Extending the UTAUT Model to Examine the Influence of Social Media on Tourists' Destination Selection

Nidhi Sharma [1]
Bhanupriya Khatri [2]
Shad Ahmad Khan [3]
Mohd Salman Shamsi [4]

Abstract

Purpose : The main goal of this study was to examine social media's influence on tourists while selecting a destination.

Methodology : The data were gathered using a purposive sampling technique from 340 visitors of tourist destinations in tri-city (Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula) and Delhi. The sampled group consisted of travelers who accessed social media platforms. PLS-SEM 3.3.3 version was used for data analysis.

Findings : When it comes to the selection of destinations, social media has a significant influence on visitors' decision-making. The results of this study revealed that performance expectancy, social influence, perceived risk, effort expectancy, and perceived trust significantly influenced behavioral intentions to use social media for destination selection. The determinants, such as habit and behavioral intentions, influenced tourists' actual usage of social media.

Implications : The study's findings are meant to provide the major participants in the tourism industry with insights into tourists' behavior. All the parties involved in the tourism business must understand the pertinence of social media. To reach customers who prefer to use technology-based solutions, social media networking sites are essential. Also, including social media in a marketing strategy makes it possible to provide users with adequate and necessary information.

Originality : This research concentrates on web-based technology, such as social media, to better understand how it influences visitors when they use these technologies to choose their destinations by posing questions to scholars and practitioners.

Keywords : **social media, tourism, destination, consumer behavior, destination selection, tourist behavior, UTAUT model, PLS-SEM**

Paper Submission Date : July 5, 2022 ; Paper sent back for Revision : March 1, 2023 ; Paper Acceptance Date : March 15, 2023 ; Paper Published Online : April 15, 2023

[1] *Research Scholar,* University School of Business, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali - 140 413, Punjab.
(Email : nidhins.sharma1994@gmail.com) ; ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3014-2312
[2] *Associate Professor,* University School of Business, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali - 140 413, Punjab.
(Email : bhanupriyakhatri23@gmail.com) ; ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4130-6271
[3] *Assistant Professor,* College of Business, University of Buraimi, Al Buraimi, Oman.
(Email : khan.shadahmad@gmail.com) ; ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7593-3487
[4] *Assistant Professor (Corresponding Author),* Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Nagpur (Constituent of Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune), Symbiosis International (Deemed University) Nagpur Campus, Wathoda, Nagpur - 440 008, Maharashtra. (Email : shamsi.sam@gmail.com)
ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9524-7732

DOI : https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2023/v53/i4/172689

Consumer behavior has evolved considerably because of technological advancement and the widespread accessibility of the internet. Nowadays, people use the internet to assist them in making any kind of decision. The use of the internet has also encouraged people to use social media (SM) more frequently (Agarwal & Mewafarosh, 2021; Shamsi et al., 2022). As of now, a few analysts have broken down the various meanings of SM (Wolf et al., 2018). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined SM as a collection of online communication channels used for community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and collaboration. Social networking is becoming a progressively important part of everybody's daily life. The most recent decade has encountered a remarkable development of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Since the development of web-based media, its reception has grown significantly and is now used by billions of users. Insights demonstrate that 59% of the world's population uses SM, with Facebook being the most popular networking platform (Chaffey, 2023). End users have the opportunity to convey and respond to a posting, exchange information without difficulty, and learn about new developments and how to apply them in their daily lives (Chaffey, 2023).

SM and social networking sites have become significant tools for getting speedily exhaustive details about a particular destination (Di Pietro et al., 2012). Tourists choose their destinations based on the destination's image (Sabari Shankar, 2020) under social media's colossal impact (Aftab & Khan, 2019). The dynamic use of SM when traveling in the form of posting stories, pictures, and recordings influences other expected tourists to travel to appealing destinations. Although people use web applications like Google Chrome to browse and schedule their free time, the development of Web 2.0 and online media has made the cycle more institutive (Jore et al., 2020). This change gives openness and permits the clients to make and trade the substance (i.e., user-generated content) (Simon, 2016). The use of various technologies can be ascribed to individuals' desire for SM (Shukla et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021).

Since the emergence of digital Web 2.0 and its acceptance and application in tourism, numerous researchers have engaged in quantitative and qualitative studies to understand the ever-changing function of SM. As the use of SM grows and evolves, we need to advance an exceptional comprehension of the critical role of SM in tourists' travel decisions. Also, a working research model needs to be developed that can assist tourism officials in better understanding the best approaches for using SM to publicize their products and destinations. Furthermore, many existing studies are based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model in different domains. However, the present study incorporates more variables in the UTAUT model, such as perceived risk, trust, and habit, which will offer more insights. As a result, the following questions are addressed in the present study:

RQ1. What is social media's influence on tourists while selecting a tourism destination?

RQ2. Does gender moderate the relationship between the factors of UTAUT and behavioral intention?

Theoretical Background

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

Based on the literature review, Venkatesh et al. (2003) developed the UTAUT model as a complete synthesis of existing technology acceptance research. This technology-driven model enables learners to research any learning method for future usage (Rahi et al., 2019). This model provides more clarity on the most likely determinants of technology acceptance (Vega et al., 2019). The UTAUT aims to solve concerns such as apprehension about using prevailing instructional technology. We have applied UTAUT's principles and concepts to the setting of consumer technology acceptance and use.

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Development

Performance Expectancy (PE)

According to Venkatesh et al. (2012), PE is the degree to which using technology will provide benefits to consumers in performing certain activities. It was revealed to be an important determinant in the studies of online travel buying intentions (BI) (Amaro & Duarte, 2013). PE positively influenced behavioral intention (BI) in the context of travel (San Martín & Herrero, 2012), mobile learning (Chao, 2019), and other situations. Other studies have also identified PE as a significant antecedent of technology use in tourism settings (Huh et al., 2009; San Martín & Herrero, 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- **H1 :** PE significantly influences tourists' BI.

