Original Article

Unraveling the Relationship of Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use on Consumer Attitudes towards Social Networking Sites for Tourist Destination Selection

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Abstract: *This paper explores the relationship between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on consumer attitudes towards Social Networking Sites (SNS) for travel destination selection. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design and used a questionnaire as an instrument. The online questionnaire was distributed to 413 respondents through Google Forms. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the descriptive data and Pearson's R to test the relationships between the variables under investigation. Based on the study's findings, it is clear that users' attitudes toward Social Networking Sites (SNS) are associated with their assessment of perceived usefulness and ease of use. This positive relationship indicates that as these users perceive SNS as more useful and easier to use, their attitude toward using these platforms becomes more positive. The research could show how consumers understand and engage with social networking sites (SNS) while selecting travel destinations. It may also provide insights into the factors influencing consumer attitudes in this context, which can benefit marketers and businesses in the travel industry.*

Keywords: *Consumer Attitude, Perceived Ease Of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Social Networking Sites, Travel Destination Selection.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Internet technologies have significantly increased, mainly social media platforms like social networking sites (SNS) (Matikiti et al.; M., 2017). Social Networking Sites (SNS) proliferated from a platform that serves a few people online to a platform many internet users use. As mentioned by Boyd and Ellison (2007), SNSs have a profound impact on users' lives, which is not unexpected considering that they allow people to connect. Social networking has become a worldwide phenomenon due to the increase in prominence of sites for social networking.

Social networks have become an essential instrument for constructing the image of a tourist location and gaining commercial recognition in the tourism industry. Photo and video sharing have become a norm in the 21st century (R'athonyi, 2013). Creating engaging content on social networks and sharing the content and visual assets of social network members who have visited the destination might influence the destination's ability to attract new tourists. According to Varkaris & Neuhofer (2017), through sharing experiences, potential tourists may use social media as a source of a collective pool of information in planning and decision-making to research a particular destination's benefits.

One significant benefit of SNS is the simplicity with which one can access responses. Perceived usefulness reflects customers' benefits from using SNS (Khraim,2020). According to Almaiah and Alismaiel (2019), the perceived usefulness of information systems significantly influences their utilization. Users are more likely to adopt a system if they perceive it as beneficial for their performance.
Another essential component of one's intention to use technology systems is perceived ease of use. Users' view of how simple it is to communicate with technology is known as perceived ease of use. (Davis, 1989). Perceived ease of use is a crucial factor in the acceptance and usage of social networking sites. Studies such as those by Venkatesh and Venkatesh & Davis (2000) and Rauniar et al. (2014) have emphasized the importance of perceived ease of use in technology acceptance models, particularly in social media platforms like Facebook.

Existing research has delved into the motivations behind social networking site usage (Lin & Lu, 2011). Studies like those by Choi and Chung (2012) and Abed (2016) have delved into the relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use social networking sites.

However, research that directly investigates the influence of perceived usefulness and ease of use on consumer attitudes toward social networking sites for tourist destination selection is needed (Nath et al., 2019). As social networking sites continue to have a significant impact on travel decisions, the objective of the study was to ascertain the respondents' evaluations regarding perceived usefulness and ease of use, as well as the correlation between these factors and consumer attitudes regarding Social Networking Sites (SNS) for the purpose of selecting travel destinations. Addressing this gap through empirical research will advance academic knowledge and provide practical implications for the tourism industry, ultimately enhancing the consumer experience in destination selection.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is anchored on Davis' (1989) theory of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the perception of usefulness and ease of use influence people's attitudes about their intention to use an information system, which may translate into natural information system use. Lai (2019) noted that among the TAM components, perceived utility and perceived ease of use are the primary elements that either directly or indirectly influence the intention of behavior to embrace novel technologies. The current study determined the relationship between perceived usefulness and ease of use as determinants of attitude toward using SNS in tourist destination selection.

A) Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Perceived usefulness reflects the benefits that customers will obtain from using SNS. Almaiah and Alismaiel (2019) mentioned users are going to utilize a computerized system if they believe it will improve their ability to perform. Perceived utility is a key element influencing system use. Oliveira et al. (2020) stated that the perceived utility of information directly impacted purchase intention, and the antecedent constructs positively and significantly impacted the perceived usefulness of online reviews. Moreover, earlier studies demonstrated the statistically significant positive influence of perceived usefulness on actual use. (Alenazy et al., 2019; Algunbto et al., 2017; Larmusau et al., 2018). Erkan and Evans (2016), in their research conducted with UK consumers who use social media to decide about their purchases, was more relevant, suggesting a more skeptical behavior of Brazilian consumers.

B) Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

PEU is an essential factor influencing one's intention to use information technology systems. Relevant studies on perceived ease of use and attitude towards Social Networking Sites (SNS) shed light on the factors influencing users' behaviors and intentions in the context of online platforms. Research by Shi (2018) suggests a positive impact of perceived ease of use on consumers' attitudes towards SNS advertising. Additionally, studies by Jo (2022) and Hunt & Krishnan (2021) highlight the significance of perceived ease of use in providing utilitarian value to SNS users and increasing SNS use, indirectly influencing well-being. Furthermore, the research conducted by Denan et al. (2020) highlights the significance of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and privacy concerns in shaping the inclination of millennials to utilize Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as a means of job searching. This highlights the significance of user perceptions regarding the ease of use in determining their level of participation with Social Networking Sites (SNS) for diverse objectives.

Research has indicated that perceived ease of use is a critical determinant of user acceptance and adoption of technology, including social media platforms. It has been highlighted as a critical factor influencing users' attitudes towards and engagement with social networking sites, alongside perceived usefulness and other variables (Lee, 2020). On the other hand, Siamagka et al. (2015) suggest that while perceived usefulness is a significant driver of organizations' adoption of social media, perceived ease of use may only sometimes be a crucial factor in specific contexts. This indicates that the impact of perceived ease of use on social media adoption can vary depending on the specific setting and user group.

C) Attitude toward using Social Networking Sites

Yuan (2021) mentioned in his study that attitude determines one's cognitive values, which express a person's positive or negative feelings about performing a particular behavior. However, a person's mindset can affect their feelings about utilizing a social networking site and influence their engagement. Early observational research has shown that attitudes positively influence social networking sites. For instance, Hua et al. (2017), Tariq et al. (2016), and Phang Ing and Ming (2018) have found a connection between one's mindset and the desire to utilize social media. Users' actions intended to use social media might be influenced by their attitude towards using it. According to Erkan and Evans (2016), customers' favorable attitudes toward word-of-mouth information on social media have a beneficial impact on their intention to buy. This demonstrates that a user's attitude toward using social media could positively influence their decision to use it for learning.

Additionally, a number of researches have looked at attitude as a mediating construct to predict how different previous circumstances will affect behavioral intention for engaging in social media. According to Hua et al. (2017), travelers' attitudes toward using social media modulate the beneficial effects of perceived utility and perceived simplicity of use on their behavioral intentions. Similarly, research has demonstrated that attitude functions as a mediating variable between information

quality and purchase intention (Phang & Ming., 2018). Several experimental studies have been conducted to test the relationship between intention to use and actual research by Siamagka et al. (2015) suggests that while perceived usefulness is a significant driver for the adoption of social media by organizations, perceived ease of use may not always be a crucial factor in specific contexts. This indicates that the impact of perceived ease of use on social media adoption can vary depending on the specific setting and user group use. Dumpit and Fernandez (2017) and Lu and Yang (2014) examined the impact of motives on the intention to use social media sites. Matikiti et al. (2017) showed that the benefits affect attitudes toward using SNS for a trip organization, with perceived usefulness having the most significant influence. Hua et al. (2017) modeled using social media as a tool to select tourism destinations. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2018) studied the factors influencing attitudes toward using social media about festival attendance.

III. METHODOLOGY

A) Study Design

This quantitative study uses a descriptive-correlational research design to address its objectives. The descriptive correlation design describes the relationship between the variables under investigation. Studies utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design often focus on measuring variables and determining the strength and direction of relationships between them (Hamora et al., 2022). In the context of social networking sites (SNS), a descriptive-correlational research approach might help examine factors such as perceived ease of use and attitudes toward SNS usage. By investigating the relationships between these factors, researchers can gain insight into how user views of ease of use influence their attitudes toward connecting with SNS platforms.

