

The Success of Using Social Media for Tourism Purposes in Thailand

Mayprapawee Varnakomola Kolenberg¹, Sumaman Pankham^{2,*}

1,2 College of Digital Innovation Technology, Rangsit University, Pathum Thani, Thailand

* Correspondence: mayprapawee2m39@gmail.com sumaman.p@rsu.ac.th

Abstract: The tourism industry is one of the most important economic drivers for the development, prosperity and wellness of the country. The changes in the past generation have seen technological advancement create a new tourism market where the tourists' desires are inspired by the influence of watching social media tourism pages and other social media platforms to choose a travel destination to visit. This paper proposes a new model for the tourism market by using social media. A mixed methodology approach was applied by using the elements from the Rough Set Delphi Technique to measure the consensus of 21 experts by exploring the interrelationship among the eight components for the success of using social media for tourism purposes. A 7-point rating scale survey of 800 tourists is used to collect data and CFA to analyze data. This study's results shed light on information quality, perceived benefits, push travel motivation, pull travel motivation, trust, satisfaction, customer loyalty and the intention to recommend, by considering the variables the study concluded interpretation that a better understanding of the cause and effect has led to the social media success for tourism purposes in Thailand. The findings are important for the private and public tourism sectors.

Keywords: Tourism, Social media, Customer loyalty, Travel motivation, Intention to recommend

1. Introduction

Tourism organizations are the driving economic forces for the well-being, prosperity, and development of a country such as Thailand [1]. In the past decade, technological advancements in online networking, such as TripAdvisor platform, Hi5, blogs, websites, together with other social network platforms have created a push factor that is impacted by the inner desire of travelers to be influenced by these modern information and communication channels [2]. Younger generation are push more towards self-help technology digital platforms on mobile devices (e.g. mobile apps) than traditional marketing to decide on their tourism planning [3]. Pull factors are created by research engines such as Google, the usage of social media channels from electronic devices (e.g. iPads and mobile phones), leading to increase online travel communication sharing of information with others [4]. Sharing information about tourist destinations in Thailand is a collection of information based on the opinion of travelers, personal experiences both positive and negative, satisfaction, and whether the information quality received on social media about the destinations in Thailand is meeting expectations or not meeting expectations [5]. The problem is that social media information is not always accurate because the shared opinions, uploads of pictures or videos, and personal travel reviews are opinion based that are not up-to-date, and many destinations' positive reviews are from before the pandemic [6]. So many destinations have been impacted by the crisis and were not renovated or maintained, and in some cases like national parks and beaches, can be more beautiful than before [7]. This is why social media must promote destinations according to their present status [8].

Thailand has a 20-year national plan involving social media's importance to tourism destinations. Thailand is investing in the development of more accurate travel information sharing, experience reviews, posting of pictures or videos, and posting ratings on travel sites that are recognized by the Thai Tourism Authority (TAT), such as Trip Advisor [9]. To ensure standardized quality of service accommodation related to travel destinations so that the experiences expected from what is promoted and the experiences on the different platforms are the same, Thailand-recognized high rating websites such as Booking.com, Agoda, HolidayCheck, Expedia.com, Hotels.com, TripAdvisor and other international sites [10, 11]. Sharing experiences, evaluations, images, and information on high rating platform impact perception uniqueness of destinations [12]. Amazing Thailand campaigns have been focused on the uniqueness of Thai destination sites, their OTOP products, traditional ways

of life that promote ancient Thai foods, traditional agricultural life, and the diversity of each Thai tourism site [13]. TAT used visual technology to promote accurate information and reduce unstandardized reviews by showing the actual Thai destinations from a 360-camera view of the present site outlook [14].

The differences that affect the success of social media usage for tourism in Thailand, such as push or pull factors, information quality, knowledge sharing, satisfaction, and other factors briefly mentioned above, all influence travelers' decision-making to travel to any Thai destination [15]. The researcher found that there is a significant need to analyze and identified the if these different factors mentioned above have an impact on the success of using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand [16]. That is why this academic work looked at the different key factors, variables, theories, and items to be used in reflecting the research.

2. Conceptual framework

Success of using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand as the conceptual framework included information quality, perceived usefulness, push travel motivations, pull travel motivations, trust, satisfaction, customer loyalty, and intention to recommend.