Effort Expectancy (EE)

EE is the degree of ease and effort associated with consumers' use of the technology (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Users like technology that is efficient and easy to use (Godoe & Johansen, 2012). Studies have shown that the less effort put into understanding the technology, the more likely it is to be adopted (Curtis et al., 2010). According to studies, EE significantly affects BI in cases of online travel purchasing adoption (Amaro & Duarte, 2013), mobile learning (Chao, 2019), and academic libraries (Williams et al., 2021). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- **H2 :** EE significantly influences tourists' BI.

Social Influence (SI)

SI is the extent to which a person perceives that other significant people believe that they should use the new system (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The viewpoints and roles of key people, such as "friends, family, and coworkers," are emphasized in social impact (Tan et al., 2014). Several studies have revealed the enormous impact of SI on BIs in SM (Humaid & Ibrahim, 2019; Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021). It has been examined in different contexts, such as academic libraries (Williams et al., 2021), advertising (Arora et al., 2018), and mobile usage (Hew et al., 2015; Musa et al., 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- **H3 :** SI significantly influences tourists' BI.

Perceived Risk (PR)

PR is defined as the probability of undesirable results that go against buyers' expectations (Bauer, 1960). It is frequently linked with the risk associated with online financial transfers, particularly when the actual purchase is obstructing the transactions. Although online consumers are conscious of these concerns, e-commerce firms continue to have issues with internet privacy and the protection of personal information (Harvey Tanakinjal et al., 2010). A substantial influence of PR on BI was revealed in previous studies by Schnall et al. (2015) in mHealth, Alalwan et al. (2018) in internet banking, and Biswakarma (2017) in the context of tourism. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

- **H4 :** PR significantly influences tourists' BI.

Perceived Trust (PT)

Trust can be defined as the belief that online sellers would operate in accordance with customers' expectations and avoid engaging in unethical behavior (Gu et al., 2009). The influence of trust on online purchasing intentions has been studied previously (Chen et al., 2010). Existing studies identified trust to be a substantial influencer of BI in settings of mobile banking usage (Gu et al., 2009), social commerce (Akman & Mishra, 2017), using SM for the transaction (Hansen et al., 2018), mHealth usage (Schnall et al., 2015), and retail (Panda et al., 2014). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

↳ **H5 :** PT significantly influences tourists' BI.

Habit (HB)

HBs are well-formed behaviors that emerge naturally as a consequence of a consistent pattern (Limayem et al., 2007) and are usually consolidated without much effort on the user's part (Lee, 2014). Reiteration of the behavior in a clear sense and also over a period of time can become a repetitive activity, weakening the intention of users (Limayem et al., 2007). Previous studies have shown HB to be an important component in technology acceptance for mobile app shopping (Tak & Panwar, 2017), teaching blogs (Chen et al., 2015; Sharma & Khatri, 2021), smartphones apps (Gupta et al., 2018), and so on. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

↳ **H6 :** HB significantly influences tourists' actual usage.

Behavioral Intention (BI)

BI is considered a straight precursor of use behavior because it specifies an individual's preparedness to undertake a specific action. Actual behavior is the visible, observable response to a given goal in a particular environment (Liao et al., 2006). In the IT acceptance studies, much evidence indicates that BI strongly impacts AU (Venkatesh et al., 2003, 2012). As stated by Gupta et al. (2018), Kurup and Jain (2018), Agarwal and Singh (2018), and Baptista and Oliveira (2015), there is a significant association between BI and AU in different contexts, such as online purchases and mobile payment. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

↳ **H7 :** BI significantly influences tourists' actual usage.

Moderation Effects

Men and women use technology differently (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Hew et al. (2015) added gender as a moderator to the variables affecting mobile app usage. The effects of PT, PE, SI, PR, and EE on BI were found to be moderated by gender (Venkatesh et al., 2003, 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

↳ **H8 :** Gender moderates the relationships of (H8a) PE, (H8b) EE, (H8c) SI, (H8d) PR, (H8e) PT, and BI.

Research Methodology

The target audience for this study was visitors of tourist destinations in tri-city (Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula) and Delhi because these cities offer a range of tourist attractions for both domestic and international travelers. The sampled group included travelers who accessed SM platforms to gather information for destination selection. A purposive sampling method was used to gather data in 6 months (from October 2021 to March 2022) using an adaptive questionnaire. The adaptation of statements used in the investigation was in the following

manner: four items of each PE, PR, PT, EE, and BI from Chao (2019); four items of HB and SI from Venkatesh et al. (2012) and Tak and Panwar (2017). These were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). A total of 340 valid responses were acquired and used for the final analysis in SmartPLS Software 3.3.3 version using partial least square structural equational modeling.

Furthermore, Harman's single factor analysis was used to check if the study had any common method bias. The results showed that the study's total variance was 37.67%, which is below the maximum limit of 50%, stating no bias of the common method (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Analysis and Results

Descriptive Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are listed in Table 1. The percentage of men was 47.64%, and the percentage of women was 52.35%. The majority of respondents (66.17%) were between the ages of 15–25 years. A total of 78.23% of the respondents were unmarried; whereas, 21.76% of the respondents were married. Most respondents were post-graduates (45.88%), and only 1.47% had professional qualifications. The respondents who traveled once a year were 26.76%. Concerning travel places, 71.76% of the respondents traveled within India; whereas, only 10.56% traveled within states. Regarding the type of travel destination, 41.17% of the respondents preferred family vacation destinations, and only 2.05% preferred spiritual destinations.

