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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE IN THE RISING TIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOWARDS PROMOTING TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has been the focus of the tourism industry in recent decades, specifically for the travel and hospitality sector. The increase of usage and dependency on the Internet has escalated the growth of multiple forms and types of social channels, which have also transformed travel business for agencies and companies to communicate and market their services to the targeted demographics. Consumers would utilise the unlimited information from social media in deciding on potential destinations and leisure activities, which dramatically influences tourism marketing. Nonetheless, the interdisciplinary applications of digital platforms in the tourism industry have resulted in various studies that are found to be fragmented,

resulting in gaps when translated into practice. Thus, a critical review of prior social media research is needed to interpret the precipitation and outcomes. Hence, this study had identified and synthesised 45 articles during 2012 to 2019 using extensive literature search within social media area of research interest within the field of tourism and hospitality Information System (IS). Contingent on a content analysis on the synthesised articles from both the individuals' and firms' perspectives, significant motivations, limitations, and conditional parameters of social media use were identified and categorised to develop a conceptual model holistically.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Tourism Marketing; Literature Review; Future Research

ECONLIT KEYS

Z32; Z33

1. INTRODUCTION

The technology boom in recent decades has not only seen the rise of the Internet in creating multiple platforms of social media but has also changed the ways of travel business and industry worldwide (Iglesias-Sánchez, Correia, Jambrino-Maldonado & Heras-Pedrosa, 2020). Potential travellers are currently more proactive in planning and purchasing services, accommodations and experiences with the expansion and accessibility of social media. Hence, individual travellers can either provide, obtain or share information and opinions within a common or designated social platform (Tussyadiah, Rozakausar, & Soesilo, 2018a). Buhalis and O'Connor (2005) have argued that the Internet has also created e-tourism, where interactivity and constant interconnections between various stakeholders, businesses and consumers emerged for the convenience of consumers. As a result, there have been constant reorganisations in the processes, management and marketing strategies of tourism products to ensure the specific businesses remain relevant to the changing time of tourism, which thus revolutionising the industry (Roult, Gaudette, Auger & Adjizian, 2016). The rapid and constant evolution of different tools and uses of digital technology within tourism has also led to professionals within the industry to adapt to these new market realities continuously.

Current social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and even blogs or forums are becoming popular within travel and tourism business as travellers share pictures, stories and experiences online that can attract ad influence

many people (Abou-Shouk & Hewedi, 2016). The power of social media is unavoidable, with a 220% yearly growth in Facebook (Iglesias-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020) and more than 800 million visits a month on YouTube, with at least 4 billion videos viewed each day as the second largest search site after Google. These numbers are reportedly growing as the years go by, with nearly 25% of the world population currently indulging in social media and expected to rise to 2.33 billion by 2020 (Iglesias-Sánchez, López-Delgado, Correia & Jambrino-Maldonado, 2020). Most consumers rely heavily on social media for travelling purposes, with Sticky Media (2014) reporting 40% of the travel destinations being influenced by social networking sites, and 70% of the visitors trust online recommendations than only 14% who have confidence on the advertisers. Hence, social media is the most trusted form of communication, which has also become a prominent place of creating, distributing and marketing contents that are unique to the users.

However, many travel organisations have yet to exploit the full potential of social media despite the staggering reports of the interactions and opportunities as a result of this form of networking (Roult *et al.*, 2016). Studies have indicated several limitations in social media use such as financial capacity, workforce compatibility, technicality and performance issues as well as geographical locations (Jabil, 2018; Perkins Coie, 2018). These challenges would need to be addressed to ensure the increase of possibility in social media use within the industry (Adapa *et al.*, 2018). Taking into account the indispensable role of social media in both customers' decision making and in tourism operational management, an assessment of literature on social media applications in tourism and hospitality has been carried out by De las Heras-Pedrosa, Jambrino-Maldonado, Iglesias-Sánchez and Lugo-Ocando (2019) as well as Leung, Law, Hoof, and Buhalis (2013). However, the sociological approaches in social media marketing are found to be devoid of a relative insight towards the importance of social media in the tourism sector as the focus are commonly on technological and communicative aspects (Lee, Lowry & Delconte, 2015).

Hence, different perspectives and speculations of social media tools and the evolving roles towards travel choices need to be established. The present study

aimed to systematically review relevant studies on social media use that were conducted within the tourism and hospitality industry to identify the gaps and propose new areas for further studies. Hence, theories, findings and impacts of previous research on social media adoption would be summarised and classified into reference models developed within this study. There were also several contributions from this study to the body of knowledge within the technological and tourism fields.

Firstly, this study had avoided the repetition of similar works through a holistic approach and syntheses on the theories, perspectives and results of existing studies.

