

THE EFFECT OF MULTIPLE FORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON TOURISTS' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM

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INTRODUCTION

Agritourism is growing as a popular tourist destination based on the working farm and providing the tourism experiences. Responding to the global trend of sustainable development, scholars found that developing agritourism can contribute to a sustainable economic activity, creating job opportunities, increasing the income of the farm householders, and improving farm revenue, which benefits to the community economic growth (Ammirato et al., 2020; He et al., 2022). Agritourism offering the customized travel experiences, culture, or nature conserving environment is usually small in scale and has a high cost of service, so the itinerary fee charged is higher than the mass tourism. But if the high cost sustainable agritourism have the business market to get the enough profit for the owner to maintain and support their sustainable tourism management? And what's the critical factor driving sustainable tourism consumption willingness? That's definitely an important issue for agritourism industry to develop sustainably. With the rise of networking websites, it's easy to get the authentic information or shared experiments form using social media and decide the travel destination. According to relative research, consumers' choice of travel destination or willingness to pay would be influenced by netizens, bloggers, and opinion leaders through the various social media platforms (Gon, 2020; Joo et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2020; Pike et al., 2019; Narangajavana et al., 2017). Furthermore, according to previous studies, consumers' perceived value is an important factor driving tourism consumption, and perceived value affects the willingness to pay (WTP) (Chi et al., 2020; Mai et al., 2019; Park, & Song, 2018). Chen and Lin (2019) found that social media usage indirectly affect satisfaction through perceived value,

which simultaneously directly affect satisfaction that then influences purchase intention. Moreover, scholars revealed that the information from different media forms such as text, images, video, multimedia, establish the platforms for the tourists to review and get detailed introductions and understand more about the authentic trip information and perceived the values about the environment, culture, and community of the agritourism destination, and thus promote tourists' attractions and being willing to pay for the farm tour (Hysa et al., 2022; Walsh, & Dodds, 2022). Therefore, this study hopes to explore the relationship between multiple forms of social media usage, perceived value, and their WTP for sustainable agritourism.

This article examines to what extent the multiple social media forms used by tourists make the tourists recognize and perceive the value of the sustainable agritourism and be willing to choose the higher cost but paid more agritourism services; it is also the main source of funds for the sustainable development of agritourism. And hope that the results of this research will provide tourism managers and relevant departments of governments with a strategic reference for future operation and expansion of the sustainable agritourism market, which is beneficial to attract tourists to pay for increasing the economic revenue of the agritourism industry and promoting sustainable management of agritourism.

THEORETICAL BACHGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

The two-step communication theory asserts that interpersonal communication is more likely to change the attitudes of the audience than mass communication. Many academic studies have confirmed the impact and role of consumer use of

social media in travel-related decision-making (Casaló et al., 2010; Pan et al., 2007; Parra-López et al., 2011). The impact of social media message is more widespread and faster than the traditional press channels, and the opinions some users receive from social media can significantly influence the purchasing decisions of others (Rondan-Cataluna et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2012). Joo et al. (2020) also confirmed that the more they use social networks to share travel experiences, the greater the impact on the willingness of significant others to support or agree to travel to a destination and pay for it. Extending the theory, we proposed:

Hypothesis 1:

Social media usage positively influences the WTP of sustainable agritourism.

Chen and Lin (2019) found that social media usage affect satisfaction indirectly through perceived value, which simultaneously affect satisfaction directly that then influences purchase intention. Regarding the perceived value of sustainable tourism, previous studies showed that tourists' perception of the value of sustainable tourism tend to have a higher willingness to pay (Chi et al., 2020; Mai, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2019; Park, & Sony, 2018; Talwar et al., 2020). Moreover, gender and income levels have been investigated to understand consumers' social media usage and purchasing behaviours. Females show a greater trust for information and communication in social media networks, and positively affect WTP (Dangelico et al., 2022; Dur'an-Roman et al., 2021; Sethna et al., 2017). But the effects of consumers' income level on purchasing sustainable services existed different results and needed to clarify (Dangelico et al., 2022; Namkung & Jang, 2014). Accordingly, we proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2

The perceived value positively affects the WTP of sustainable community-based tourism.

Hypothesis 3

Demographic variables (gender, monthly flexible budget) moderate the impact of social media usage and perceived value on WTP of sustainable agritourism.

METHOD AND MESUREMENT

Subjects are the tourists who had participated in the sustainable agritourism in New Taipei City in Taiwan. This research was conducted a questionnaire survey from July 2022 to January 2023. The agritourism spots selected along the Tamsui-Kavalan Trails, where ancient farm life experience preserved, including Note Shuangxi, Tai Ping Satoyama, Meet Jimuling, Shui Nan Dong, Blue Magpei Tea EcoTea Trip, provided more than half-day in-depth sustainable tourism service, natural and historic landscapes, local foods, and the farm handmade experience. And after the agritourism experiences, the managers asked the tourists to fill out online questionnaires. There're 390 valid questionnaires for data analysis.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts: (1) Moderator variables: "gender" and "Monthly flexible budget" are binominal variables. (2) Social media usage: Consumers are asked to choose which internet platform and content form to use to decide to sign up for a paid trip. Multiple options are Facebook or Instagram posts, web blog posts, websites reviews, and newsletters posts (Line, WeChat, etc.), video (YouTube, live broadcast). Each item the participant chooses, it would be scored as 1; Social media usage points must be at least 0 and at most 5. (3) Perceived value of sustainable tourism: Response options are designed with a six-point scale of Likert-type Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). (4) Willingness to pay: Each respondent was asked to answer what percentage of the additional travel expenses they were willing to pay. The additional proportion less than or equal to 5% were the ones who were willing to pay the lower price (encoded as 0); 6% or more is the one who is willing to pay the higher price (encoded as 1). This study uses binary logistic regression method for analysis.