Table 1. ***Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 340)***

Demographic	Category	Frequency	% (100)
Gender	Men	162	47.64
	Women	178	52.35
Marital Status	Unmarried	266	78.23
	Married	74	21.76
Age (years)	15–25	225	66.17
	26–35	96	28.23
	36–45	12	3.52
	45 and above	7	2.05
Educational Level	Below graduation	31	9.11
	Graduation	148	43.52
	Post-graduation	156	45.88
	Professional Qualification	5	1.47
Monthly Income	Less than 250,000	54	15.88
	200,000–500,000	100	29.41
	500,000–1,000,000	79	23.23
	More than 1,000,000	47	13.82
	Prefer not to say	60	17.64
Travel Frequency	Once in a month	17	5
	Quarterly	72	21.17
	Every 6 months	78	22.94

	Once in a year	91	26.76
Travel Places	Within state	36	10.58
	Within India	244	71.76
	Outside India	60	17.64
Type of Travel Destination	Adventures	138	40.58
	Business	13	3.82
	Family vacations	140	41.17
	Religious	22	6.47
	Spiritual	7	2.05
	Others	20	5.88

Measurement Model Assessments

Table 2 illustrates the measurement model's outcome using convergent validity and reliability. Average variance extracted (AVE) values varied between 0.547 and 0.667, which is above the suggested loading value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). Cronbach's alpha (CA), Dijkstra and Henseler's RhoA (Rho_A), and Composite reliability (CR) values meet the ideal benchmark of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). The minimum required value of factor loadings is 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019), and all the factor loading values are above the required threshold.

Table 2. ***Results of the Measurement Model***

Latent Variables	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	CR	AVE
AU	*AU1*	0.805	0.852	0.858	0.894	0.628
	AU2	0.788				
	AU3	0.739				
	AU4	0.845				
	AU5	0.782				
BI	*BI1*	0.816	0.795	0.798	0.867	0.619
	BI2	0.796				
	BI3	0.753				
	BI4	0.781				
EE	*EE1*	0.818	0.813	0.887	0.870	0.626
	EE2	0.784				
	EE3	0.758				
	EE4	0.804				
HB	*HB1*	0.853	0.833	0.837	0.889	0.667
	HB2	0.791				
	HB3	0.813				
	HB4	0.809				
PE	*PE1*	0.854	0.806	0.951	0.856	0.600

	PE2	0.719				
	PE3	0.785				
	PE4	0.732				
PR	*PR1*	0.778	0.798	0.834	0.863	0.612
	PR2	0.740				
	PR3	0.825				
	PR4	0.783				
PT	*PT1*	0.885	0.828	0.890	0.882	0.654
	PT2	0.761				
	PT3	0.875				
	PT4	0.700				
SI	*SI1*	0.716	0.757	0.863	0.828	0.547
	SI2	0.727				
	SI3	0.704				
	SI4	0.807				

Discriminant Validity

The examination uses Fornell and Larcker's criterion (1981) and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio for discriminant validity. Fornell and Larcker's method claims that the under root of the diagonal constructs' AVEs is greater than their inter-item correlation standards. As depicted in Table 3, all of the constructs fit Fornell and Larcker's requirements, with each one clearly distinguishing itself from all others. The HTMT ratio should be below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015) or 0.90 permissible value (Gold et al., 2001) to establish discriminant validity. The results in Table 4 display that the values of HTMT exceed 0.85 in the case of actual usage and PR and actual usage and habit, but are under the range of the 0.90 permissible value (Gold et al., 2001), indicating no discriminant validity issue.

Structural Model Assessment

Structural model assessment (refer to Figure 1) investigates the linkage among all the constructs and their forbidding usefulness (Hair et al., 2019). To discover the required *p*-values for the hypotheses stated in the

Table 3. *Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

	AU	***BI***	***EE***	***HB***	***PE***	***PR***	***PT***	***SI***
AU	0.793							
BI	0.710	0.787						
EE	0.558	0.609	0.791					
HB	0.731	0.474	0.371	0.817				
PE	0.745	0.705	0.535	0.561	0.774			
PR	0.742	0.705	0.553	0.535	0.726	0.782		
PT	0.686	0.731	0.547	0.531	0.670	0.613	0.809	
SI	0.316	0.449	0.320	0.196	0.293	0.215	0.363	0.740

Table 4. ***HTMT Ratio***

	AU	*BI*	*EE*	*HB*	*PE*	*PR*	*PT*	*SI*
AU								
BI	0.842							
EE	0.586	0.683						
HB	0.870	0.579	0.399					
PE	0.792	0.738	0.491	0.650				
PR	0.881	0.827	0.588	0.664	0.824			
PT	0.779	0.845	0.586	0.615	0.704	0.715		
SI	0.312	0.490	0.343	0.192	0.264	0.204	0.363	

Table 5. ***Results for the Structural Model***

Hypotheses	Relationships	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Error	*p*-value	*t*-value	Remark
H1	*PE –> BI*	0.167	0.045	0.000	3.697	Accepted
H2	*EE –> BI*	0.137	0.037	0.000	3.713	Accepted
H3	*SI –> BI*	0.186	0.033	0.000	5.655	Accepted
H4	*PR –> BI*	0.289	0.045	0.000	6.672	Accepted
H5	*PT –> BI*	0.300	0.048	0.000	6.239	Accepted
H6	*HB –> AU*	0.508	0.041	0.000	12.482	Accepted
H7	*BI –> AU*	0.469	0.043	0.000	10.953	Accepted

research, the procedure was undertaken using the bootstrapping procedure with prescribed 5,000 bootstraps (Hair Jr et al., 2020). The endogenous construct's actual usage coefficient of determination (R^2) is determined to be considerably high, with a value of 70.4%. Table 5 shows that EE, PR, SI, PR, and PE are significantly related to BI with Std. β 0.167, 0.137, 0.186, 0.289, and 0.300, respectively; BI is significantly related to AU with Std. β 0.508; and HB is positively related to AU with Std. β 0.508. All of the presented hypotheses have a *p*-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and are, therefore, accepted. As shown in Table 5, the *t*-value of all proposed hypotheses exceeds the required value of 1.96.

