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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE USE OF TIKTOK IN TRAVEL PLANNING

Nursarah Natasha Mohd Fodzi¹, N Alia Fahada W Ab Rahman², Monizaihasra Mohamed^{3*}

¹ Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia
Email: s62509@ocean.umt.edu.my

² Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia
Email: n.alia@umt.edu.my

³ Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia
Email: monizamohamed@umt.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the use of TikTok in travel planning. Specifically, this study will use the UTAUT2 theory to examine the effects of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating factors, habit, and hedonic motivation on tourists' intentions to use TikTok for their travel planning. In addition to these factors, the study considers perceived trust, self-efficacy, and personal innovativeness as additional independent variables that may influence their intentions. Data will be gathered from the respondents via a questionnaire using a purposive sampling. After data collection, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) will be used for analysis. It is anticipated that the findings of this research will add to the body of knowledge and provide useful information to the travel and tourism sector to enhance tourists' experiences.

Keywords:

TikTok, Travel Planning, Behavioral Intention, UTAUT2.

Introduction

TikTok is a video-sharing app that permits users to make and share short-form videos about any subject. Using TikTok, people can enhance their videos with voiceovers, stickers, filters,

sound effects, and background music to make them more artistic. In September 2016, the Chinese company Bytedance released Douyin. When they went global in September 2017, they changed the name to TikTok, but they still use the old name in their home country. Douyin is among the most well-known apps in the country. Currently, the app is used daily by over 700 million users.

TikTok has been downloaded on more than 3.5 billion smartphones around the world. It reached one billion in February 2019, and it reach two billion in April 2020. By mid-2021, it had hit three billion. TikTok was the first app that was not owned by Facebook to hit 3 billion users. TikTok is also the most downloaded and most profitable app that was not a game in the first half of 2022.

Malaysia, like many other places in the world, has its own TikTok content creators, or "TikTokers" who are making videos on a wide range of themes and genres to entertain viewers. TikTok has demonstrated that, with the correct content and target audience, video content can reach a sizable audience (Tan, 2022). Thus, this study will examine how tourists use TikTok for travel planning. Previously, the theoretical framework for examining travelers' intentions to visit has been the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Wang et al., 2022), but the variables are very limited. In this study, we focused on the UTAUT2 theory to identify the effect of TikTok on tourists' travel planning behavior.

TikTok is a new social media platform that influences travel that is unmatched by other platforms. Studies have been done to look at how TikTok affects the growth of destinations (Wengel et al., 2022), the impact of travel vloggers on short video sharing (Zhao et al. 2022), and how food vlogs affect the perception of a place (Li et al., 2020). Even though TikTok marketing is still in its early stages, more and more companies are prepared to help companies create the kind of original content that encourages users to click on the platform. Light-hearted and entertaining advertisements set to music are more effective than conventional marketing that emphasizes a product's great attributes. Their goal is to get popular on the platform and inspire users of TikTok to imitate it. However, TikTok has influenced tourism that has never been seen before. This implies that the qualities of the site itself should be considered (Zhou et al., 2023).

Tourism research can stay up to date with the digital world by investigating the effect of TikTok use on tourist's planning behaviour. TikTok is one of the new social media that has emerged in the past few years because of the growth of new social media. Some people may find that using TikTok has negative effects. However, in the context of tourism, some people found that TikTok can give tourists more helpful information about trip preparation. Although there were studies on TikTok use, unfortunately most of the written observational studies have been in China (Wang et al., 2022; Wengel et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2022). Based on the discussion, this proposed study will incorporate the use of TikTok in the process of travel planning. The results of this study will help to improve the body of knowledge and better understanding of users and their decision in travel planning. Even though the results on travel influence are trending upward, this study has the potential to assist users in better understanding the platform.

TikTok, a platform for sharing short videos with lengths ranging from 15 seconds to 10 minutes, has emerged as the most popular and successful new social app in recent years, particularly among millennials. Because of its capacity to play short videos, TikTok has quickly become an extremely popular app. Using UTAUT2 framework, perceived trust, self-efficacy and personal innovativeness, this study aims to recognize how these factors induce tourists' intent to utilize TikTok in planning their travel.

Social media are easy to use, reach people all over the world, and have a lot of knowledge. They play a big part in spreading information about tourism and affecting tourists' decisions about where to go. There are many parts to a consumer's travel decision, such as choosing a destination before the trip, booking a place to stay, and deciding how long to stay and what activities to do (Zhou et al., 2023). The social networking app market is changing so rapidly today that it might be difficult to predict which new applications will still be present by the time they have been written about. Countless apps have debuted too much fanfare only to fizzle out due to a lack of interest and users, be acquired by a larger or more established platform, or continue to serve a niche audience while fading from the public eye.

