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HOW DO INFORMATION QUALITY AND INFORMATION CREDIBILITY AFFECT FOREIGN TOURISTS' INFORMATION ADOPTION FROM SOCIAL MEDIA? A CASE FROM CHINA

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Abstract:

Social media increasingly influences tourism marketing strategies. Tourists can obtain information regarding tourist destinations via social media platforms. This study analyzes the effects of information quality and information credibility on the adoption of social media information by foreign tourists. A conceptual model was constructed using the Information Adoption Model theory. The research focused on foreign tourists aged 18 and older who had not visited China post-COVID-19.The questionnaire was used to collect data, and responses from 277 foreigners were obtained. The collected data was analyzed using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that the information quality and information credibility on social media positively influence its usefulness, thereby significantly impacting information adoption by foreign tourists. Based on these research results, tourism companies and destinations should prioritize information quality in their promotional efforts. Utilizing official accounts or mainstream social media platforms for promotion is recommended, alongside enhancing the usefulness of information to effectively influence foreign tourists' engagement with information regarding Chinese tourist destinations. This paper also discusses recommendations for future studies.

Keywords:

Information Quality, Information Credibility, Information Adoption, Social Media, Tourist Destination

Introduction

Social media has emerged as the predominant and most effective medium for travelers in the era of smart tourism. Social media augments the visitor experience by offering users more comprehensive information than alternative sources(Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). Social media, with its attributes of prompt information dissemination and substantial engagement, has transformed the manner in which visitors gather and assess information during their travel decision-making process (Pop et al., 2022).During the Web 2.0 era, travelers generate and disseminate travel information via Internet applications (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) and social media platforms (e.g., TripAdvisor) in diverse formats, including reviews, photographs, short videos, and live streams (Bilgihan et al., 2016), significantly augmenting travelers' knowledge and comprehension of the destination.

In contrast to traditional marketing channels, social media consistently delivers tourism information to travelers, lower expenses, and removes intermediaries. This platform is regarded as effective for the tourism industry (Xiang et al., 2015). Researchers assert that social media plays a growing role in tourism marketing, particularly in promoting tourism products and destinations (Hysa et al., 2021) .

Research in the tourism industry has increasingly focused on social media, examining its influence on visit intention(Arora & Lata, 2020; Song et al., 2021), electronic word-of-mouth(Andriani et al., 2019; Leong et al., 2021; Ran et al., 2021) and its role in destination decision making(Agyapong & Yuan, 2022; Anuar et al., 2021). Tourists' selection of tourism information on social media platforms remains under-explored. It is essential to examine the collection of tourism information by tourists to comprehend the process of tourism information search (N. Chung et al., 2015). This research examines the adoption of travel information on social media by foreign tourists from the perspective of the receiving end. This study posits that information quality and credibility influence information adoption. The results offer theoretical perspectives on information adoption within social media contexts.

Literature Review

Social Media in Tourism

Agyapong and Yuan (2022) defined social media as a collection of Internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Initially, social media was utilized initially primarily for marketing (Alalwan et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2021) and customer relationship management (Foltean et al., 2019). With ongoing technological advancements, social media has increasingly been utilized in personnel recruitment(Rahman et al., 2022), training (X. Cheng et al., 2019; Kasakliev et al., 2020) , and education(Al-Rahmi et al., 2021; Van Dijck & Poell, 2018). The gradual recovery of global tourism post-pandemic highlights the growing significance of social media in tourism marketing (Hysa et al., 2021).

Social media is a crucial platform for the tourism industry, enabling marketers to disseminate information to tourists efficiently. The emergence of the Web 2.0 era has markedly enhanced the timeliness and interactivity of social media (Khan & Abir, 2022). Social media offers more comprehensive information than alternative platforms (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). Social

media significantly influences tourists' access to destination information and facilitates direct engagement with tourist locations (Kim et al., 2017). Research by Yadav et al. (2012) indicates that social media is an important tool for tourism marketing and has the potential to improve the reputation of destinations. In contrast to traditional media, social media facilitates the dissemination of information regarding tourist destinations to potential travellers at a lower cost and more efficiently(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Tourists utilize social media platforms to share knowledge and information regarding tourist destinations and their travel experiences, thus influencing the destination image to some degree (Molinillo et al., 2018).