FINDINGS

In this study, binary logistic regression was used to analyze and estimate in three models. Model 1 explores the impact of social media usage and perceived value on the willingness to pay. Model 2, based on Model 1, adds two demographic variables, including gender and available monthly budget, to the price of willingness to pay. Model 3, based on

Model 2, explores the moderating effect of population variables on social media usage and perceived value on willingness to pay. According to model 2, the best model chosen, both social media usage and perceived value have significant positive impacts on the willingness to pay. Each additional social media usage increased the odds of high willingness to pay by 35.5% (95% confidence interval: [1.096, 1.674]). When the perceived value increased by one unit, the odds of high willingness to pay increased by 2.4%. The interaction between population variants, gender and monthly flexible budget, and social media usage was not significant, as well as the perceived value (see Table 1).

DISCUSSIONS

Theoretical contributions

Based on the theory of two-step flow of communication, this study has found that consumers used social media, when increasing by one unit, the odds of high willingness to pay would increase significantly compared with the low one. Findings support many previous studies (Cui et al., 2019; Gon, 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Pike et al., 2019; Rondan-Cataluna et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2012) note that social media usage positively affects the WTP. The model fits well and effectively predict the WTP. According to the results of the research, regardless of whether the gender is male or female and the monthly flexible budget is high or low, there is no significant difference in the impact of social media usage and perceived value on the willingness to pay. Moreover, improving tourists' perception of sustainable tourism is conducive to increasing tourism revenue. These results confirm earlier research of Mai et al. (2019) and Chi et al. (2020), which suggest that perceptual value is a major factor influencing tourists' WTP higher prices for tourism services.

Practical implications

Operators may use multiple social media forms well to promote the sustainable agritourism services to enhance the consumers to meet their needs for various kinds of visual or literal information

acquisition and share comments, so as to increase their WTP for sustainable tourism, which is then beneficial to foster the agritourism profits for elevating the quality of the sustainable services. Since responsible tourism is the current trend of sustainable consumption, tourists attach importance to the value perception of tourism on the local economic, socio-cultural and ecological environment, so that tourists are willing to participate in sustainable tourism, through tourism activities to bring local community income. It's important for the tour operators or government officials to enhance the tourists' perceived value of sustainable agritourism and promote consumers to increase contact with various social platforms and content forms, whether it is posting, and video or word-of-mouth commentary. The government could cooperate with the local community, tourism operators, or industry organizations to invest and develop the sustainable tourism business in the rural farm field, and through the various contents of public (including inviting the influencers, YouTuber, bloggers) or private social media promote and convey the sustainable value of agritourism to attract the travelers visiting, participating and consuming for the tourism services, which help increase the local economic benefits and foster the tourism revenue for making more efforts to develop tourism sustainably.

Limitations and research directions

This study conducted rigorous methodological and data collection, and data analysis by logistic regression, but some limitations could be addressed in future studies: The samples collected in this study are contemporaneous intervals (cross-sectional), so the results of the analysis can only explain the current individual behavior of individuals WTP for tourism. However, the changes of tourists' behaviors still require long-term observation or consideration of the impact of society context where may be more able to determine the causal relationship between variables. Future research could examine the other factors, and even through qualitative interviews to gain insight into consumers.

Table1. Summary Table of Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

variable	Model 1		Model2		Model3	
	B(S.E.)	Exp(B)(CI)	B(S.E.)	Exp(B)(CI)	B(S.E.)	Exp(B)(CI)
Social media usage(SM)	0.318** (0.108)	1.375 (1.113,1.698)	0.303* (0.108)	1.355 (1.096, 1.674)	0.384* (0.183)	1.468 (1.025,2.102)
Perceived value (PV)	0.019 (0.011)	1.020 (0.999,1.041)	0.023* (0.011)	1.024 (1.002, 1.046)	0.047*(0. 020)	1.048 (1.008,1.09)
Gender (G)			0.508* (0.236)	1.662 (1.047, 2.638)	0.550* (0.244)	1.734 (1.074,2.8)
MFB			0.523* (0.221)	1.687 (1.093, 2.603)	0.464* (0.227)	1.591 (1.02,2.483)
G X SM					-0.022 (0.024)	0.978 (0.934,1.025)
G X PV					0.319 (0.257)	1.375 (0.831,2.274)
MFB X SM					-0.291 (0.227)	0.747 (0.479,1.165)
MFB X PV					-0.023 (0.023)	0.977 (0.934,1.023)
Omnibus Test	x2(2) =13,471**		x2(4) =24,808**		x2(8) =29,917**	
Hosmer & Lemeshow Test	x2(8) =13,572		x2(8) =8.173		x2(8) =18,069*	
Cox & Snell R2	0.034		0.062		0.074	
Nagelkerke R2	0.047		0.084		0.101	
-2 Log likelihood	496.882		485.544		480.436	

Note: * at a significant level of 0.05, ** at a significant level of 0.01, SM=Social media usage, PV=Perceived value, MFB=Monthly flexible budget, G=Gender.

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