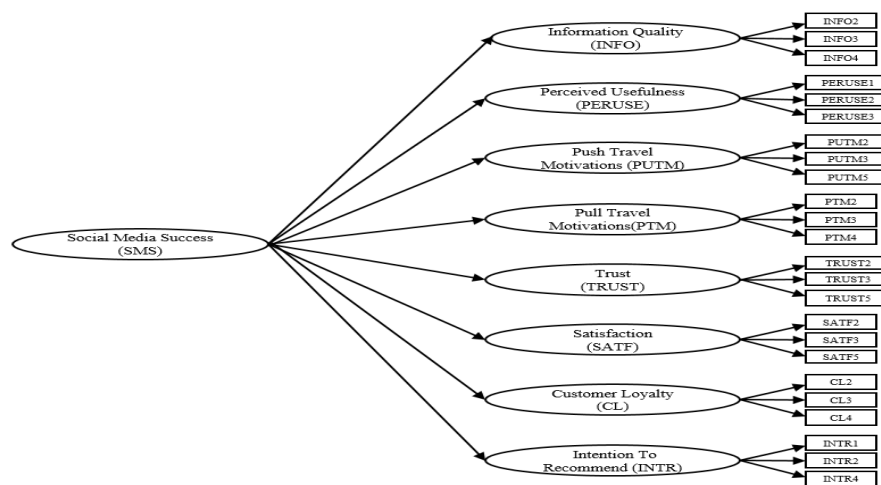


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Literature review

3.1 Information Quality (INFO)

Talwar et al. [17] studies have suggested that the information quality involves issues of information accuracy, relevance, reliability, and completeness. Available data variety is received through social media users, it is notable and not always trustworthy, but it is informative from the perspective (opinion-based) of consumers.

3.2 Perceived Usefulness (PERUSE)

Kaur et al. [18] studies had identified how to recognize perceived usefulness through information and knowledge sharing via social media. As information is now easily accessed through the use of social media regarding destinations, activities, amenities, accommodation, and other personal preferred traveler services that can be done just by clicking on a computer or a mobile device, this makes travel planning easier.

3.3 Push Travel Motivations (PUTM)

Wengel [19] studied the push travel motivations as the internal forces that push travel motivations, such as personal preferences or desires that can vary greatly from one person to another. Internal factors influence explorers in their choice of destination; that is why choice of destination can vary from one person to another.

3.4 Pull Travel Motivations (PTM)

Adruce et al. [20] studied regarded that the pull travel motivations as an external factor that attracts tourists to visit a destination. Pull travel motivations included the destination attributes, expectations, benefits, and travelers' perceptions.

3.5 Trust (TRUST)

Li et al. [21] studied explained that the trust in social media is the willingness to depend on others; it is a fundamental factor in determining the intention to recommend a Thai tourism destination which is trustworthy for travelers. Trust creates long-term relationships that lead to loyalty as a foundation of travel.

3.6 Satisfaction (SATF)

Nalluri et al. [22] studied identified satisfaction as the positive correlation of quality tourist experiences at a tourism site, creating willingness towards advocating destinations to other relatives and friends to try out wonderful travel experiences.

3.7 Customer Loyalty (CL)

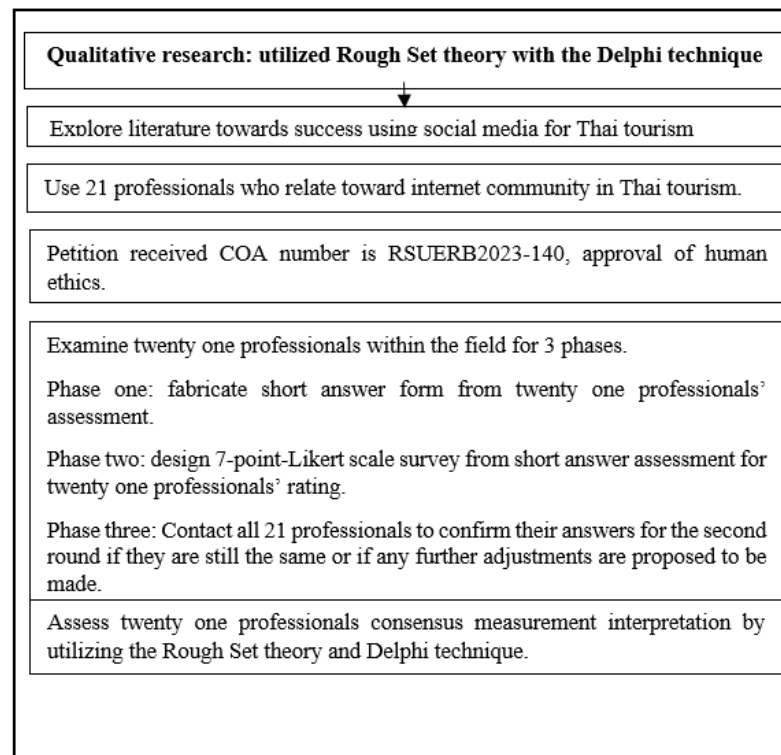
Rimadiaz et al. [23] studies examine the customer loyalty by analyzing the trust and satisfaction towards the use of social media in Thai tourism services. Having customer loyalty, travelers endorse each other by recommending destinations or services they are satisfied with.