Secondly, a guidance structure through the use of reference models in social media adoption was proposed in this study to interpret findings from current research. Multiple relationship models had been outlined within this study for tourism personnel to interpret and create optimum approaches in social media marketing to promote relevant tourism products and destinations accordingly.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media had been generally defined as a group of internet-based applications, where internet users would create the content and make publicly available instead of by marketers or suppliers (Chu & Luckanavanich, 2018). Hence, social media can also be referred to as consumer-generated media and the resources for relevant information were created, shared, and exchanged extensively. Therefore, social media had been a form of digital support in creating personal relationships as well as business contacts that broke conventional boundaries as relevant messages and discussions can be dispersed rapidly around the globe (Al-Badi, Tarhini & Al-Sawaei, 2017).

Each type of social media had unique features, with different levels of social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure to cater to different purposes and audiences. Hence, social media had currently extended to numerous forms, from wikis, blogs, microblogs (i.e. Twitter) and social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn) to media sharing sites, consumer review sites (i.e. TripAdvisor, Epinions), virtual social worlds (i.e. Second Life), collaborative projects (i.e.

Wikipedia, Wikitravel), content communities (i.e. YouTube, Flickr, Scrib, Slideshare, Delicious), and virtual game worlds (i.e. World of Warcraft) (Chu & Luckanavanich, 2018). Nonetheless, with the abundance types of social media available for the tourism and hospitality industry to exploit for commercial purposes, most research that had been carried out in this area of interest focused mainly on the use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube (Jabreel, Moreno & Huertas, 2017; Mariani et al., 2016; Philander & Zhong, 2016; Usakli et al., 2017). Through the number and length of visits, as well as visitor satisfaction and the number of return visits, the tourism and hospitality industry can effectively manage, promote and monitor potential travellers through the cost-efficient tool of social media.

3. METHODOLOGY

A methodical approach in retrieving the articles was used in this study, whereby reliable sources were identified prior to the selection of articles. These sources were ISI Web of Science, Scopus databases and Google Scholar. The search was carried out by using keywords, which were 'Social media', 'Social networking sites', 'Web 2.0', 'travel' and 'tourism' to retrieve relevant articles, which addressed the objective of this study in ensuring a comprehensive overview of findings and discussion on social media within the tourism and hospitality literature was established. The search was limited to studies that were published between 2012 to 2019, while the references cited had been traced. Each identified articles were carefully read through by two researchers to determine its inclusion for analysis. The decision to include an article to the analysis was primarily based on their mutual agreement of its direct relevance to the theme of the study. Initially, the search had resulted in retrieval of conference papers, book chapters, literature review papers, and refereed journal articles. However, literature review papers were discarded due to limitations in the information that, if any, can contribute to knowledge development. Hence, after careful screening, selection and reading of the articles, this study had reviewed 45 relevant studies.

The articles are then examined using content analysis. Chuah (2019) suggested that extended reality (XR) technologies generally encompasses both

individual and organization-level factors, with six main categories within it-technology specific, fashion-specific, media-specific, expected cost-benefit ratio, technology risk and privacy risk. Taking into consideration the breadth and depth of Chuah (2019) framework on examining the application of XR technologies, these categories were adapted, modified and employed as the consumer and firm related research streams in current study. Throughout the analysis, a framework with four research streams from the consumers' perspective and another one research stream from the firms' perspective were developed for classifying and analysing the studies.

To verify the reliability and validity of the article assignment, two authors independently reviewed all 45 articles included in the sample and assigned them to the five research streams. As some studies discussed social media in a number of ways, one study might be assigned to more than one stream if the study focus was multifaceted. The classification results input by the two authors were then cross-compared to ensure consistency. It is possible that personal bias may exist during the assignment, but the consensus of two authors—both are experienced researchers in IS and tourism management— should minimize the probability of bias.

4. RELEVANT THEORIES AND PRIOR RESEARCH

The relevant studies on tourism and social media had yet to develop theories to hypothesise or predict the phenomena for related future purposes. As shown in the analysis, the most frequently used theory is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) or TAM-relevant theories, which provided the insights of the intentions and motivation in using computers and other Information Technology (IT). Nonetheless, rapid technological innovation alongside the progress of the Internet was found to challenge existing IT products and acceptance theories. Therefore, an overarching technological framework that combined multiple theories or extended the salient constructs would be needed. On the other hand, sociology-based theories such as self-congruity theory and social cognitive theory were used to explain or interpret phenomena that were complex due to the social and technical entanglement. Media richness or visual content that can influence hedonism behavioural and experiential value of consumers were currently explained through

specific media theories. This study had briefly reviewed the theories applied and the relevance to tourism and social media.

