

# Information Adoption on social media: How does it affect travel intention? Lessons from West Java

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## **Abstract**

*The ability of social media in today's digital age has been significantly developed because it has become a very important communication tool to connect with others or to know good information about products or services. One of the products that consumers adopt on social media is travel products. But information about tourist destinations on social media is not enough to be adopted by consumers to visit intention. Thus, this study aims to identify the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on social media using the information adoption model through argument quality, source credibility, perceived usefulness, and information adoption in increasing travel intention to the tourist destination in West Java. This research has conducted by accepting travel information related to social media using a sample of 404 respondents. The survey was conducted using online questionnaires and processed using the SmartPLS application for testing models and hypotheses. The results of this study showed that the entire relationship of variables showed positive results to travel intention. Information from social media through the quality of information and credibility of information plays a significant role in influencing travel intention.*

*Keywords: information adoption, social media, tourist destination, travel intention*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, social media has become a communication tool used by 3.80 billion users in January 2020 and this number has increased by more than 9 percent (321 million new users) in 2019 (Hootsuite, 2020). Of the total of 272 Indonesian citizens, it has 160 million people have become active users of social media (Hootsuite, 2020). Social media has emerged as an important platform for multidimensional interaction and exchange of information, for commenting on each other, giving reviews, spreading invitations, and sharing pictures, photos, and videos (Uratnik, 2016).

In the tourism sector, social media has become one of the most important and popular communication channels in the smart tourism era (Chung, Han, & Koo, 2015). In recent years, social media has become an effective integrated marketing communication channel and a channel for marketing tourism services (Öz, 2015; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). In maximizing opportunities to attract new potential tourists, tourism marketers need to make strategies on how to involve potential customers in the decision-making process through the provision of online information via user-generated contents (UGC) that will help tourists get information about tourist destinations, travel plans, and create tourist expectations for tourists (Narangajavana et al., 2017). UGC on social media leads to an understanding of how persuasive information will aid others to make their travel decision (Chung, Han, & Koo, 2015). Therefore, research related to UGC adoption on social media and its impact on travel intention needs to be implemented. This is because the important role of social media content cannot be ignored in the development of the tourism industry and its influence on tourist behavior.

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In the economic sector, tourism has an opportunity like foreign exchange earnings, regional income, regional development, investment, labor absorption, business development, spread across various parts of the region, especially in Indonesia (Kemenparekraf, 2019). According to a source from the Ministry of Tourism, the tourism sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019 is 4.80 percent, increasing 0.30 points compared to 2018. The contribution of tourism to GDP will be driven by foreign tourists, domestic tourists, and investment. On the other hand, in 2020, according to the Head of the West Java Tourism and Culture Service (Disparbud), domestic tourists decreased by 70 percent, and 16 % of foreign tourists since the pandemic occurred in West Java (Kemenparekraf, 2019). Nowadays, Covid-19 affects all fields, including the tourism sector; therefore, it is necessary to normalize the tourism sector quickly, starting with culture, the creative economy, and strategic marketing. This can be implemented through social media content

Therefore, the tourism industry needs to promote and educate the program, mainly by adjusting the current situation to use social media for an effective marketing strategy. The tourism industry must find ways to harness this demand and its advantage in tourism marketing. This study will focus on what factors tourists looked for in reviews on social media regarding their decision to travel intention. This research is important to do because no study looked at the influence of UGC on social media in decision travel intention in West Java.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Integrated Tourism Marketing with Social Media

Internet is a social network that connects people to make social relationships and interact with each other by sharing information and gaining valuable knowledge (Kwon & Wen, 2010). Social media is communication, conveyance, collaboration, interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility (Tuten, 2020). Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through building networks and virtual communities using powerful tools by computers, tablets, smartphones through web-based software or web applications that contain content about personal data, videos, photos, etc. Social media is generally considered an Internet-based application in which there is a UGC (User Generated Content), which includes interactions between consumers, contains relevant information, and is shared online by consumers with other consumers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Social media also has important implications for the hospitality and tourism industry. One of its functions for tourist visitors is to exchange information with all people (Cheung et al., 2008).

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) defined E-WOM/UGC as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet. User-generated content (UGC) on social media has changed consumer behavior to shop online, including travel planning information (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Credibility at UGC is considered reliable and suitable for tourists who want to find information because there is much knowledge from experienced tourists to travel to tourist destinations. And past studies show that most people who often share UGC are young people (Murphy et al., 2010). Reinhard (2019) suggests that marketers need to create online media to promote their products by taking advantage of these opportunities. Social media can provide a virtual picture of tourist attractions because it can be fresh and exciting content. Reinhard (2019) also adds that that can be an opportunity and advantage for tourism organizations to market their tours effectively and efficiently to all consumers. Sites like social media, YouTube can provide an online space for users to their experiences and comment on products/services.