Social media platforms have effectively shifted consumers from passive observers to active participants (Leong et al., 2021). Tourists can gather information regarding destinations, including reviews and photographs, which aids in assessing the value of visiting these locations (Cheng et al., 2024). Social media has a significant impact on tourists travel intentions and behaviours(Agyapong & Yuan, 2022). Previous studies have predominantly examined the information adoption behaviour of tourists from specific countries or regions within social media, resulting in certain regional limitations regarding research subjects (Daowd et al., 2021; Silaban et al., 2023). Daowd et al. (2021) noted that the environmental variations might provide avenues for future research by exploring different contexts and engaging in cross-cultural studies to examine the distinctions in culture and behaviour among social media users. This study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on non-Chinese citizens aged 18 and older, who are not currently residing in China and have not travelled to China since the COVID-19 pandemic.The objective is to examine the behaviour of foreign tourists who adopt information.

Chinese Inbound Tourism
Since 2012, the number of inbound tourists to China has risen alongside improvements in the international economic situation. In 2019, inbound tourists to China totalled 145 million, generating international tourism revenue of US$131.3 billion. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, nations typically implemented visa restrictions to inhibit the entry of international tourists(Seyfi et al., 2023). With the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic, China is set to reinstate visa-free transit in 2023 gradually. In 2024, inbound tourist arrivals in China totalled 131.9 billion, recovering to over 90% of the pre-pandemic level (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2025). Relevant studies indicate that China's inbound tourism will require time for full recovery(Chen & Wang, 2024) . The effectiveness of social media in promoting inbound tourism in China is insufficient(Xie et al., 2024). Understanding the factors that influence foreign tourists' adoption of tourism information on social media is essential. Social media assists marketers in selecting effective digital marketing strategies for inbound tourism marketing (Armutcu et al., 2023).

Research Model and Hypotheses

Information Adoption Model
Currently, information on social media is treated as knowledge transfer in organizations that need to be adopted. Sussman and Siegal (2003) proposed the Information Adoption Model (IAM) through the integration of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). This model examines how individuals acquire information via computer-mediated communication platforms, subsequently influencing their intentions and behaviours. IAM comprises four fundamental elements: argument quality, source credibility, information

usefulness and information adoption. This model explains how individuals make informed decisions after receiving computer-mediated information(Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Recently, IAM theory has also been extensively applied in research related to social (Afandi et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2022) .

Prior studies have demonstrated the importance of information quality and credibility in adopting information(Song et al., 2021). The IAM theory posits that information quality and information credibility influence information adoption(Sussman & Siegal, 2003) .

Relationship between Information Quality and Information Credibility to Information Usefulness

Information Quality

Information quality refers to how individuals perceive a message as current, precise, valuable, and useful(Rieh, 2002). Information quality influences consumers' decision-making process. Sussman and Siegal (2003) indicated in their foundational study on the information adoption model that informational influence may manifest via central and peripheral routes. The central route suggests that recipients focus on the content of the message, as indicated by the quality of the argument presented. Consequently, researchers consider information quality an important variable(Yones & Muthaiyah, 2023). The peripheral route suggests recipients employ straightforward decision-making criteria to assess the message, often reflecting the source's credibility.

Previous studies have examined the correlation between information quality and information usefulness. Information quality significantly influences consumers' perceived usefulness in decision-making (Yones & Muthaiyah, 2023). Elwalda et al. (2022) demonstrated that information quality significantly impacts perceptions of usefulness. The anonymity afforded to users on social media platforms frequently complicates information quality assessment (Jain et al., 2021).In this context, information quality and credibility are crucial indicators, enabling users to find information's usefulness when making decisions regarding products or services(Song et al., 2021; Tapanainen et al., 2021).
Therefore, the hypothesis can be defined as follows:
H1: Information quality has a positive effect on information usefulness.