4.1) TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL

Technology acceptance model (TAM) had been one the most influential frameworks that explored the acceptance and use of technologies in individuals, which was first introduced by Davis in 1986 (King & He, 2006). The model was based on a well-grounded Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) from the behavioural psychology domain. Hence, through TAM, the adoption behaviour of computer and information systems in the workplace among users can be explained (Davis, 1989). The decision was found to be influenced by the degree of belief that using a particular system would enhance job performance (perceived usefulness) and being effortless (perceived ease of use). The ease of use was reflected in the simplicity and user-friendliness of social media applications based on the quality of the technological system, such as high levels of accuracy and multi-language support. Perceived usefulness represented the performance outcome of social media, which would be determined by the quality of the information in terms of relevance and attractiveness (Di Pietro et al., 2012).

Although the model was known to be specific in terms of behavioural observations, some critiques found the constructs had neglected contingent and contextual factors, which were essential to the decisions of different technologies. Other challenges when using TAM was the superficial insights of the perceptions among users due to the quantitative-based technique when applying this model (Baron et al., 2006). Abou-Shouk et al. (2016) had suggested the need to modify TAM to enhance the applicability in qualitative approaches, which could further uncover specific external variables with regards to social media use that could not be determined through quantitative measures. Studies that had applied the revised TAM, such as Rauschnabel (2018a), had argued that the relevant practical factors that were specific to the context or technology used should be made the primary focus. As a result, Di Pietro et al. (2012) integrated the original TAM with the role of

enjoyment and E-word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication to better understand behavioural intentions toward social media applications in selecting a tourism destination. A study was carried out by Abou-Shouk et al. (2016) on the adoption of social media by tourists and travel agents using a modified TAM included perceived enjoyment as additional factors.

4.2) USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

Uses and Gratification Theory (U>) was used in the communication science field in understanding the way and reason for people to use a particular form of media and gained influence in the field of IS (Ku et al., 2013). U> was known as a theoretical motivational paradigm (Katz, 1959), which, therefore, assumed the audiences were goal-directed, and would actively choose the type of media to satisfy the psychological and social needs, including the consequences. The degree of media exposure, according to the preferred type, would arguably affect the extent of reliance on media for information. Nonetheless, Rauschnabel (2018a) had identified five broad categories of gratifications in IT and media use: practical (life efficiency; usefulness); hedonic (enjoyment; entertainment); social (socialising; maintaining existing relationships); sensual (enhancement of reality; wearable comfort); and symbolic (self-expressiveness; status). Thus, in the tourism aspect, media can have an impact on travellers' experience, which would create a unique image and desire to visit a tourism destination.

4.3) BROAD-AND-BUILD THEORY

Fredrickson (2001) had proposed the broad-and-build theory, which assumed positive emotions would broaden the range of thoughts and actions, which could enhance personal satisfaction. Hence, an individual who experienced positive emotions such as love, joy, interest, and contentment in broaden-and-build processes, where the thoughts and behavioural experiences broadened, the person would develop more open and creative characteristics. Hence, studies on perceived enjoyment, which can be regarded as a positive motivation or belief through the use

of social media and ICT had been extensively done (Abou-Shouk *et al.*, 2016). Nonetheless, studies that investigated the relationship of positive emotions in social media and the satisfaction/ behavioural intentions within the field of tourism were minimal (Tu *et al.*, 2017), with limited research on the positive outcome of social networking services (SNS) used. Only a handful of studies that focused on tourism had investigated on the positive emotions of leisure travel, with results that confirmed the theory, whereby positive emotions were raised as the travelling dates approached (Mitas, Yarnal, Adams & Ram, 2012).

5. REFERENCES MODELS FOR THE ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

This study had analysed and organised the factors that had an impact on the adoption of social media technology into a set of themes based on similarities. Figure 1 is a multi-level, categorisation framework that included both individual and firm-level factors, with four main categories in the individual-level and one main category in the firm-level.

These reference models would contribute in two ways. Firstly, these models provided researchers with a summary of findings from a plethora of past studies. The gaps from these findings can be identified to establish the areas where extensive research would still be needed. Secondly, the reference models can be used to monitor inconsistent findings, whereby more pragmatic researches can be carried out, particularly those that can merge these models.