The moderating effect of gender among the association of PE, PR, SI, and EE with BI is tested with the PLS multi-group analysis. Table 6 displays the results, which claim no significant difference between women and men as far as PE leads to BI. The results also reveal that women and men do not differ in terms of EE and BI. When it comes to SI and BI, gender does not make any significant difference. There is also no significant difference between women and men as far as PR leads to BI. However, some inferences can still be drawn, where in the case of PE and BI, SI and BI, and PR and BI, women are more influenced as compared to men. When it comes to EE and BI, the results show that men are more impacted than women. Furthermore, in the case of PT and BI, there is a significant difference between women and men.

Model Fit

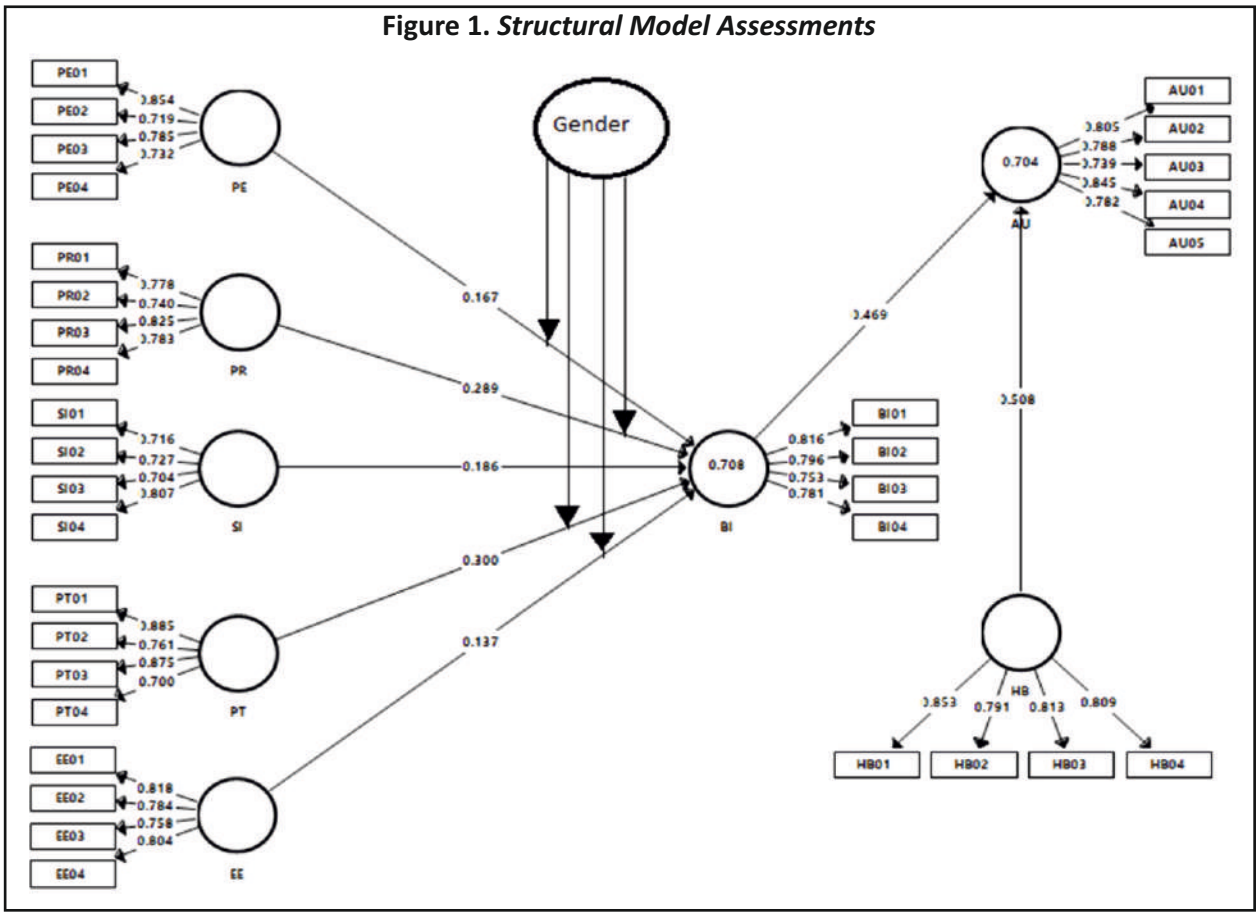
In the research with PLS-SEM models, a global model fit index, such as the SRMR, is critical for evaluating the model's goodness of fit (Hair Jr et al., 2020). The present study's model has a 0.07 value of SRMR, which is

Table 6. ***Moderating Effect***

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (Women–Men)	CI 2.5%	CI 97.5%	*t*-value	*p*-value	Supported
H8	Gender as a moderator						
H8a	*PE* G -> BI*	0.169	0.099	0.616	1.846	0.066	No
H8b	*EE* G -> BI*	–0.083	0.000	0.302	1.090	0.276	No
H8c	*SI* G -> BI*	0.057	0.124	0.239	0.902	0.368	No
H8d	*PR* G -> BI*	0.094	0.216	0.352	1.051	0.294	No
H8e	*PT* G -> BI*	–0.245	0.071	0.549	2.746	0.006	Yes

Note. ***Moderation effect, G = gender.**

Figure 1. ***Structural Model Assessments***



considerably below the maximum value of .08, demonstrating the high explanatory power of the model (Henseler et al., 2016).