Information Credibility

Information credibility refers to the perception of the reliability and trustworthiness of the information source by the information receiver, independent of the information itself(Wu & Wang, 2011). According to Sussman and Siegal (2003), informational influence can function via a peripheral route, specifically through source credibility. Source credibility is a straightforward criterion for assessing the utility of a message (Yones & Muthaiyah, 2023). Studies conducted by Erkan & Evans (2016) and Tapanainen et al. (2021) indicate that users' perception of usefulness is significantly influenced by information credibility.
Thus, the second hypothesis is formed as follows:

H2：Information credibility has a positive effect on information usefulness

Information Usefulness

Information usefulness is the first step in information adoption(Erkan & Evans, 2016). Information usefulness denotes users' perception of increased productivity from applying of new information(Chung & Buhalis, 2008). Previous research indicates that information usefulness is critical for information adoption (Leong et al., 2021; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Consumers are more inclined to adopt information perceived as useful, as it aligns with their needs and goals(Yones & Muthaiyah, 2023). Subsequently, it was found that information usefulness has a positive and significant correlation with information adoption (Arora & Lata, 2020; Islam et al., 2022).

Consequently, the third hypothesis is articulated as follows:

H3: Information usefulness has a positive effect on information adoption.

Research Model

The proposed research framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 1 below.
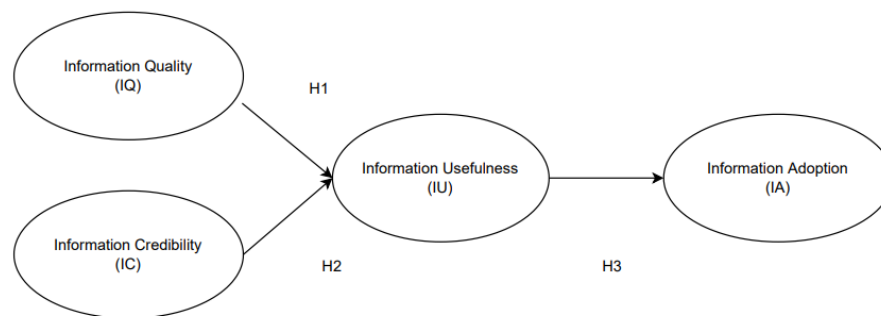
Figure 1：Research Framework

Research Methodology

This research utilized a survey methodology, employing a structured questionnaire to gather quantitative data from participants.

Data Collection and Analysis Technique

Measurement variables and indicators were derived from previous studies and developed in alignment with the research objectives. The measurement employed the Likert scale ranging from (1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree). This research uses a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, to ensure that the characteristics of the respondents are targeted and defined, thereby enhancing the sample's representativeness for the research objectives. The authors utilized GPower to determine the sample size. The minimum sample size is determined to be 107. The samples were characterized by individuals aged 18 years and older, non-Chinese citizens or those not currently residing in China, and who have not travelled to China since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. A sample size of 277 respondents was collected to conduct this research. The characteristics of the respondents are discussed in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Characteristics

Description		Percentage
Gender	Female	56.3%
	Male	43.0%
	Prefer not to say	0.7%
Age	18-35	46.6%
	36-50	37.2%
	51-65	14.8%
	Above 65	1.4%
Education level	Doctoral degree	23.1%
	Master's degree	35.7%
	Bachelor's degree	21.3%
	Undergraduate degree	12.3%
	Others	7.6%
Nationality	Australia	12.3%
	Britain	5.4%
	Canada	2.5%
	France	4.7%
	Germany	4.0%
	India	1.4%
	Indonesia	10.1%
	Italy	1.8%
	Japan	2.5%
	Malaysia	20.9%
	Myanmar	0.4%
	Other	4.7%
	Philippines	2.2%
	Russia	1.1%
	Singapore	13.7%
	South Korea	4.0%
	Thailand	1.8%
	United States	6.5%
Occupation	Entrepreneur	15.2%
	Freelancer	8.7%
	Government employees	18.1%
	Homemaker	4.7%
	Other	1.8%
	Private sector employee	25.3%
	Retired	3.6%
	Student	22.7%
Monthly income	Above the US $1500	24.2%
	The US $ 1000-1500	33.2%
	The US $ 500-1000	15.9%
	Below the US $ 500	9.7%
	Prefer not to say	17.0%