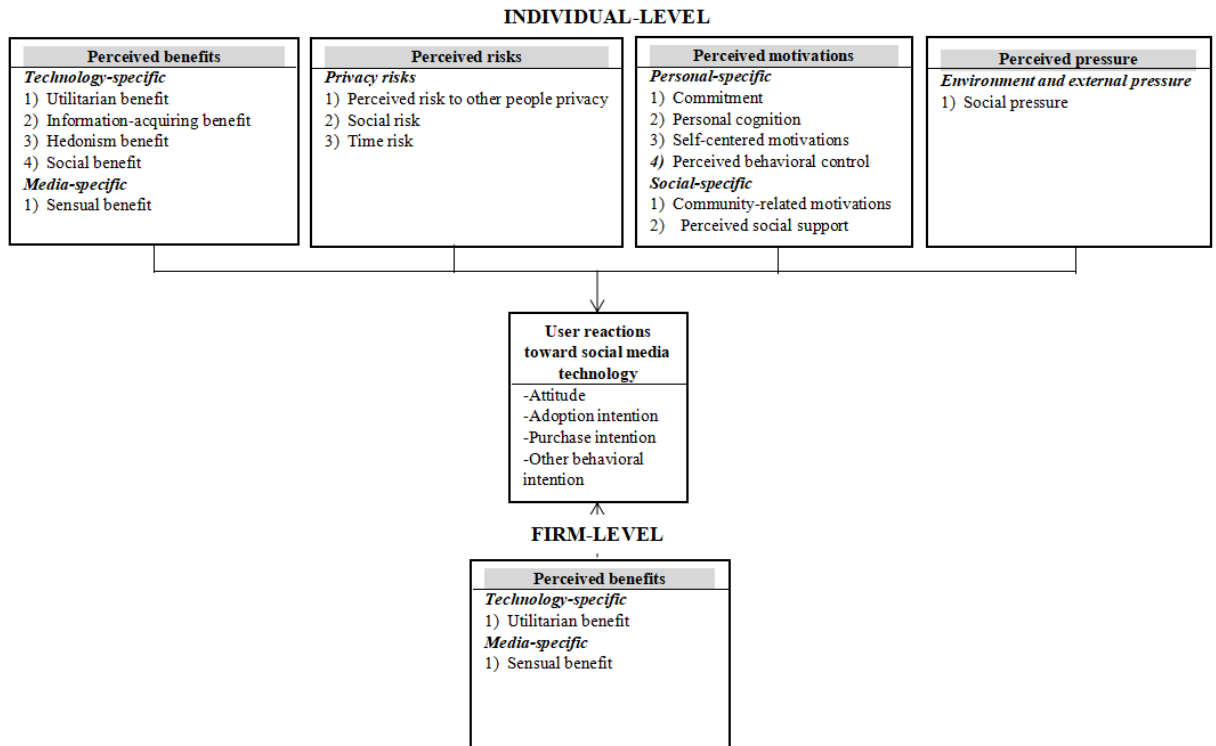


Figure 1: Reference model summarising the factors related to user reactions to social media technology (compiled by authors)

5.1) INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL FACTORS

The factors that encouraged individuals to adopt and use social media can be categorised into four aspects, which were:

- i. perceived benefits of social media
- ii. perceived risks of social media
- iii. perceived motivations
- iv. perceived pressure

5.1.1) PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

5.1.1.1) TECHNOLOGY SPECIFIC

Utilitarian Benefit

The utilitarian benefit can be reflected by the extent of a belief that individuals have on the use of new technologies that could improve the outcomes of a particular task towards life/work efficiency by simplifying complex tasks or expediting task

completion (Dehghani, 2018). Within the technicalities of social media, the tasks that individuals need to be able to perform included searching for information, creating functions, using navigation as well as producing and distributing information, which outcomes were highly dependent on contextual use (personal vs organisation) (Rauschnabel et al., 2018b). According to relevant theories of technology acceptance and consumption value, 'perceived usefulness', 'ease of use', 'relational benefits', and 'functional value' were frequently associated to utilitarian benefit (Davis, 1989; Rogers, 2010; Venkatesh et al., 2012).

Di Pietro, Di Virgilio and Pantano (2012) found that expected functional benefits of social media were a dominant motivator or a salient intrinsic motivator in influencing an individual to use when choosing a tourism destination. Similarly, Abou-Shouk et al. (2016) observed that people had favourable attitudes towards social media when technology was perceived to be beneficial in accomplishing specific tasks in a more comfortable, faster, or better way. Cao, Yu & Tian (2017) also argued that convenience was the main reason for people to use social media as results from their study had observed challenges in persuading individuals to broaden the range of application or promotion when the technicalities were over complicated. On a more specific scale of the study, Osei, Mensah and Amenumey (2018) had demonstrated that females considered social media more useful than males. This finding reaffirmed several arguments across a range of research that females use more social media than males (Nunkoo, Juhaweer & Rambhunjun, 2013). Although empirical evidence had established the practical benefits of social media technology, the heterogeneous nature consumers (openness and neuroticism) and device perceptions (technology, fashion, or both) were identified to be critical moderators of the effects (Matikiti, Mpinganjira & Roberts-Lombard, 2017). Consumers who perceived high functional benefits would be more likely to adopt social media and garnered high value in openness to experience, a low value on neuroticism, and believed smart glasses to be the most innovative technology.