Social media platforms are essential to people's lives in the current digital era because they enable them to constantly stay in touch with their networks and the outside world. Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are the most extensively used social media platforms in Malaysia. More than ever, Malaysians rely on social media to learn about news, fashion, and other topics. Similar to the Philippines and Australia, statistics from social media platforms in Malaysia indicate that people have gradually shifted their lives online and are now online as soon as they wake up (Howe, 2023).

Approximately, 33 million of Malaysian are internet users. However, there are multiple issues that demonstrate the constantly fluctuating statistics regarding the amount of time Malaysians spend on social media. People appear to be spending less time online in 2023, even though social media is evolving. Between the ages of 16 and 64, the typical Malaysian internet user logs on for 8 hours and 6 minutes each month. Compared to a year ago, this represents an 11% decrease.

In 2023 the social media platforms that Malaysians use the most are WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. WhatsApp is the most popular social media tool in the country, with 89.3% of users (Howe, 2023). Its ease of use and comfort make it popular with people of all ages. At the same time, the variety of features on Facebook (84.8% of them) and Instagram (74.3% of them) attracts many kinds of people and keeps those who use them in touch with everything going on around them. Even though the number of young people using TikTok to have fun is growing, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram are still the highest popular social media sites in Malaysia because they have a widespread and are used in everyday life.

In Malaysia, TikTok, the social media platform that has recently gone viral worldwide, is highly well-known, particularly among youth. With its emphasis on creativity and self-expression, short films, and fun atmosphere, TikTok has emerged as a hub for inspiration and entertainment. Since the majority of TikTok users are likely younger millennials and Gen Z, it makes sense that the majority of the app's content is composed of newer (Howe, 2023). Compared with other social media, tourists can gain more information from short video

stories like those on TikTok than from text and pictures. (Liu et al., 2019). Despite this, TikTok is a popular application, but it is not utilized for trip planning (Howe, 2023). This demonstrates that Malaysians are dependent on technology, particularly its younger generations, many of which use TikTok.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

The UTAUT model was based on four concepts which are performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Gender, age, level of knowledge (experience), and perceived usefulness were used as moderators (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In order to concentrate on the consumer's perspective for an expanded version of UTAUT2, Venkatesh et al. (2012) established a foundational framework that took three factors into consideration: Price/value, hedonic motivation, and habit. Because of this, the model has an inherent capacity for prediction, which enhances its capacity to forecast user adoption by as much as 74%.

In the setting of how people utilize technology, UTAUT2 looks at how price value affects how technology is used. Nathan et al (2020) found that age changed the effect of price value on plans for behavior intention. In other words, younger tourists were more price conscious because they did not have as much money or freedom. Price value affected both what they planned to do and what they did. Price value, on the other side, has been said to help explain things in a consumer setting. On another note, getting information from the Internet does not cost anything, so price trade-offs are not a good way to explain things in this kind of research (Herrero et al., 2017). It was mentioned that in empirical studies, the original UTAUT2 model can be modified to suit research questions (Balouchi et al. 2017). This study decided to include new variable such as self-efficacy as a significant determinant of behavioral intention (Admiraal et al., 2013; Moghavvemi et al., 2013; Larose et al., 2012; Sung et al., 2015). Other than that, this study also considers personal innovativeness as a significant determinant of behavioral intention which has been studied across various contexts such as mobile payments (Slade et al., 2015a; Thakur & Srivastava, 2014).

Performance Expectancy

Performance expectation (PE) is how much tourists think that TikTok can improve their trip planning (Venkatesh et al., 2003). This part is about how customers see the benefits of using the system for a certain task. Studies show that PE has a big effect on how likely tourists are to use technology, especially when tourists see the benefits of doing so. During the time before a trip, tourists usually try to find out a lot of information about their chosen location. So, tourists should use social media sites that are not just for tourism but can help them plan their trips (Mariani et al., 2019).

H1: Performance expectancy positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Effort Expectancy

It refers to the amount of work people think they will have to do to use a technology system (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Effort expectancy (EE) is how much work tourists think it takes to pick a place using TikTok. Many studies have found that EE has a big effect on people's

plans to act in different tourism settings and situations (Cheunkamon et al. 2020; Nathan et al., 2020; No & Kim, 2014; Tan & Ooi, 2018).

H2. Effort expectancy positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Social Influence

Social Influence (SI) is the extent to which customers see the effects of other users when they use the system (Venkatesh et al., 2003). According to Mosquera et al., (2018) and Nathan et al., (2020), SI significantly influences how people consume. In this study, SI refers to the impact of a person's social surroundings, such as friends, family, and coworkers, on his or her intention to use TikTok (Zhou et al. (2010). However, some studies have found that SI does not have much of an effect on intention (Escobar-Rodriguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014; Jeon et al., 2018).