3.8 Intention to Recommend (INTR)

Baber et al. [24] studies analyzed that the intention to recommend refers to tourists' satisfaction on social media platforms towards Thai tourism services and products they have experienced. Intention to recommend is closely related to word of mouth by telling or recommending other social media users to check out what you are happy, satisfied with, or even delighted about. The intention to recommend is crucial for the Thai tourism industry as positive messages help create client devotion reliability from those who have trust and are satisfied with tourism services. This, in turn, is good for business. As good news spreads fast on social media, businesses can go viral.

4. Research methodology

A mixed-methods approach for success using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand:



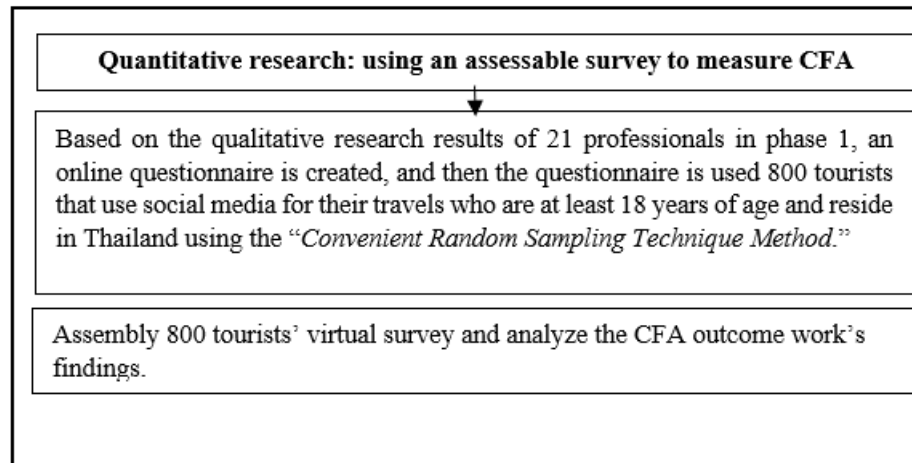


Figure 2. Research Methodology

4.1 Qualitative Research: utilized Rough Set theory with the Delphi Technique

Rough Set theory and Delphi technique phases:

Phase 1: The questionnaire guidelines were determined from the document review in turn 1. The guidelines were related to the question in phase 1 online via mail. Questions and suggestions were answered by professionals in phase 1 by e-mail. Synthesize data from questionnaire guidelines and professional recommendations in phase 1.

Phase 2: The estimator rating scale levels 1-7 questionnaire was utilized in phase 2. The questionnaires in phase 2 were distributed via e-mail. The questionnaires and suggestions were completed by professionals in phase 2 via e-mail.

Phase 3: The questionnaire was constructed in turn 2 to analyze consensus. Another query for phase 3 is used to confirm all professionals' answers in phase 2 by sending a questionnaire via e-mail. Arbitrary analysis using Rough Set Theory and Delphi Technique

4.1.1 Demographic Analysis

Demographic analysis was conducted in three groups: 1) 5 Thai tourism officials, 2) 8 university professors who are familiar with the success of using social media for tourism in Thailand, and 3) 8 business professionals in the industry.

4.1.2 Research Instrument

The research instrument was a virtual questionnaire. Twenty-one professionals were requested to complete the 7-point Likert scale questionnaire. Then, they confirmed their answers after adjustments, utilizing the Rough Set Theory and Delphi Technique. The answers are displayed in Table 2.