Information-acquiring benefit

Information-acquiring benefit demonstrated the right for every individual to

obtain any information online without restrictions, which involved a process of using the acquired knowledge or information to understand or form an opinion. Social media emerged to be a popular source of information that inevitably changed the repertoire of media consumption due to the availability, dynamism and easy to use. Hence, consumers these days had turned to social network sites as Facebook and Twitter rather than to newspaper, television or radio to acquire travel package deals, tour news and other related travel information (Bergstrom & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018). However, several studies had also found the significance, credibility, trustworthiness and reliability of the online reviews compared to traditional word-of-mouth (Munar & Jacobsen, 2013; Dellarocas as cited in Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009).

Results from these studies represented a need to ensure ethical awareness in the use and adoption of Web technologies in contributing and providing reliable information or current affairs.

Understandably, consumers were more interested in the degree of openness and the effectiveness of social media when selecting and purchasing tour commodities, since the Internet still posed to some extent, uncertainty. The significant relationship between the degree of information and the possibility in utilisation were identified (Milano et al. 2011; Sigala et al. 2012), whereby there a clear need for developing quality information published through the social media by the tourism and hospitality services marketers was established.

Hedonism benefit

Hedonism benefit represented the extent of intrinsic motivation based on individual perception of fun and pleasurable when carrying out an activity (leisure and playing) (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The perception had been conceptually linked to the construct of 'enjoyment' within the domain of technology acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Undoubtedly, individuals would prefer highly entertaining activities, including relevant activities with technologies and media (Sundar & Limperors, 2013) due to the 'feel-good' factor. Many researchers believed that information of interests obtained or shared information (videos, texts, audio) helped individuals to escape unpleasant situations, release stress or break free from daily

life routines. Hence, these reasons were regarded to be strong determinants for the continuous intentions of social media use (Li et al., 2015; Merhi, 2016). Similarly, Zsila et al. (2018) found that individuals who perceived online activities as enjoyable were more likely to have favourable feelings towards using online technologies. Yang and Liu (2017) further argued that people who exhibited a high degree of fun while online would spend a long time visiting websites that fulfilled their needs.

While Ghazali et al. (2018) identified enjoyment as a critical hedonic motivation to interacting in a social network, Yoon and Kim (2007) confirmed that perceived enjoyment could be influenced by the quality of interaction while online, such as the ease of use in the interactive tools and quality of navigation. From a psychological perspective, hedonism consumption had been associated with multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of an individual experience of purchasing products or services. Hence, researchers within the field of tourism revealed that the overall travel experience could be enhanced due to the association with real-world escapism, entertainment, and enjoyable elements related through social networking (Jung et al., 2016b; Tussyadiah et al., 2018a). Likewise, Dieck et al. (2018b) pointed out that a virtual version of real product such as the interactive and 3D reconstruction of a travel destination, where users can explore would significantly influence the satisfaction, especially in creating memories of augmented reality. Hein and Rauschnabel (2016) proposed that such virtual reconstructions of the tourism destinations or virtual tours would actively provide fun and support the experiences exchanged with other users, which could contribute to the promotion of a destination and diffuse advertising messages.

Social benefit

Findings from studies that used U> found that individuals tended to choose certain digital technologies can improve social relationships (Ro et al., 2018). Social media technology provided an avenue to meet new people, besides staying in touch with people whom they already know (Rauschnabel, 2018a). These online platforms offered substantial expectation for introverted people to build a social connection with other people. Depending on the purpose of these online platforms, some would

encourage and engage individuals with shared enthusiasms in similar activities (sightseeing travel) or discussions about topics related to web-based technology in the online communities (live casting on Facebook). These types of social media can expand interpersonal networks for any individuals as well. Recent evidence suggested that social benefits significantly affected both the intended and continued behaviour of users through the links and content push (Cao, Yu & Tian, 2017). The higher the interactivity and connectivity of social media, the stronger the trust users will have, affecting the intentions or decision-making of social media adoption and consumption.

5.1.1.2) MEDIA SPECIFIC

Sensual benefit

The sensual benefit was related to sensual pleasures that users experience from the stimulation of various human senses such as sight and sound and (Rauschnabel, 2018a). Reality travel shows became popular on video platforms recently and were deemed to have greater emotional resonance than traditional films and television series. The precise, enhanced and refined integration of “image elements” on tourism destinations enhanced the visual and acoustic senses of the audience (Hao, Xu & Zhang, 2019). Besides, Korean pop culture, as exemplified in the song “Gangnam Style” in 2014 (which reached 2 billion views on YouTube) and numerous online content attracted enormous interest in South Korea and the culture, especially Gangnam. Other wearable technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR) allowed users to touch and taste virtual objects, which will enhance the sense of experienced realism. Other examples of such experiences include catching Pokemon creatures while virtually sightseeing the world from the lens of the hand phone camera, taking selfies with enhanced apps that could attach a virtual top hat or a moustache to be shared with friends and followers. These forms of technology applications would maximise the senses and emotions of users, which further empowered customer experience.