Results and Discussion

Data were analysed using SmartPLS 4.0 software in two steps: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The assessment of the measurement model begins with an evaluation of the factor loadings (FL). The value of each factor for all constructs exceeds 0.708, which is deemed acceptable (Hair et al.,2017). Reliability is evaluated through Cronbach Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR). Hair et al. (2017) indicated that Cronbach's alpha (α) values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 are considered satisfactory, while composite reliability values (CR) should exceed 0.70. In this model, all the Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.795 to 0.826, satisfying the established criteria. The composite reliability (CR) values for each construct range from 0.866 to 0.891, indicating that they are acceptable. The measurement model demonstrated acceptable reliability. The convergent validity analysis for each construct is conducted through the measurement, as indicated by the AVE values. An acceptable AVE is 0.50 or higher, indicating that the construct accounts for at least 50 per cent of the variance of its items (Hair et al., 2017). The result presented in Table 2 indicates that all AVE values exceed 0.5.

Table 2: FL, AVE, CA, and CR Results

Construct	Item	FL	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
Information Quality	IQ1	0.823	0.619	0.866	0.795
	IQ2	0.807			
	IQ3	0.756			
	IQ4	0.759			
Information Credibility	IC1	0.81	0.609	0.886	0.84
	IC2	0.808			
	IC3	0.795			
	IC4	0.737			
	IC5	0.75			
Information Usefulness	IU1	0.813	0.621	0.891	0.846
	IU2	0.743			
	IU3	0.855			
	IU4	0.737			
	IU5	0.786			
Information Adoption	IA1	0.795	0.631	0.873	0.806
	IA2	0.804			
	IA3	0.786			
	IA4	0.794			

Notes: FL =Factor Loading; CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations result is presented in Table 3. All values presented meet the criterion of being less than 0.90 (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015). Consequently, this model attained discriminant capability.

Table 3: Heterotrait-monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	1.Information Quality	2.Information Credibility	3.Information Usefulness	4.Information Adoption
1.Informtion Quality				
2.Information Credibility	0.791			
3.Information Usefulness	0.881	0.704		
4.Information Adoption	0.821	0.719	0.831	
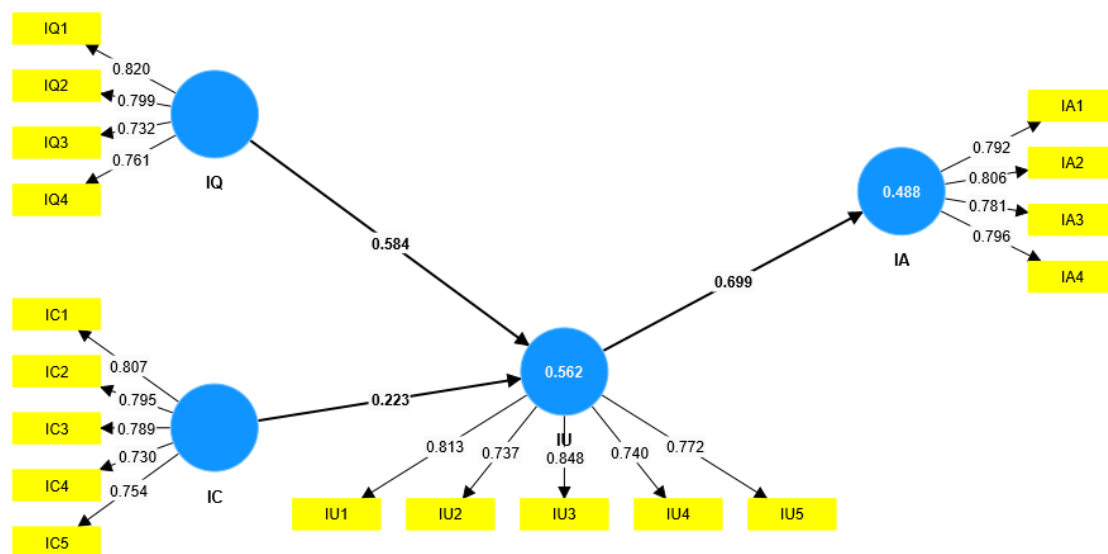
Figure 2： SEM Analysis Results