4.1.3 Data collection

Data collection was conducted after the approval of human ethics by the Office of Research Ethics at Rangsit University. The COA number is RSUERB2023-140. Data collection was conducted by 21 experts in three phases from November 2023 to January 2024. In phase 1, the experts were requested to complete an open-ended questionnaire. In phase 2, they were requested to complete a 7-point-Likert scale questionnaire. In phase 3, all the answers given in phase 2 were confirmed by the experts who were the respondents of the questionnaire distributed in phase 2 was completed. The results were displayed in Table 1.

4.1.4 Information Mining

After the data collection in phase 2 was completed, the efficiency of the measurement was evaluated. The conservative assessment was conducted, and the quality coefficient of each answer was equal to or more than 0.75 [25].

Description of the 5-stage procedure:

Stage 1: Define properties, classify properties, and scrape property results.

1) Set properties for 2 properties that can be defined as: applicability (a1) functionally (a2).

2) Qualitative (a1) feasibility (a2) were classified utilize 7-level estimator as follows:

1 = There is a reasonable possibility of performing at the lowest level.

2 = There is a reasonable possibility of practicing at a low level.

3 = There is a reasonable possibility of practicing at a relatively low level.

4 = There is appropriate to be able to perform at a moderate level.

5 = There is a reasonable possibility of practicing at a relatively high level.

6 = There is a reasonable possibility of practicing at a high level

7 = There is a reasonable possibility of performing at the highest level.

Stage 2: Displays diverse consequences.

1) Minor Resemblance = $\{x \sqsubseteq U: [x] R \sqsubseteq X\}$ is information about interests, meaning professionals agree.

2) Major Resemblance = $\{x \sqsubseteq U: [x] R \sqsubseteq X \sqsubseteq \sqsubseteq x\}$ is ambiguous, meaning professionals disagree.

Stage 3: Define the determination rule.

Condition that $a_1 \geq 5$ include $a_2 \geq 5$ (Minor) give $d = 1$ (Consent), $a_1 \leq 4$ include $a_2 \leq 4$ (Major) give $d = 0$ (Dissent) and (Major) give $d = 2$ (Dissent).

Stage 4: Estimate Quality Value of Lower Approximation (QL) utilized the consent by 21 professionals.

Stage 5: Set that if, $QL < 0.75$, means no professional group consensus was reached. If, $QL \sqsubseteq 0.75$, a consensus was obtained from a group of professionals.

4.2 Quantitative Research: using an Assessable Survey to Measure CFA

4.2.1 Population

There were approximately 200 million tourists in 2022 as reported by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and they successfully used social media for tourism purposes in Thailand. Due to the growth of social media usage for tourism purposes in Thailand, the success of using social media in Thailand increased rapidly in 2023 and 2024, respectively, leading to the researchers' current estimation of more than 200 million tourists.

4.2.2 Sample

The research focused on tourists who used social media successfully to promote Thai tourism. A sample of 800 tourists was a harmonious relationship between this investigation model and the empirical sample size data collected. The sample size was obtained through convenience random sampling.

4.2.3 Analytical Instrument

The analytical instrument utilized in this research was an online questionnaire to analyze success in using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand. The analytical instrument was designed on the basis of research studies and relevant textbooks and in response to feedbacks and guidance from 21 professionals to help prepare the online questionnaire used in this research.

4.2.4 Data gathering

An online 7-point-Likert scale questionnaire distributed to tourists using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand was employed to evaluate the success of using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand. Factors that impact this measurement were also evaluated. The questionnaire contained one screening question, "Are you using social media such as Facebook Pages, travel websites, TikTok, and other social media platforms as part of your decision-making process to visit Thai tourist attractions?" If a respondent answered 'yes', data would be included in the evaluation.

Data were collected from January to February 2024. 800 tourists participated in this research, and the researchers checked the validity of the data or null responses. After careful rechecking and evaluation of the data gathered, a total of 600 completed questionnaires were found to be qualified for data analysis.

4.2.5 Evidence Inspection

Evidence inspection was conducted employing CFA analysis and statistical parameters to estimate the (ML) maximum likelihood. Data inspection uses statistical measurement to measure the levels of conformity [26].