5.1.2) PERCEIVED RISKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Privacy risk

The growing presence, popularity, and personalisation of the social media and the Internet at a more comprehensive perspective had posed severe threats to individual privacy (Junglas et al., 2008). Privacy risk can be referred to an individual intrinsic fear on the potential loss of control over personal information being used without knowledge and consent (Ravindran, Nagamalar & Uma Rani, 2018). The social media systems had always been criticised for collecting far more personal information than conventional systems. While the collected biometric data can enhance customer experience through personalization if used appropriately, any form of information abuse can lead to the intrusion of personal privacy. Hackers can prowl an application and falsify information by tricking the victims into visiting harmful sites and injecting viruses into computers or laptops. Moreover, through the phishing method, which involved creating fake social media accounts that looked identical to the actual profile of a company, hackers can attract customers and steal confidential data, especially where payment and money were involved. The concern about privacy threats may prevent the cultivation of the technological trust, which can result in feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty that constituted the psychological barriers of risk inhibiting adoption (Connolly & Bannister, 2007). Most studies hypothesised that privacy and data security risks would affect consumer attitude towards social media technology (Ravindran et al., 2018; Matikiti, Mpinganjira & Roberts-Lombard, 2017). Hence, people who perceived risks to be associated with using SNS, these individuals would develop a negative attitude towards the sites.

5.1.3) PERCEIVED MOTIVATIONS

Personal-specific

Studies that focused on the behaviour of sharing information through various types of social media had distinguished the actions to personal entitlement (self-centred) and community-related expectations (Hsu et al., 2007, p. 156). Personal entitlement may be primarily derived from motivations of self-centeredness, such as gaining respect and recognition, increasing social ties, boosting self-esteem to fulfilling personal fun through enjoying online activities and achieving heightened

support in return (Baym, 2010). Some of the self-centred motivations were related to maintenance and/or amplification of social capital by increasing social interaction, trust, identification, and reciprocity (Chang & Chuang, 2011). Furthermore, personal motivations could also be stimulated by commitment (compliance, identification and internalisation) depending on the level of social influence (Chung, Tyan & Han, 2017). Such engagement was considered to be “a volitional psychological bond reflecting dedication to and responsibility for a particular target”. From this perspective, several researchers had identified the role of commitment in the SNS context, whereby commitment had a positive impact on sharing behaviour, continuance use intention or other behavioural intentions (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Zhou & Li, 2014).

Social-specific

Community-related motivations addressed the expectations of tourists on possible impacts of online experiences in virtual communities or other social media users. Research on virtual communities had identified the sharing of conventional frames that referred to social norms, interests, and goals, such as helping a community to achieve common objectives or to continue operations (Hsu et al., 2007). Feelings of solidarity and identifying as part of a community can be developed as expectations were accomplished. Nonetheless, online community perspective can also be travel review writers, tourism providers, or creators of user-generated content such as a member of the community who would help other members based to help reduce risks and make decisions. Risk reduction was considered particularly crucial to non-routinized and extensive decisions regarding the acquisition of expensive and complicated products (such as specific holiday tours).

Munar and Ooi (2012) had investigated the reviews on TripAdvisor, which demonstrated contributions by members of the travelling community, which enhanced joint-affirmation and community empowerment. The results also revealed that reviewers often shared advice on practical matters. Moreover, participation in social media included social support (from unknown people from whom one may not get much in return) (cited in Baym, 2010: 85). A possible reason for this altruistic form of action was because of the feeling of being needed when supporting others

(Baym, 2010). This primary motivation also reflected the feelings of reciprocity, whereby a person would give something back to the social media sites or online communities that have contributed in useful ways to the travel planning of the person.

5.1.4) PERCEIVED PRESSURE

Environment and External Pressure

Utterback (1974) had argued that the environmental factor played a crucial role in encouraging individuals to be socially adept and innovative through technology. Pressure from friends and social groups, which were both external aspects within a social environment, influenced individual to initiate and adopt new social technologies (Hein & Rauschnabel, 2016; Zoonen et al., 2014:166). Social pressure represented “the degree of pressure that an individual could feel from social to perform or not to perform behaviour”. From the TPB perspective, influence or pressure from friends and social groups was significant when one was highly motivated to comply with the exerted pressure (Zoonen et al. 2014:166). Numerous studies believed that there was a significant relationship between social pressure and the intentions of online community participation, behavioural intention to use social media and intention to play online games (Zhou, 2011; Akman, 2014). By adopting social media technology, individuals can increase information-seeking efficiency, enhance trip organising experience and visiting memories through various layout and displays within the social platform as well as optimise communicative efforts. However, there were also studies, which exerted that effect of social pressure on attitude was moderate as individuals were mostly using SNS on their own. Hence, the pressure from others on social media adoption attitude would be weaker (Akman, 2014; Hocevar et al., 2014).