Predictive Relevance (f^2 and Q^2)

The f^2 and Q^2 effect size of the suggested model is used to analyze the predictive relevance and importance. The recommended limits for studying the change in R^2 owing to exogenous constructs' impact on endogenous

constructs are 0.02 (weak effects), 0.15 (moderate effects), and 0.35 (strong effects) (Cohen, 1998). In this study, BI (f^2 = 0.574) has a strong effect size on AU; however, HB (f^2 = 0.676) is the most important component accountable for describing the endogenous variable in the study, that is, AU. Apart from this, PE (f^2 = 0.036), EE (f^2 = 0.038), SI (f^2 = 0.099), PR (f^2 = 0.119), and PT (f^2 = 0.143) demonstrate a weak effect size on BI.

Finally, Stone-Geissers's Q^2 is used to evaluate the predictive significance of the model between constructs, and it is determined to be 0.433 for AU and 0.426 for BI, indicating strong predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974), which concludes that the findings can be generalized in distinct domains ahead in the future.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of SM on tourists while selecting a tourism destination. To unearth the tourists' inclination toward SM for destination selection, factors of the UTAUT model are used. The study reveals results consistent with previous similar inquiries for significant relationships between PE and BI (Gupta et al., 2018; San Martín & Herrero, 2012) and EE and BI (Baptista & Oliveira, 2015; Tak & Panwar, 2017), thus accepting H1 and H2. This indicates that tourists not only look for perceived benefits from SM while searching for destinations but also consider the efforts required to use such platforms. The acceptance of H3, signifying the influence of SI on BI, is also in line with some previous studies (Akman & Mishra, 2017; Chao, 2019). This reveals that reference groups greatly influence people when they are in the process of destination selection. People seek advice from others and are influenced by their SM activities related to their tourism experience.

Furthermore, previous studies have pressed upon the unavoidable role of PR (Biswakarma, 2017) and PT (Hansen et al., 2018; Schnall et al., 2015) while shaping intention for technology adoption. The same has been found in our study (acceptance of H4 and H5), as people cannot afford to risk their data, life, or property while searching for destinations, especially through SM. The usage of these platforms largely depends on the magnitude of trust they convey to the users. The occurrence of unpleasant events online while sharing personal data, performing payments, booking tickets, etc., is adding more to the influence of PR and PT on BIs.

In this study, we also enquire about what influences the actual usage of tourists through H6 and H7. HB and BI are found as significant influencers of AU, confirming previous studies too (Chen et al., 2015; Venkatesh et al., 2003). This is an important insight as, firstly, it confirms the translation of intention to actual use in the settings of SM usage for tourism. Secondly, it points toward the people who are habitual in using SM generally. The conversion of intention to actual usage has always been debated in academia and industry, but this study adds evidence in favor of the conversion. Moreover, the habitual users of SM are at times accused of using it unproductively. Our research, however, offers evidence to the contrary. Gender, as a moderator, does not significantly influence the impact of EE, PR, PE, and SI on BI but on PT in the current investigation. This phenomenon can be understood as a difference in importance given to trust by women compared to men. As per the values obtained in the moderation analysis, it is clear that trust plays an essential role for women, compared to men, in destination selection behavior using SM.

These findings of this study disclose that SM platforms are momentous in the modern day and have a substantial influence on the BI and visitors' actual behavior. Travelers use SMs in decision-making because they are frequently used as information sources. Information regarding transportation, transit routes, lodging and restaurant facilities, challenges and hazards, safety concerns, and the culture and legacy of tourist places may all be found on SM. This impact on tourists' behavior leads to selecting and making specific destination decisions. Consequently, tourism advertising through SM considerably influences travelers' actual behavior, demonstrating that companies can only broaden and gain their fair share with SM presence.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The current study provides crucial insights into SM adoption behavior for travelers' destination selection. The factors that influenced the behavior of tourists in using SM while choosing destinations are satisfactorily confirmed in the current study. Also, this study expands the theoretical corpus of knowledge in three distinct ways. Firstly, the study's findings might be classified as one of the first empirical investigations on tourists' usage of SM as an information source for selecting a destination. This paves the way for academia to explore opportunities to study more problems concerning tourist behavior and SM. Secondly, the current study incorporates new variables, such as PR, PT, and HB, in the UTAUT model to provide more insights into tourists' BI to use SM for the selection of tourist destinations. Trust and risk are two critical elements that possess the potential to alter BI, particularly in the case of technology adoption. The addition of these factors and the results obtained affirm the possibilities of extending/modifying the UTAUT model by integrating these factors into it. Thirdly, the study also investigates the moderation effect of gender between the variables. This demonstrates the difference in behavior based on gender that can be studied more in-depth. Finally, the inquiry over the resultant actual usage through the BI is also a novel element of this research, as most past studies talked about the intention and failed to test the actual usage behavior.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study intend to provide major participants in the tourism industry, namely, destination marketers, travel agencies, government, and policymakers, with insights into consumer behavior. The research findings might assist destination management organizations (DMOs) and marketers in improving their travel promotion through SM. The pertinence of SM in the tourism business must be understood by them. SM networking sites are vital for reaching customers who prefer to use technology-based and web-based solutions. Also, the inclusion of SM in a marketing strategy allows for the provision of adequate and necessary information to users. Thus, many activities can be considered for promoting a destination, for instance, creating destination pages/accounts on various SM platforms, placing frequently sought information on important SM platforms, letting past and existing tourists interact, and creating a virtual community to share their valuable experiences. The research also talks about trust and risk as important influencers. Marketers and respective governments may initiate activities to build trust and minimize risk perception among the people. Collecting and communicating testimonials from people from diverse sections of society may help build trust and mitigate risk. Governments can take visible measures over SM to communicate about their intolerance of criminal activities and assist the tourists in their region. Finally, the government and policymakers can consider launching destination branding initiatives on SM and inviting businesses with good social reputations to their destinations.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