5. Results

5.1 First order CFA

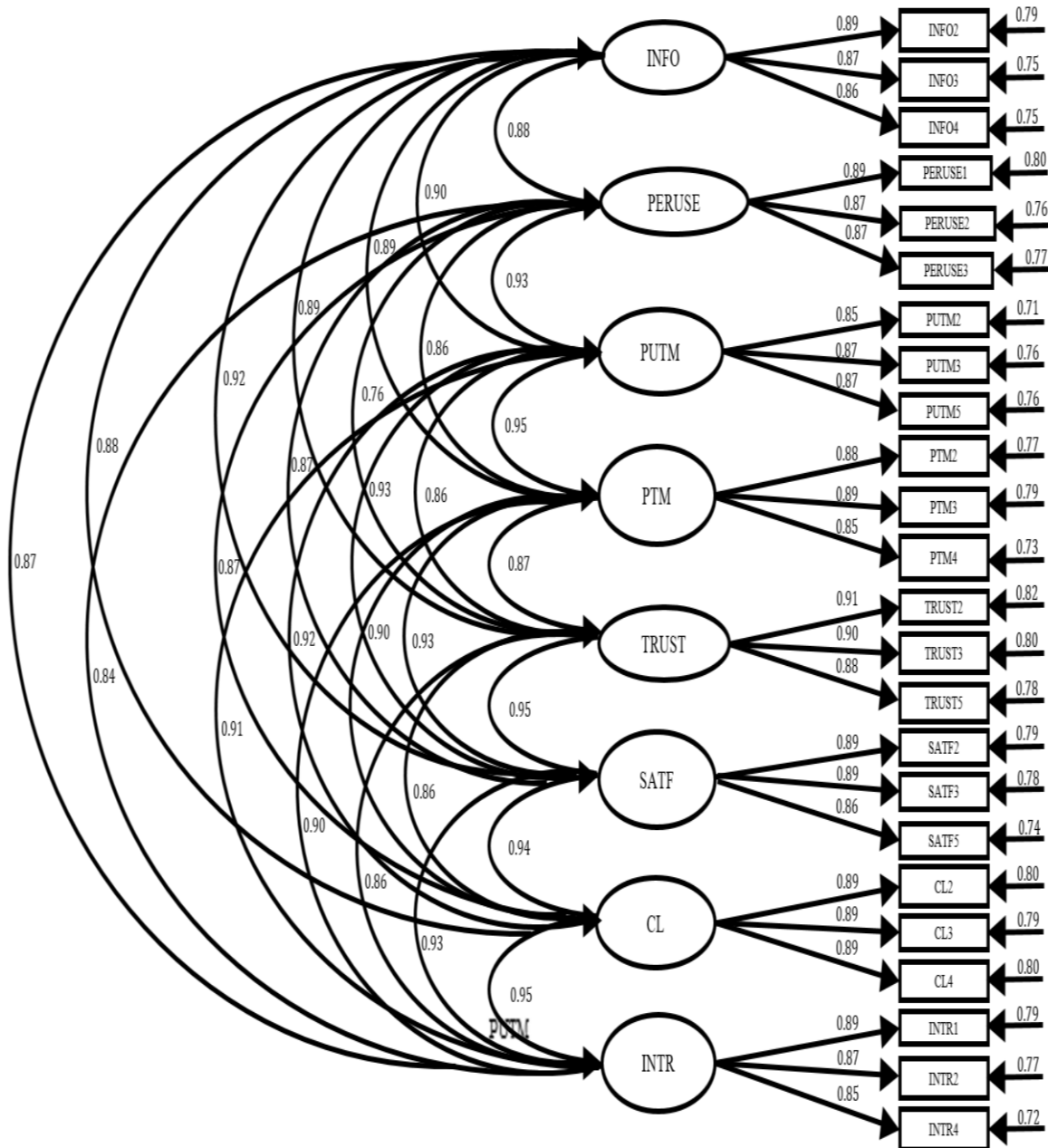


Figure 3. First Order CFA

Table 1. First Order CFA Validity

Analytical Employ	Criteria for consideration	Statistics obtained	Validity
CMIN/DF	≤ 3.00	2.124	Certified
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.938	Certified
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.917	Certified
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.976	Certified
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.981	Certified
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.078	Certified
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.043	Certified
HOELTER	> 200	348	Certified

Table 1 explain the CFA first order of using social media for tourism purposes in Thailand validity.