### Information Adoption

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) developed by Petty & Cacioppo (1986) proposed a theoretical model of information adoption to explain how people are influenced to adopt information posted in computer-mediated communication (CMC) contexts. ELM is a dual-process model of information that affects people's attitudes and behavior. There are peripheral cues and central. Processes specifically influenced this theory of human perceptions and behavior (Bhattacharjee, 2001). The information adoption model considers argument quality as the primary influence and source credibility as the peripheral influence. Quality captures the extent to high cognitive effort in information processing. While the source credibility involves processes cues and focuses on subject association with salient positive or negative cues related to the attitude object (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Nowadays, social media has a platform to help consumers to get information and share their views in many forms, like texts, pictures, and videos. This variety would help users exchange information with other people on social media. Social media is a channel to distribute information (Thackeray et al., 2012), as organizational

representation, engagement with other people, and networking for conversation among stakeholders (Mergel, 2013). Also, according to Adjei et al. (2010), the influence of online communication from consumer's quality (timeliness, relevance, frequency, and duration) on consumer purchase behavior. Communication between consumers online before purchasing is to gather practical information to help them evaluate the usefulness of a product. Therefore usefulness evaluation positively influences the adoption of a decision of consumers in a communication context (Zhu et al., 2016).

### **Argument Quality**

The argument quality is an argument with a strong persuasive informational message (Bhattacharjee, 2001). The purpose of strength of the argument concerns the acceptance of the quality information received by the recipient of the message that the argument is valid and convincing to support what they expect (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). The components contained in the quality of argument include relevance, timeliness, accuracy, and completeness. A study conducted by (Cheung et al., 2008) states that the quality of arguments on the web can affect customer perceptions and consider their behavior to buy these products. Information is useful for consumers when they have good quality information. Therefore, online consumers need detailed, complete, and relevant product information to attract and increase their interest in the products they will buy (Qiu et al., 2012). Argument quality has a significant effect on perceived usefulness (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Tseng & Wang, 2016). In conclusion, these findings support the following hypothesis:

H1: Argument quality has a positive effect on perceived usefulness

### **Source Credibility**

According to Bhattacharjee (2001), source credibility refers to "the extent to which information sources are competent and can be trusted by the recipient of the information." Source credibility plays an essential role in influencing one's cognitive attitudes. That can be obtained from artists or influencers who have an essential and high role in influencing perceptions that are useful for consumers and become sources of information that can influence users at a high level of credibility (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Source credibility can limit emotional attitudes and influence social relationships. Therefore, users can have a high level of source credibility of information from artists or influencers who have experience building social relationships on social media (Chu, 2009). Source credibility has a significant effect on perceived usefulness (Chung, Han, & Koo, 2015). Therefore, the research is:

H2. Source credibility has a positive effect on perceived usefulness

### **Perceived Usefulness and Travel Information Adoption**

Information usefulness can determine consumer purchasing decisions to adopt the information if that is indeed useful (Hsu et al., 2013). The usefulness of information can encourage someone to adopt the information. It means that if the information is useful and helps consumers make decisions, consumers will have a greater intention to adopt the information (Tseng & Wang, 2016). Information on social media from family and friends is a reliable source of information, especially travel information can build emotional relationships, especially if the information is from old friends (Chung, Han, & Koo, 2015). Erkan & Evans (2016) state that the adoption of online content can influence consumers to have purchase intentions. Because the use of social media has become widespread for consumers, both in everyday life and pre-trip information. (Öz, 2015). According to Kim et al. (2014), online video could establish the intention to visit a destination compared with audio advertising. Travel intention emphasizes the intention to travel and change actions and motivates someone to behave to visit tourist attractions (Jang et al., 2009). Perceived usefulness has a significant effect on information adoption (Arora & Lata, 2020). The research indicates:

H3. Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on travel information adoption.

H4. Travel information adoption has a positive effect on travel intention

## **METHODS**

This study uses quantitative analysis to analyze information adoption on social media. Primary data is collected from 400 respondents using online questionnaires using the Likert scale method from 1 to 5 which can be interpreted as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. In addition, there are also open questions to capture consumer attitudes towards reviews content on social media like YouTube, Instagram, Tiktok, etc. Secondary data is provided from marketing journals, books, statistical information, and online database that have been done by previous researchers.