It is important to recognize the different limitations that this study has. First, as this study is cross-sectional, longitudinal studies can be conducted in the future. Second, as this study is more inclined toward multiple destinations, the existence of multiple destinations may affect visitors differently depending on their level of participation in that place. So, future research can be done on several destinations individually. Third, this study considered complete SM for tourism destination selection. So, future research can be done on different SM platforms individually, which can be used to select destinations. Fourth, future research can be done by considering other variables, such as facilitating conditions, and hedonic motivation in their conceptual model, with age and habit as moderators.

Authors' Contribution

Nidhi Sharma conceived the presented idea and developed the conceptual framework. Dr. Bhanupriya Khatri analyzed the data. Dr. Shad Ahmad Khan and Dr. Mohd Salman Shamsi also worked on the past literature, discussion, and implications with inputs from other authors. All the authors contributed equally to data collection, provided critical feedback, and helped shape the research, analysis, and manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Funding Acknowledgement

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or for publication of this article.

References

Aftab, S., & Khan, M. M. (2019). Role of social media in promoting tourism in Pakistan. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 58*(1), 101–113. https://doi.org/10.46568/jssh.v58i1.131

Agarwal, A., & Singh, M. R. (2018). The relationship between retail experience, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention : Exploring the consumer shopping behavior in unorganized retail settings. *Indian Journal of Marketing, 48*(1), 9–27. https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2018/v48/i1/120733

Agarwal, S., & Mewafarosh, R. (2021). Linkage of social media engagement with fomo and subjective well being. *Journal of Content, Community & Communication, 13*(7), 46–57.

Akman, I., & Mishra, A. (2017). Factors influencing consumer intention in social commerce adoption. *Information Technology & People, 30*(2), 356–370. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-01-2016-0006

Alalwan, A. A., Dwivedi, Y. K., Rana, N. P., & Algharabat, R. (2018). Examining factors influencing Jordanian customers' intentions and adoption of internet banking: Extending UTAUT2 with risk. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 40*, 125–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.08.026

Amaro, S., & Duarte, P. (2013). Online travel purchasing: A literature review. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 30*(8), 755–785. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2013.835227

Arora, T., Agarwal, B., & Kumar, A. (2018). A study of millennials's preferences for social media advertising in Delhi NCR. *Indian Journal of Marketing, 48*(10), 34–51. https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2018/v48/i10/132334

Baptista, G., & Oliveira, T. (2015). Understanding mobile banking: The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology combined with cultural moderators. *Computers in Human Behavior, 50*, 418–430. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.04.024

Bauer, R. A. (1960). Consumer behavior as risk taking. In R. S. Hancock (ed.), Dynamic marketing for a changing world. *Proceedings of the 43rd Conference of the American Marketing Association* (pp. 389–398). American Marketing Conference.

Biswakarma, G. (2017). Impact of destination image and perceived risk on behavioral intention of travelers to Nepal. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications, 1*(5), 62–71.

Chaffey, D. (2023). Global social media statistics research summary 2023. *Smart Insights*. https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/

Chao, C.-M. (2019). Factors determining the behavioral intention to use mobile learning: An application and extension of the UTAUT model. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01652

Chen, C.-P., Lai, H.-M., & Ho, C.-Y. (2015). Why do teachers continue to use teaching blogs? The roles of perceived voluntariness and habit. *Computers & Education, 82*, 236–249. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.11.017

Chen, Y.-H., Hsu, I.-C., & Lin, C.-C. (2010). Website attributes that increase consumer purchase intention: A conjoint analysis. *Journal of Business Research, 63*(9–10), 1007–1014. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.01.023

Cohen, J. (1998). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587

Curtis, L., Edwards, C., Fraser, K. L., Gudelsky, S., Holmquist, J., Thornton, K., & Sweetser, K. D. (2010). Adoption of social media for public relations by nonprofit organizations. *Public Relations Review, 36*(1), 90–92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.10.003

Di Pietro, L., Di Virgilio, F., & Pantano, E. (2012). Social network for the choice of tourist destination: Attitude and behavioural intention. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 3*(1), 60–76. https://doi.org/10.1108/17579881211206543

Geisser, S. (1974). A predictive approach to the random effect model. *Biometrika, 61*(1), 101–107. https://doi.org/10.1093/biomet/61.1.101

Godoe, P., & Johansen, T. S. (2012). Understanding adoption of new technologies: Technology readiness and technology acceptance as an integrated concept. *Journal of European Psychology Students, 3*(1), 38–52. https://doi.org/10.5334/jeps.aq

Gold, A. H., Malhotra, A., & Segars, A. H. (2001). Knowledge management: An organizational capabilities perspective. *Journal of Management Information Systems, 18*(1), 185–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2001.11045669

Gu, J.-C., Lee, S.-C., & Suh, Y.-H. (2009). Determinants of behavioral intention to mobile banking. *Expert Systems with Applications, 36*(9), 11605–11616. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2009.03.024