H3: Social influence positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Facilitating Conditions

According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), customers perceive the tools and assistance that are provided when using a system as facilitating conditions (FC). It was discovered that in the UTAUT2 framework, FC directly influences real behavior and causes real behavior through behavioral purpose. Real-world investigations into this connection have shown it to be true (Escobar-Rodriguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014; Jeon et al., 2018).

H4: Facilitating conditions positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Hedonic Motivation

Hedonic Motivation (HM) is the enjoyment that a customer gets from utilizing a system or digital tool (Venkatesh et al. 2012). According to Amaros et al. (2016), HM has a greater impact on digital platforms such as social media than their perceived utility and ease of use. People are more inclined to use new apps when they have HM (Tamilmani et al., 2019). Because HM improves their experience on social media platforms, millennials use social media as a means of entertainment (Bilgihan, 2016; Herrero et al., 2017; Kowalczyk-Anio, & Nowacki, 2020).

H5. Hedonic motivation positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Habit

The UTAUT2 model says that, when it comes to technology, habits affect both behavioral intention (BI) and actual behavior (AB). Habit (HA) is when a customer acts in a certain way that they learned to do through use. Habit refers to the observance of a specific behavior formed during use. Research has indicated a robust association between consumers' BI and their HA (Tamilmani et al., 2020). Users or consumers accept information technology and apps on their own and voluntarily (Limayem et al., 2007). This unconscious behavior can influence real behavior, although it is unintentional (Khalifa & Liu (2007). Using digital platforms makes people more likely to become addicted and supports the way they already act (Assaker et al. 2019).

H6. Habit positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Self-Efficacy

Refers to person's belief that he or she can do a set of actions or activities that are needed to do a given job effectively (Bandura,1986). It can be described as how people in our study thought they would be able to use apps and get good results from doing so. Customers' self-efficacy has a big effect on how likely they are to use new systems and how they think those systems will affect their lives (Compeau & Higgins,1995). People's plans to use new technologies are directly related to how they think they can get good results with little work (Zhang & Jin, 2016). It was found that behavioral intention to use self-service technologies is strongly correlated with self-efficacy (Alawan et al., 2013).

H7. Self-efficacy positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Perceived Trust

Perceived trust (PT) is a crucial component in the online and social media realms. Consumers' willingness to use technology for digital tourism activities, such as purchasing airline tickets (Jeon et al., 2018), booking hotels (Kim et al., 2017), and using travel apps (Palos-Sanchez et al., 2020), is influenced by their perception of the technology's level of trustworthiness. Travelers are inclined to trust user-generated content, and more likely to use the platform if they believe its source and content to be trustworthy (Tuclea et al., 2020).

H8. Perceived trust positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Personal Innovativeness

The willingness of an individual to experiment with any new information technology is known as personal innovation (Rogers, 1962; Agarwal & Prasad,1998). A person who is highly motivated to experiment with and learn about new technologies and systems will be highly creative and novelty-seeking (Slade et al., 2015b). Because of how important personal traits and differences are to the acceptance process, marketers and practitioners need to understand the idea of user innovativeness (Aroean & Michaelidou, 2014). People who are more creative might be more likely to try out new tools.

H9: Personal innovativeness positively influences tourists to use TikTok in travel planning.

Behavioral Intention

Behavioural intention is defined as tourists' inclination to utilize TikTok to choose their travel destination, whereas actual behavior relates to their actual usage. The UTAUT2 model states that behavioral intention also affects actual behavior (Venkataesh et al., 2012).

Methodology

This study will utilize a quantitative research design using self-administered questionnaire. The target population comprises of youth Tiktok users and the unit analysis will be an individual. A total of 400 respondents will be selected through purposive sampling. There are 40 questionnaire items in the survey, which have been applied and validated in previous studies. The measurement items of independent variables will be rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 which is strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Meanwhile for dependent

variable will be classified from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scale items for performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, habit, self-efficacy, behavioral intention will be adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2012). Items for personal innovativeness will be chosen from Rogers's (1962) Agarwal and Prasad (1998) and items for perceived trust will be adapted from Jeon et al. (2018). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 will be used to analyze the data.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge by identifying the most significant variables that can prompt tourists' intention to utilize TikTok in planning their travel. Specifically, it is expected that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating factors, habit, hedonic motivation, perceived trust, self-efficacy and personal innovativeness has a positive and significant connection with tourists' inclination to utilize TikTok in their travel planning. Additionally, to the theoretical contribution, the outcomes of this research can deliver valuable evidence to the travel and tourism sector in developing effective approach to improve tourists' experiences when visiting their place of interest as well as can accommodate the demand of digital technology utilization in tourism industry.

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