The instruments used in this study were adopted from previous studies. Argument Quality uses four indicators such as accurate, appropriate, sufficient breadth and depth, and up-to-date (Cheung et al., 2008). Source credibility also uses four indicators such as knowledgeable, appears to be expert, trustworthy, and reliable (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Cheung et al., 2008). Then, the indicators of perceived usefulness are valuable, informative, and helpful (Cheung et al., 2008). Information adoption indicators are following suggestions and having the intention to travel, agreeing with opinions suggested, and being motivated to visit (Cheung et al., 2008). Finally, travel intention indicators are will to visit, willingness to visit, and intend to visit (Arora & Lata, 2020).

The data analysis technique used in this study is the Variance Based Structural Equation Model (SEM-PLS). There are two stages in SEM PLS analysis. The first is the measurement model. The analysis of the model outside of measurement tests the validity and reliability of the instrument. The validity test measures how well an instrument is used in measurement (Hair et al., 2019). The value of factor loading and discriminant factors through measurement of Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE more excellent value above 0.5 to indicate validity (Hair et al., 2019). The reliability shows the accuracy of the measuring instruments used in research which can provide consistent results when tested in different situations. The coefficient of Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability is used as a reference to determine the reliability level of a construct with a minimum value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Second, Structure model analysis. The structure Model tests the reliability of models that use  $F^2$ ,  $Q^2$ , and  $R^2$ . The next step is to test the research hypothesis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic Analysis

The total of respondents who are already participating in this research is 404 respondents. The respondents of this study consisted of 57.2% women and 42.8% men. Based on their age, the majority of respondents were dominated by people aged 17-25 years old (49.3%) with a total respondent 199 and then also followed by 26 – 35 years old (31.2%) with a total respondent 126. Based on their occupation, the majority of respondents were students, 50.2% with 203 people. Then, based on education level dominated by people with the latest education of SMA/SMK, as many as 132 people (34.2%). Most of the respondents have <1.000.000 with 162 people (40.1%) and following with respondents with an income of 1.000.001 - 3.000.000 (27.7%) or 130 people.

### Measurement Model

**Table 1. Measurement Model**

Constructs/Items	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
<i>Argument quality</i>		0.716	0.824	0.539
Accurate	0.734			
Appropriate	0.721			
Sufficient breadth and depth	0.732			
Up to date	0.749			
<i>Source credibility</i>		0.753	0.890	0.801
Trustworthy	0.760			
Reliable	0.800			
<i>Perceived usefulness</i>		0.849	0.909	0.768
Valuable	0.893			
Informative	0.879			
Helpful	0.865			
<i>Information adoption</i>		0.762	0.862	0.676
Following suggestions and having intention	0.853			
Agree with the opinion suggested	0.742			
Motivated to visit	0.866			
<i>Travel intention</i>		0.883	0.928	0.811
Will to visit	0.898			

Willingness to visit	0.885
Intend to visit	0.917

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity**

Constructs/Items	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Argument quality	0.734				
(2) Source credibility	0.621	0.822			
(3) Perceived usefulness	0.582	0.620	0.876		
(4) Information adoption	0.653	0.552	0.546	0.895	
(5) Travel intention	0.432	0.587	0.637	0.401	0.900

Cronbach Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) category with a minimum value of 0.7, which means the constructs used for this study are consistent (Hair et al., 2019). For scores of CR in this study already fit the criteria, which are 0.824 for argument quality, 0.890 for source credibility, 0.909 for perceived usefulness, 0.862 for information adoption, and 0.928 for travel intention. Then for scores, CA is 0.716 for argument quality, 0.753 for source credibility, 0.849 for perceived usefulness, 0.762 for information adoption, and 0.883 for travel intention. Outer loadings of the remaining items were valid indicators if they have outer loading values of more than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). The result shows outer loading of indicators in this study has scores of 0.7. The convergent validity of this study fulfills AVE criteria with a minimum value of 0,5 (Hair et al., 2019). In this study, AVE already meets the requirements by exceeding the value of 0.5.

### Structure Model

The structure model is carried out to determine the quality of the research model by measuring its ability to predict construct with effect size ( $f^2$ ), cross-validated redundancy ( $Q^2$ ), coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) dan path coefficient (Hair et al., 2019).  $R^2$  measures 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 for all endogenous structures being considered substantial, moderate, and weak (Hair et al., 2019). The results  $R^2$  for travel intention is 0.343,  $R^2$  for information adoption is 0.383, and  $R^2$  for perceived usefulness is 0.384. That shows of these variables are influenced by independent variables with weak criteria. The effect size for each path model can be determined by calculating  $f^2$  by the criteria of 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large) (Hair et al., 2019). The effect of perceived usefulness on information adoption (0.624) and information adoption on travel intention have a strong effect. On the effect of argument quality, the construct of perceived usefulness has a medium effect size (0.145). Then, source credibility has a small effect size on perceived usefulness (0.078). Overall, this result shows outer model analysis meets the criteria to continue this analysis to structure model analysis. Structure model analysis provides hypothesis testing and analyzes the effect between variables.