Gupta, A., Dogra, N., & George, B. (2018). What determines tourist adoption of smartphone apps? An analysis based on the UTAUT-2 framework. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 9*(1), 50–64. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-02-2017-0013

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 2–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203

Hair Jr, J. F., Howard, M. C., & Nitzl, C. (2020). Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis. *Journal of Business Research, 109*, 101–110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.069

Hansen, J. M., Saridakis, G., & Benson, V. (2018). Risk, trust, and the interaction of perceived ease of use and behavioral control in predicting consumers' use of social media for transactions. *Computers in Human Behavior, 80*, 197–206. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.11.010

Harvey Tanakinjal, G., Deans, K. R., & Gray, B. J. (2010). Third screen communication and the adoption of mobile marketing: A Malaysia perspective. *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 2*(1), 36–47. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijms.v2n1p36

Henseler, J., Hubona, G., & Ray, P. A. (2016). Using PLS path modeling in new technology research: Updated guidelines. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 116*(1), 2–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-09-2015-0382

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43*, 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Hew, J.-J., Lee, V.-H., Ooi, K.-B., & Wei, J. (2015). What catalyses mobile apps usage intention: An empirical analysis. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 115*(7), 1269–1291. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-01-2015-0028

Huh, H. J., Kim, T. (Terry), & Law, R. (2009). A comparison of competing theoretical models for understanding acceptance behavior of information systems in upscale hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 28*(1), 121–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.06.004

Humaid, A. B., & Ibrahim, Y. M. (2019). The examination of factors influencing Saudi small businesses' social media adoption, by using UTAUT model. *International Journal of Business Administration, 10*(2), 96–114. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v10n2p96

Jore, S., Mathur, K., & Boghani, C. (2020). Impact of social media usage on emotional imbalance. *NMIMS Management Review, 38*(1), 69–101. https://management-review.nmims.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/MR-1-69-101_compressed.pdf

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Kurup, A. J., & Jain, P. (2018). Effect of e-loyalty cues on repurchase behavioural intentions among online shoppers. *Indian Journal of Marketing, 48*(11), 7–22. https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2018/v48/i11/137982

Lee, W.-K. (2014). The temporal relationships among habit, intention and IS uses. *Computers in Human Behavior, 32*, 54–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.11.010

Liao, C., Palvia, P., & Lin, H.-N. (2006). The roles of habit and web site quality in e-commerce. *International Journal of Information Management, 26*(6), 469–483. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2006.09.001

Limayem, M., Hirt, S. G., & Cheung, C. M. (2007). How habit limits the predictive power of intention: The case of information systems continuance. *MIS Quarterly, 31*(4), 705–737. https://doi.org/10.2307/25148817

Musa, A., Khan, H. U., & AlShare, K. A. (2015). Factors influence consumers' adoption of mobile payment devices in Qatar. *International Journal of Mobile Communications, 13*(6), 670–687. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMC.2015.072100

Panda, R., Swar, B. N., & Mukerjee, K. (2014). Factors affecting brand trust: An exploratory investigation among Indian retail consumers. *Indian Journal of Marketing, 44*(7), 7–17. https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2014/v44/i7/80362

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2012). Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it. *Annual Review of Psychology, 63*(1), 539–569. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100452

Puriwat, W., & Tripopsakul, S. (2021). Explaining social media adoption for a business purpose: An application of the UTAUT model. *Sustainability, 13*(4), 2082. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13042082

Rahi, S., Othman Mansour, M. M., Alghizzawi, M., & Alnaser, F. M. (2019). Integration of UTAUT model in internet banking adoption context: The mediating role of performance expectancy and effort expectancy. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 13*(3), 411–435. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-02-2018-0032

Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Taheri, B., Gannon, M., Vafaei-Zadeh, A., & Hanifah, H. (2019). Does living in the vicinity of heritage tourism sites influence residents' perceptions and attitudes? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 27*(9), 1295–1317. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1618863

Sabari Shankar, R. (2020). Impact of cognitive and affective image on tourists' travel motivation. *Indian Journal of Marketing, 50*(5–7), 35–45. https://doi.org/10.17010/ijom/2020/v50/i5-7/152118

San Martín, H., & Herrero, Á. (2012). Influence of the user's psychological factors on the online purchase intention in rural tourism: Integrating innovativeness to the UTAUT framework. *Tourism Management, 33*(2), 341–350. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.04.003

Saprikis, V. (2021). Factors that determine the adoption intention of direct mobile purchases through social media apps. *Sustainability, 12*(11), 449. https://doi.org/10.3390/info12110449

Schnall, R., Higgins, T., Brown, W., Carballo-Dieguez, A., & Bakken, S. (2015). Trust, perceived risk, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as factors related to mHealth technology use. *Studies in Health Technology and Informatics, 216*, 467–471.

Shamsi, M. S., Narula, S., & Sharma, A. (2022). Does environmental awareness via SNSs create sustainable consumption intention among the millennials? *Journal of Content, Community and Communication, 15*(8), 100–116. https://doi.org/10.31620/jccc.06.22/08

Sharma, N., & Khatri, B. (2021). A review on green human resource management Practices and employee's green behavior. *Indian Journal of Natural Sciences, 12*(65), 29629–29638.

Sharma, N., Khatri, B., & Attri, A. K. (2021). Impact of green HRM practices on employees' behavior in IT sector. *Pacific Business Review International, 13*(10), 57–68.

Shukla, P., Vyas, P. H., & Pandya, M. N. (2020). An empirical study on actual experience of selected social media users in Vadodara city of Gujarat state. *NMIMS Journal of Economics and Public Policy, 5*(4), 61–87.