5.2 Second order CFA

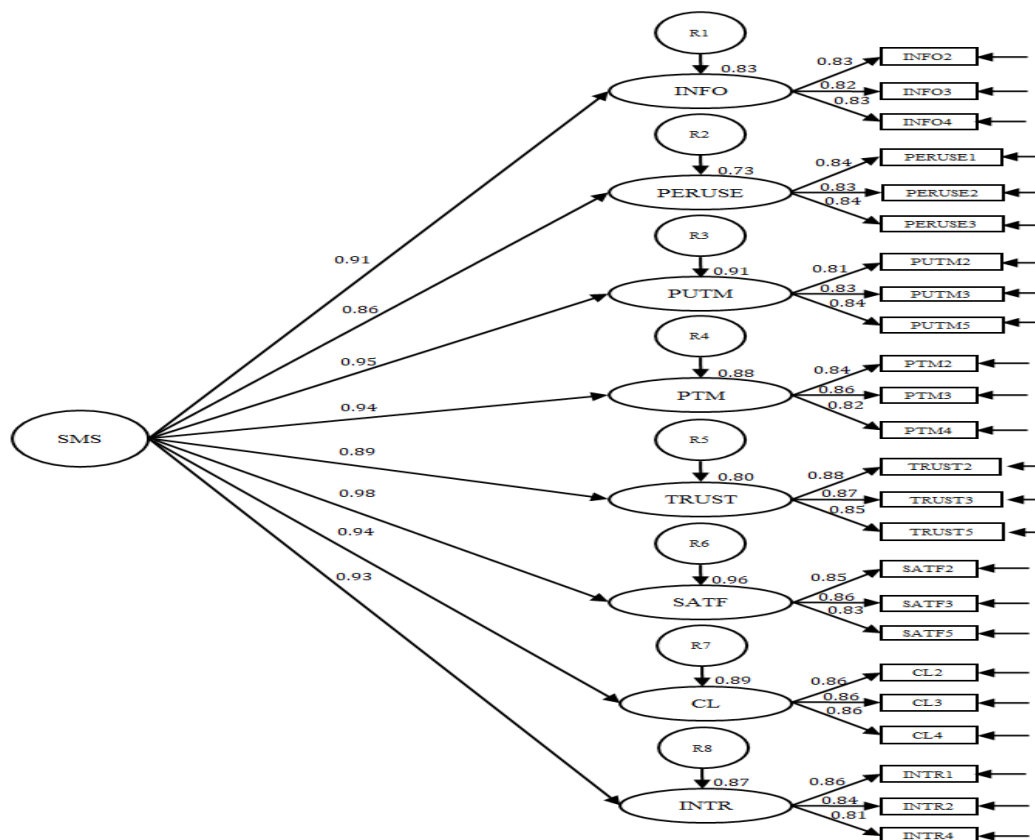


Figure 4. Second Order CFA

Table 2. Second Order CFA and Consensus Measurement (QL) Outcome

Fluctuating	Data Worth	R ²	QL
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	b	SE	t		
Information Quality (INFO)	0.910	-	-	0.830	-
INFO 2: Tourist attraction information on social media has appropriate details.	0.830	-	-	0.696	0.900
INFO 3: Tourist attraction information on social media provides current information.	0.820	0.044	23.609***	0.679	0.800
INFO 4: Information about tourist destinations on social media provides accurate information.	0.830	0.044	24.200***	0.687	0.750
Perceived Usefulness (PERUSE)	0.860	0.048	19.154***	0.730	-
PERUSE 1: Social media attractions help you save time when searching for tourist attractions	0.840	-	-	0.714	1.000
PERUSE 2: Social media attractions make it easy to find places to visit	0.830	0.040	24.267***	0.692	1.000
PERUSE 3: Social tourist attractions make it easy to find tourist attractions anywhere, anytime.	0.840	0.040	24.200***	0.705	1.000
Push Travel Motivations (PUTM)	0.950	0.049	20.239***	0.910	-
PUTM 2: Social media attractions create excitement from the novelty of the tourist destination	0.810	-	-	0.650	1.000
PUTM 3: Travel destinations on social media encourage you to travel with friends or family	0.830	0.044	23.165***	0.685	0.950
PUTM 5: Tourist attractions on social media help encourage you to go to new tourist destinations that you have never been to before.	0.840	0.045	23.395***	0.702	1.000
Pull Travel Motivations (PTM)	0.940	0.049	20.916***	0.880	-
PTM 2: The sights on social media are spectacular.	0.840	-	-	0.703	0.950
PTM 3: Social media tourist attractions have unique architecture.	0.860	0.040	26.134***	0.737	0.800
PTM 4: Social media travel destinations offer exciting activities and adventures.	0.820	0.042	24.098***	0.672	0.800
Trust (TRUST)	0.890	0.053	21.208***	0.800	-
TRUST 2: Trust information about tourist destinations on social media.	0.880	-	-	0.783	0.850
TRUST 3: Trust activities advertised about tourist attractions on social media.	0.870	0.034	29.793***	0.760	0.800
TRUST 5: Trust recommendations and reviews of tourist destinations on social media to be accurate according to the review information provided.	0.850	0.036	27.709***	0.725	0.850