Structural Model Evaluation

This analysis assesses the structural model. The essential criteria for evaluating a structural model are R2, statistical significance, path coefficients, and confidence intervals. Before examining the criteria, evaluating collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is crucial. The VIF value should ideally be near or below 3. In this model, all VIF values fell below the specified threshold, suggesting that collinearity is not a concern.

The path coefficients presented in Table 4 indicate that all relationships among the estimated constructs were statistically significant, as evidenced by p values less than 0.05 and confidence interval values that do not include 0.

The first hypothesis indicates a positive and significant relationship between information quality and information usefulness (β=0.58， T-value = 9.397）. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that information quality significantly impacts information usefulness (Elwalda et al., 2022). The quality of information influences foreign tourists' consumption of tourism-related information via social media, affecting their assessment of its effectiveness.

The second hypothesis, which posits that information credibility positively impacts information usefulness, received support (β=0.225, T-value= 3.577). In alignment with prior research, the findings indicate that information credibility positively impacts information usefulness in utilizing computers to obtain information (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Leong et al.,

2021). Foreign tourists on social media will select highly credible information from authoritative sources to enhance its usefulness.

The third hypothesis indicated a positive and significant relationship between information usefulness and information adoption (β=0.692， T-value=22.625). This finding aligns with previous research conducted in this area. Chen and Dermawan (2020) indicate that users are more likely to adopt information on social media platforms when they perceive it as useful. Foreign tourists prioritize the usefulness of information when utilizing travel information on social media.

This study confirms the significance of information quality and credibility concerning information usefulness and establishes that information usefulness positively impacts information adoption. These results support previous research and offer significant insights into how the tourism sector can improve foreign tourists' perception of information usefulness by utilizing social media.

Table 4:Evaluation of Structural Model Results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β Value	Std Error	t-values	p-value	Decision	f2	VIF	R2
H1	IQ -> IU	0.58	0.062	9.397	0	Supported	0.435	1.747	
H2	IC -> IU	0.225	0.063	3.577	0	Supported	0.065	1.747	0.558
H3	IU -> IA	0.692	0.031	22.625	0	Supported	0.917	1	0.478

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this research align with existing literature. Information quality and information credibility have a positive effect on information usefulness, and information usefulness positively impacts information adoption, as indicated by IAM(Sussman & Siegal, 2003). The findings demonstrate the applicability of the IAM model proposed by Sussman and Siegal (2003) to foreign tourists' adoption of information from social media. Foreign tourists assess the quality and credibility of information obtained via social media, influencing their evaluation of its usefulness and subsequently impacting their information selection process.

This research recommends that travel companies and tourist destinations disseminate high-quality information about Chinese tourist destinations via social media platforms and official. Accounts on mainstream media, such as YouTube and Facebook, to improve the credibility of the information provided. Content should include practical information relevant to foreign tourists, such as customs and habits, cultural characteristics, transportation conditions, travel suggestions and other pertinent details about Chinese tourist destinations, which will facilitate the rapid acquisition of useful information for foreign visitors. This research has several limitations. First, this study is based on a sample drawn from different countries. Future research should incorporate samples from additional countries to enhance the generalization of the research model(Song et al., 2021). Second, this study examines the relationship between information quality and information credibility in the context of information adoption. The scholar argues that future research should investigate additional variables across diverse contexts to enhance the original IAM(Wang, 2016). Future research is expected to incorporate

additional variables to enhance the IAM model, including travellers' attitudes and intentions.

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