5.2) FIRM-LEVEL FACTORS

Only one category of factors that affected firms to adopt social media technology was identified. This category was the perceived benefits of social media technology.

5.2.1) PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

5.2.1.1) TECHNOLOGY SPECIFIC

Utilitarian benefit

Social media offered business firms (travel agents) a variety of benefits, which included improvement to the provision of information on the business and enhancement of communication process with customers. Business reputation and networking with industry stakeholders can be improved as customer loyalty increased through the effectiveness of internet marketing. As a result, new markets can be penetrated, which would innovate services through ideas, promote brand awareness, affect customer travel plans, and increase sales and profits, which were concurrent with previous studies (Abou-Shouk et al., 2016; Gretzel & Yoo, 2013). Using social media was useful for business firms to provide information about packages and services as well as promote deals and brands in assisting potential tourists to be well-informed and decide better. Hence, social media sites were platforms for firms to interact with customers on specific benefits that can boost sales and improve customer loyalty).

Hedonism benefit

Travel firms perceived social media as a source of entertainment and enjoyment once the users found the content to be attractive, fun, pleasurable and enjoyable. Besides, perceiving social media ease to use and the enjoyable tools available for the business targets would affect the usefulness and adoption by firms (Abou-Shouk et al., 2016). Furthermore, other studies on firms exerted that easiness of use increased the enjoyment of social media adoption, as a system that was easy to use improved the feelings of pleasure and entertainment in using social media. This result was concurrent with a previous study who used perceived ease-of-use as a predictor of perceived enjoyment (Di Pietro & Di Virgilio, 2012), which findings can explain the kind of interactions in perceiving social media adoption. As discussed in TAM, these networking sites were easy to use, enjoyable and perceived to be useful

for consumers.

6. DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows that extensive social media users at both individual and firm-levels, alongside the antecedents, have been proposed. However, limited firm-level users have been examined empirically, which suggests that further investigations can be made in this area. Perceived usefulness and ease of use at the individual level as well as the established technology acceptance constructs seem to be the two most researched factors in contemporary social media research. Meanwhile, some researchers have revealed that perceived trustworthiness, credibility and information openness are other forms of dimensions that yielded to be the benefits of information acquisition. However, these dimensions are insignificant for the adoption intention of consumers in tourism, which can be due to the usage context. All studies have shown a significant impact of social media technology on perceived enjoyment.

One plausible explanation for this finding is because of the natural urge in people to share experiences and travel, which is fun and entertaining, that can literally be emphasised on “The Big Three” of social networks (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter).

Constructs within social media would require further research scrutiny. Based on the analysis, mixed findings are found on the impact of immersion, desired enhancement of reality/experienced realism and visual enjoyment at individual and firm-level. While Koo et al. (2016) and Hao et al. (2019) have found a positive relationship between media-specified constructs and travel attitude/intention, Mariani, Mura and Di Felice (2018) have both found the relationship to be insignificant. Likewise, Kim (2012) demonstrates that media embodiment is a contributing factor for the desire to travel, with Mariani et al. (2018) argue that embodiment is an inhibiting factor for social media engagement. Chen et al. (2014) have also examined the synergistic effect between information content and media embodiment, and find potential travellers who are exposed to media would likely form a desire to travel to the destination, as they recognise gratifying content on the

destination. In another study by Hao et al. (2019), the embodiment is found to be dependent upon the level of immersion. Users with a high level of immersion will experience a strong sense of embodiment or feelings of visiting the destination than those with a low level of immersion. Interestingly, immersion, which is the extent of feeling being engaged in, involved with and engrossed by the virtual scene, especially in terms of magical and unique natural landscapes are highly proportionate to the expression of the desire to visit the destination. Therefore, comparing the findings of various studies has been deemed challenging.