*** p-Value < 0.001

Table 2. Second Order CFA and Consensus Measurement (QL) Outcome (Continue)

Fluctuating	Data Worth	R²	QL
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	b	SE	t		
Satisfaction (SATF)	0.980	0.050	22.302	0.960	-
SATF 2: Satisfied with suggestions or comments about tourist attractions on social media.	0.850	-	-	0.718	0.950
SATF 3: Satisfaction in sharing good experiences about tourist destinations on social media.	0.860	0.034	29.793***	0.735	0.950
SATF 5: Satisfies following and sharing tourist destination information on social media with others.	0.830	0.036	27.709***	0.689	0.850
Customer Loyalty (CL)	0.940	0.052	21.782***	0.890	-
CL 2: Aim to regularly search for tourist attractions on social media.	0.860	-	-	0.745	0.950
CL 3: Will rank tourist attraction searches on social media first.	0.860	0.036	28.089***	0.745	1.000
CL 4: Always come back and search for tourist attractions on social media.	0.860	0.035	27.748***	0.741	1.000
Intention to Recommend (INTR)	0.930	0.052	21.607***	0.870	-
INTR 1: Will always recommend to your acquaintances to search for tourist attractions on social media.	0.860	-	-	0.660	0.950
INTR 2: Will always recommend others to search for travel destinations on social	0.840	0.035	26.960***	0.714	0.900
INTR 4: Always share information about tourist attractions on social media with others.	0.810	0.037	24.682***	0.660	0.950

*** p-Value < 0.001

Table 3. Second Order CFA Measured

Indication	Benchmarks	Acquired	Measured
χ^2	-	610.940	Verify
df	-	242	Verify
χ^2/df	$\chi^2/\text{df} \leq 3.00$	2.525	Verify
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.919	Verify
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.900	Verify
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.968	Verify
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.972	Verify

Table 3. Second Order CFA Measured (Continue)

Indication	Benchmarks	Acquired	Measured
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SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.033	Verify
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.050	Verify

6. Discussion

This research investigated eight items: information quality, perceived usefulness, push travel motivations, push travel motivations, trust, satisfaction, customer loyalty and intention to recommend. Data were analyzed using statistical software. After conducting CFA, it was found that all factors were indicated as being qualified and harmonious [26].

Satisfaction was had the highest significant weight because satisfaction was employed to measure specific assistance, suggestions, and information accuracy that met the expectations of travelers using social media for travel in Thailand. Therefore, it was not surprising that the positive experiences from social media about Thai tourism purposes were mostly affected by satisfaction. Positive reflection and sharing personal highlights on social media platforms led to satisfaction as the key component, satisfaction influences travelers' intention to recommend tourist destinations to others [22].

Push travel motivations has the second significant weight since the internal factors are very personal, such as one's desire and preference, which, if met, lead to satisfaction, similar to the reason why satisfaction has such a high impact. When tourists learn accurate information from social media and experience the same way as being told by social media, push travel motivations can result them in highly recommending tourist destinations to others [19].