Simon, J. P. (2016). User generated content – users, community of users and firms: Toward new sources of co-innovation? *Info, 18*(6), 4–25. https://doi.org/10.1108/info-04-2016-0015

Stone, M. (1974). Cross-validatory choice and assessment of statistical predictions. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Methodological), 36*(2), 111–133. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2517-6161.1974.tb00994.x

Tak, P., & Panwar, S. (2017). Using UTAUT 2 model to predict mobile app based shopping: Evidences from India. *Journal of Indian Business Research, 9*(3), 248–264. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIBR-11-2016-0132

Tan, G. W.-H., Ooi, K.-B., Chong, S.-C., & Hew, T.-S. (2014). NFC mobile credit card: The next frontier of mobile payment? *Telematics and Informatics, 31*(2), 292–307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2013.06.002

Vega, A., Ramírez-Benavidez, K., & Guerrero, L. A. (2019). Tool UTAUT applied to measure interaction experience with NAO Robot. In, M. Kurosu (eds.), *Human-computer interaction. Design practice in contemporary societies*. HCII 2019. Lecture notes in computer science (Vol. 11568, pp. 501–512). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22636-7_38

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly, 27*(3), 425–478. https://doi.org/10.2307/30036540

Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: Extending the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology. *MIS Quarterly, 36*(1), 157–178. https://doi.org/10.2307/41410412

Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science, 46*(2), 186–204. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.46.2.186.11926

Williams, M. L., Saunderson, I. P., & Dhoest, A. (2021). Students' perceptions of the adoption and use of social media in academic libraries: A UTAUT study. *Communicatio, 47*(1), 76–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2021.1876123

Wolf, M., Sims, J., & Yang, H. (2018). Social media? what social media? *Academy for Information Systems Conference Proceedings 2018*, 3. https://aisel.aisnet.org/ukais2018/3

Appendix

Appendix. ***List of Statements***

Construct	Code	Items	Sources
Performance Expectancy	*PE1*	I find social media useful as it helps me in selecting a destination.	(Chao, 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003)
	PE2	Using social media enables me to select a destination more quickly.	
	PE3	I find social media useful as it provides me with the news about places of my interest to select a destination.	
	PE4	I can save time when I use social media as a tool for the selection of a tourism destination.	
Effort Expectancy	*EE1*	Learning how to use social media for destination selection is easy for me.	(Chao, 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003)
	EE2	My interaction with others on social media would be clear and understandable to select a destination.	
	EE3	It would be easy for me to become skillful at using social media to select a destination.	
	EE4	I would find social media easy to use it as a tool for destination selection.	
Social Influence	*SI1*	People influence (relatives) my behavior that I should use social media as a tool to select a destination.	(Tak & Panwar, 2017 ; Venkatesh et al., 2012)
	SI2	People who are important (non-relatives) to me influence me to use social media to select a destination.	
	SI3	My community generally encourages me to use social media for destination selection.	
	SI4	People who are important to me have helped me use social media to select a destination.	
Perceived Trust	*PT1*	I believe that social media is trustworthy for selecting a destination.	(Chao, 2019)
	PT2	I trust social media to use it as a tool to select a destination.	
	PT3	I do not doubt the honesty of people sharing their experiences on social media to use it as a tool to select the destination.	
	PT4	I believe that social media has the ability to help me in selecting my destination.	
Perceived Risk	*PR1*	I think using social media for destination selection puts my privacy at risk.	(Chao, 2019)
	PR2	I am confident in using social media to select a destination, even if I have never used it before.	
	PR3	Using social media exposes me to an overall risk while selecting a destination.	
	PR4	Using social media for destination selection will not fit well with my self-image.	
Habit	*HB1*	Using social media for destination selection has become a habit for me.	(Venkatesh et al., 2012; Tak & Panwar, 2017)
	HB2	I am addicted to using social media for the selection of travel destinations.	
	HB3	I must use social media as a tool to select the travel destinations.	

	HB4	Using social media is a part of my daily routine.	
Behavioral Intention	*BI1*	Assuming I have access to social media, I intend to use it as a tool to select travel destinations.	(Chao, 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003)
	BI2	Given that I can access social media, I predict I would use it to select destinations.	
	BI3	I plan to use social media as a tool to select destinations in the future.	
	BI4	I predict I will use social media as a tool to select destinations in the near future.	
Actual Usage	*AU1*	I consider myself a regular user of social media to select destinations.	(Saprikis, 2021)
	AU2	I prefer to use social media when available for destination selection.	
	AU3	I firmly believe in frequently using social media as a tool for tourism destination selection.	
	AU4	I do select destinations mostly by using social media.	
	AU5	I confirm that I can use social media as a tool to select destinations.	

About the Authors

Nidhi Sharma is a Research Scholar at Chandigarh University, Mohali, India. Her areas of research include social media marketing, destination marketing, and consumer behavior. She has published research papers and book chapters in various reputed journals and books.

Dr. Bhanupriya Khatri is working as an Associate Professor at Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab. She has teaching experience of more than 10 years. Her area of expertise is organizational behavior, talent management, and human resource development. She has published many research papers and book chapters in various reputed journals and books.

Dr. Shad Ahmad Khan is serving as an Assistant Professor at the College of Business, University of Buraimi in the Sultanate of Oman. He is an active researcher who has professional strength in the area of business management and marketing. He has vast experience in organizing international events like conferences and seminars. His areas of interest are data sciences, green practices, entrepreneurship, administration sciences, and marketing.

Dr. Mohd Salman Shamsi is currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Nagpur (Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune). He earned his PhD from Aligarh Muslim University. His research interests include promotion management, purchase intention, technology adoption, and sustainable consumption.