### Hypotheses Testing

Argument quality ( $\beta = 0.394$ ,  $t = 5.178$ ) and source credibility ( $\beta = 0.289$ ,  $t = 9.634$ ) has a positive effect on perceived usefulness, therefore H1 and H2 are accepted. Then, the result of perceived usefulness ( $\beta = 0.620$ ,  $t = 17.928$ ) have significant influence on information adoption. Finally, the results of this test indicate that information adoption affects travel intention significantly and positively ( $\beta = 0.587$ ,  $t = 14.593$ ). Thus, H4 was accepted.

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity**

Hypothesis	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Result
(H1) Argument quality => Perceived usefulness	0.394	5.178	0.000	Accepted
(H2) Source credibility => Perceived usefulness	0.289	9.634	0.000	Accepted
(H3) Perceived usefulness => Information adoption	0.620	17.928	0.000	Accepted
(H4) Information adoption => Travel intention	0.587	14.593	0.000	Accepted

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to find out about the factors that influence UGC on social media on interest in traveling through the variables of argument quality, source credibility, perceived usefulness, and information adoption. First, the result of this study shows that argument quality has a positive and significant effect on perceived usefulness. This study explained the significance of argument quality in building an audience's positive use of information. This means that content on social media with good quality would make the audience's perception of the usefulness of information to help their intention to visit travel destinations. Past studies also found a similar result that is shown there is a positive relationship between the quality and benefit of information regarding the adoption of information through UGC from social media travel information (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Chung, Han, & Joun, 2015; Tseng & Wang, 2016). It means, that in sharing information about tourist attractions review content on social media, needs to be adjusted to consumer needs, clear, accurate, and up-to-date information.

Second, this study indicates that source credibility has a positive and significant influence on information usefulness (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Zheng et al., 2015). This finding implies that credible information about content UGC on social media would make tourists perceive the information would help them make decisions about the travel destination they would visit. Ayeh et al. (2013) research also explained reliable indicator information on source credibility from social media could be useful as information needed in travel planning. This finding implies that credible information about content UGC on social media would make audiences perceive the information would help them make decisions about the travel destination they would visit.

Information usefulness has positive information on information adoption. Information adoption theory describes useful information that would help audiences to adopt the information they received. That means useful information content through UGC on various social media about travel reviews greatly influences tourists' decisions in adopting the information for traveling. Cheung et al. (2008) that the information shared through online communities is very useful and positively affects consumers' decisions to adopt this information in food traveling in Hong Kong and Macau. In summary, user-generated content from social media helps the tourist to adopt information before a travel destination. Akehurst (2009) found that the content of travel information through UGC on social media that intelligently presented and relevant information helps consumers or tourists make it easier for them to decide to go to tourist destinations. The tourism industry should act on spreading useful information to make audiences have lots of references about products to help them adopt and intend to try products.

Information adoption has a positive effect on travel intention (Akehurst, 2009; Arora & Lata, 2020). This finding implies that adopting information on social media will affects tourists to visit travel destinations they want. That means information on social media should consider every factor in the adoption proses starting from argument quality and source credibility that impacted the tourist information usefulness. The results supported Arora & Lata (2020) that the relevance, comprehensiveness, accuracy, and expertise of the source influence the intention of the destination visit. tourists research that content that contains factual information and influences feelings will make them influenced to visit destinations. Because of that, the tourism industry makes sure they have enough information about the content on social media to make sure consumers or tourists well-adopt information about travel products.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study highlights the influence of argument quality and source credibility in social media on perceived usefulness and information adoption, including its overall effect on travel intention to West Java's destination. The result shows that argument quality and source credibility on social media affects travel intention positively and significantly through perceived usefulness and information adoption factors. It concluded that travel information adoption on social media in variable argument quality and source credibility drives tourists or consumers to adopt the information for enhancing positive travel intention. The more favorable tourists adopt the information, the higher their tendency to intention and recommend travel destinations becomes. Therefore, the tourism industry targets to encourage a marketing strategy that focuses on important factors such as information quality and credibility which are very important in the process of information adoption for the consumer to travel destination they want.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This research still has some limitations that might be developed better for future research. Regardless of the research results that researchers have done, this study still has some limitations and needs to be researched

further. This study only examines the behavior of someone who has visited a travel destination in West Java through UGC on various social media. Then future research could explore other regions by focusing on comparing one or two more social media and focusing on generation Z to get more specific results. Further research can also consider doing a mix-method analysis to find out more about what factors on social media can make tourists interested to visit travel destinations.

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