Customer loyalty had the third significant weight, as a direct and indirect influence factor that impacts tourism decision-making. The direct impact is that when personal desires or preferences are met, this leads to loyalty. Indirect impact is that if the information a tourist has perceived is trustworthy, it will lead to a desire to recommend this positive experience to others. Both direct and indirect factors affect tourist loyalty toward the usage of social media for tourism purposes in Thailand. That is why this component had such a significant impact, as all factors seem to impact and lead to customer loyalty [23].

Pull travel motivations had the fourth significant weight as an external factor that can encourage travelers to use social media for tourism in purposes Thailand, such as interest in Thai health spa facilities and other tour packages or promotion benefits promoted by TAT. It was not surprising why this component had a high level of significance [20].

Intention to recommend had the fifth significant weight for the reason that all factors in this component led to motive towards advocate. If information quality received, personal desire, push travel motivations, pull travel motivations, satisfaction, and other components are interrelated to one another [24].

Information quality had the sixth significant weight, for the reason that the quality of information received needs to be relevant and reliable. High quality information leads to confidence in the sources of information related to tourism in purposes Thailand provided by social media platforms. The TAT uses its websites and the campaign entitled, "Amazing Thailand," through accurate tourism information. That is why this component had high significance [17].

Trust had the seventh significant weight, for the reason that it takes a long time to build up. Social media platforms that are trustworthy are believed to provide accurate information about the tourism sites or tourism activities in Thailand. Confidence in these social media platforms results tourists in making a decision easily; that is why trust is a significant component [21].

Perceived usefulness had the lowest significant weight because many tourists. Despite the tourists' awareness of the usefulness of sharing tourism information, perceived usefulness is not their actual experience. That is why it had the lowest significance [18].

In summary, all eight components impacted the use of social media for tourism purposes. Although they may vary, they are all important.

7. Conclusions

This study shed light on the tourism destination impact on social media usage by individual tourists. The study identifies how tourism destinations are impacted by advanced technological changes, the important specific of this study identifies eight elements of variables including information quality, perceived benefits, push travel motivation, pull travel motivation, satisfaction, trust, customer loyalty and intention to recommend. The focus has been to consider how each variable has contributed to the success of using social media for tourism destinations in Thailand, the cause and effect of each factor shown in this study help better understand the overview of the influence each has toward the new tourism market.

The study identified eight factors interrelationship how tourism success depends on social media platform. In this study the difference factor are analyze by a strong theoretical foundation, theories, and research work where use to create the conceptual framework. However, due to the limitation of research study within the time frame only eight key variables where use to identify the success of using social media for tourism destination purpose. The result, however, still provided a clear indicator how the eight elements key factors impact the social media usage for tourism purpose.

The study investigated a qualitative research methodology and a quantitative research methodology by applying a mixed-method research approach using the Rough Set Delphi Technique. The applied method for qualitative method uses 21 experts from 3 different groups to measure their consensus which pass the QL 1.00 for each item, giving a clear views, opinion and feedback to develop the research instrument in this case the questionnaire survey. If, more expert and difference groups could be applied a wider and more variant result could be found in phase 1. For phase 2, the quantitative research method collected data by using the research instrument develop from phase 1 to collect data from the 800 tourists using a 7-point rating scale assessable survey to measure the relationship of the eight elements and examine what impact the success of social media usage for tourism. The data analysis process utilize the CFA first and second order to measure the outcome and result to indicate the importance of each factor variable toward the success of social media for tourism destination.

In conclusion, by measuring the relationship between the eight elements key variable the study has find out that information quality, perceived benefits, push travel motivation, pull travel motivation, satisfaction, trust, customer loyalty and intention to recommend have significant impact on the success of social media usage for tourism. The finding are useful for all private and public tourism sectors, but also for social media platform that provide tourism information to understand the desires and required advance technological impact on tourism industry, these changes are not limit to social media platform but in the future can be other changes due to technological advancement such as AI technology, various forms of machine learning, 3D visual travel stimulation, meta verse platform, and other possible future changes that could impact the tourism industry.

8. Suggestions

Suggestions for future research

The social media for tourism purposes can be expanded to different countries and areas. It is possible to employ more factors other than these eight components in this study for better understanding of social media impact on global tourism.

Suggestions for new policy

The government and the private sector could help to promote a new tourism campaign and support tourism policy to improve the quality and accuracy of tourism information to enhance travelers' motivation to visit tourism destinations. A new policy could focus on the purpose of social media usage in developing tourism, especially undeveloped tourist attractions.

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