Furthermore, majority of prior studies have adopted a unidimensional concept of immersion, which has resulted in the simplification of various stimuli (He et al., 2018; Herz & Rauschnabel, 2019; Huang & Liao, 2015; Rauschnabel, 2018a; Tussyadiah et al. 2018b). According to Zhang et al. (2017), immersion is a complex phenomenon that requires multiple levels of neuro-psychological involvement that can influence behaviour such as attention, perception, and emotion. Hence, there are four types of immersion related to travels and tourism, which are spatial immersion, emotional immersion, cognitive (strategic) immersion, and sensory-motoric (tactical) immersion. By employing a multidimensional concept, the different effects of diverse sensory or perceptual stimuli on multiple levels of immersion can be observed. Results from these observations can assist marketers or researchers within the tourism and hospitality industry in selecting suitable technological features that stimulate the desired immersion.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1) PROPOSITIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

There are significant and unique new trends of framework and processes found from this review, which this study has identified and to be discussed as possible areas of future research as follows:

(1) Focus on social media adoption at the firm level and compare the motivation underlying the adoption intention across application categories and user groups: Recent articles published in credible tourism journals tend to examine more

consumers- or travellers-centric issues. This finding indicates that there are still opportunities for research from the perspective of a firm or sector, such as communication, management, and market research. Researchers could make significant contributions by exploring the perceptions of a specific firm (hotel, restaurant, airline) towards the implementation of social media and validate the information with empirical data. Diverse social media applications are also designed to cater to different users. For example, Twitter and LinkedIn are targeted at professionals, politicians and enterprise-level users, Pinterest is designed for marketing or e-commerce enthusiasts, while Facebook and Instagram are best suited for social networking followers. Therefore, future research might benefit from comparing the motivation underlying social media adoption across different application categories and user groups to identify potential differences.

(2) Disentanglement of underlying dimensions in sensual benefits, examining interrelationships and mechanisms as well as validating multidimensional structures of immersion: The review has found decisions on social media adoption are primarily based on technological, sensual and contextual benefits and related dimensions.

However, much confusion and ambiguity to the dimensions within sensual benefit due to evidence that describes the impact of immersion with social media adoption is not that simple (Herz & Rauschnabel, 2019; Rauschnabel, 2018b). The relationship could be mediated by other variables, such as perceived usefulness (Yim et al., 2017), enjoyment (Tussyadiah et al., 2018a), flow (Shin, 2018), and embodiment (Shin, 2018). As such, there is still a high level of uncertainty in the extent of the immersion towards social media when the sensual benefits are not interpreted to be useful and enjoyable by the consumers. Hence, future research could focus on dichotomizing the dimensions that encompass sensual benefit by interpreting the extent of enjoyment, flow, and embodiment for different types of social media users. By doing so, the interrelationships of these domains could generate the perceived usefulness that can heighten sensual senses that contributes to social media adoption. Details of these processes can also be explored to be canonized for future interpretations in the broader scope of the tourism and hospitality industry, which transcends to other disciplines. Besides, a unidimensional

approach would limit the evaluation of immersion due to multiple forms of technological stimuli from social media. A multidimensional concept future studies that include the effects of different technological stimuli loads on various aspects of immersion can be carried out. Another opportunity to be delved within this area of research interest is to strengthen the validation of the multidimensional concept, which is currently lacking.

(3) Employing more pragmatic and set-theoretic methodological approaches: The reviewed articles show that new or relevant theories within the use of social media in the tourism and hospitality industry have yet to be established. Data-driven results from a handful of these studies or reports of mere methodologies that explains the theoretical constructs of social media users have not been able to be interpreted uniquely within the tourism sector. Therefore, future studies need to highlight theory development or introduce new theories that can build substantive knowledge accumulation in tourism. For instance, an extended version of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Media Synchronicity Theory can be integrated to identify relevant factors that motivate people to engage in a virtual tourism site and to develop an interest in future travels. Consequently, 'next-generation' VR devices and forecasts of rapid progression can be developed for user adoption worldwide. Moreover, more than half of the articles on social media research in tourism have surprisingly shown extensive use of quantitative methods, which are often used for knowledge generation. Scarce attempts on mixed paradigms or mixed methods have been carried out; hence, mixed-approaches that incorporate survey and case study in an attempt to triangulate research data through structural equation modelling (SEM), which is currently an analytical tool that is being used extensively in researches on social media. Although this tool allows interrelationship between constructs towards using social media to be analysed simultaneously, most studies seldom analyse the combined variables of previous factors and higher behavioural intentions. Hence, this study proposes the use of fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) that addresses the complex constructs within a theory and determining factors such as perceived benefits, perceived risks, and individual differences concurrently in future studies. Results

from this approach may help marketers from the tourism and hospitality industry to plan and strategize as to the intentions, and behavioural causes are configured.

7.2) LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings and discussions of this study are useful to industry practitioners and academic researchers interested in the use of emerging online social media technologies. Limitations in relation to this study, nevertheless, are unavoidable. The main limitation of this study is the inclusion of social media-related articles from academic journals. Literature review papers were not included. Future research should consider analysing publications in the above sources to get more insights on this subject.

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