when I update my status.</li> </ol>
Received social support	Burke et al. (2010)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compared to everyday life, number of SNS friends initiated communication with would increase while I am traveling.</li> <li>2. Compared to everyday life, number of wall posts received would increase while I am traveling.</li> <li>3. Compared to everyday life, number of messages received would increase while I am traveling.</li> <li>4. Compared to everyday life, number of comments received would increase while I am traveling.</li> <li>5. Compared to everyday life, number of "Likes" received would increase while I am traveling.</li> <li>6. Compared to everyday life, number of times tagged in photo would increase while I am traveling.</li> </ol>
Perceived social support	Kim & Lee (2011)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I can count on the people listed as "friends" on my SNS page for emotional support.</li> <li>2. I can count on the people listed as "friends" on my SNS page for helping me understand things.</li> <li>3. I feel pretty much all alone although I do have people listed as "friends" on my SNS page.</li> <li>4. I think I can count on the people listed as "friends" on my SNS page for helping me doing something.</li> <li>5. I think I can count on the people listed as "friends" on my SNS page for helping me with my questions.</li> <li>6. I think I can count on the people listed as "friends" on my SNS page for filling in for me if I am unable to do something.</li> </ol>
Tourism experience	Tussyadiah & Zach (2012)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using SNS contributed positively to my overall travel experience.</li> <li>2. Using SNS helped me to enjoy my travel.</li> <li>3. Using SNS assisted me in gaining a meaningful travel experience.</li> </ol>