B) Study Participants

To determine respondents who would fulfill the researcher's criteria, a question (i.e., whether the respondent used social media sites to select a destination) was set as a filter at the beginning of the questionnaire. The participants in this study were domestic tourists between 18 and 59 who traveled from 2019 to 2021 and utilized social networking sites to select travel destinations in the Philippines. The profiles of the respondents are shown below.

a. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents. The data reveals that respondents were primarily male (n=214, 51.80%), between the ages of 18 and 25 (n=229, 55.40%), college graduates (n=234, 56.66%), self-employed (n=174, 42.13%), and are earning a monthly income between ₱20,000 – ₱25,000 (n=203, 49.15%).

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile (N=413)		
Gender	**Frequency (f)**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	214	51.8
Female	199	48.2
Total	413	100
Age		
18 y/o – 25 y/o	229	55.4
26 y/o – 33 y/o	114	27.6
34 y/o – 41 y/o	45	10.9
42 y/o – 49 y/o	20	4.8
50 y/o – 59 y/o	5	1.2
Total	413	100
Highest Educational Attainment		
Doctorate	21	5.08
Master's degree	72	17.43
College Graduate	234	56.66
Short term course	69	16.70
Others		
High school graduate	4	0.97
Senior High School graduate	13	3.16
Total	413	100
Occupation		
Government employee	104	25.18x
Private Institution employee	117	28.33

	Self-employed	174	42.13
	Unemployed	18	4.36
	Total	413	100
Monthly Income			
	₱20,000 – ₱25,000	203	49.15
	₱25,001 – ₱30,000	86	20.82
	₱30,001 – ₱35,000	24	5.81
	₱35,001 – ₱40,000	23	5.57
	₱40,001 - ₱45,000	16	3.87
	₱45,001 - ₱50,000	8	1.94
	Others:		
	None	18	4.35
	₱ 10,000 - ₱15,000	12	2.90
	₱ 15,000 - ₱ 20,000	23	5.56
	Total	413	100

Source: *Data from the respondents*

C) Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This study used a 385-sample size computed using the Raosoft online calculator, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. To gather the needed data, the researcher used snowball and convenience sampling. Kirchherr and Charles (2018) state that these two sampling methods provide researchers with sufficient data to obtain conclusive results. Convenience sampling is a commonly used form of non-probability sampling where samples are selected from easily accessible locations or online platforms (Edgar & Manz, 2017). On the other hand, the snowball sampling technique creates a pool of respondents by referring to individuals with specific characteristics of interest in the research study (Frey, 2018). The sampling strategies utilized in this study are appropriate and allow researchers to reach the intended population by relying on availability and referrals.

D) Data Collection

The data was collected online using Google Forms, and informed consent was included in the online questionnaire. It was requested of each participant to indicate that they were taking the survey voluntarily. The process was limited to individuals who indicated their willingness to take part in the data gathering. Moreover, only those participants who met the inclusion criteria were counted as respondents. The questionnaire took approximately 7 to 10 minutes to complete. Informed consent ensures the confidentiality of the responses and the anonymity of the participants. Data gathering took place from May to August 2023.

E) Instrument

The survey questionnaire was used as the instrument. It was adapted from Khraim's (2020) study titled "Factors Affecting UAE Consumers' Attitudes Towards Using Social Networking Sites in Hotel Selection." The researcher sought permission from the author to utilize the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire was the demographic profile of the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire focused on variables and comprised 15 items. Seven (7) items measured perceived usefulness, five (5) items for perceived ease of use, and three (3) items for attitude towards the use of SNS. All items were measured using a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as the lowest (strongly disagree) to 6 as the highest (strongly agree).

The researchers conducted pretesting with 30 samples to check the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's alpha (CA) is used to test the reliability and internal consistency of the data. All items need to have a value equal to or greater than the suggested cut-off of 0.70 when evaluating Cronbach's Alpha, which indicates the appropriate reliability of the construct (Alzubi et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2021). Table 2 displays the Cronbach's α values for each of the research's concepts. These values range from 0.907 at the lowest possible level to 0.960 at the highest, exceeding the suggested threshold of 0.70. This suggests that all of the study's constructs were extremely trustworthy.

Table 2: Construct Test of Reliability

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
PU	7	.959
PEOU	5	.960
ATUSNS	3	.907

F) Statistical Analysis of Data

The data was collected, organized, and presented using various descriptive statistical methods, such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation. These statistical methods described the respondents' characteristics and assessments of different variables. Furthermore, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was utilized to determine the relationships between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude toward using Social Networking Sites (SNS) in selecting travel destinations.

IV. RESULTS

This study's objective was to evaluate respondents' opinions on the usefulness and ease of use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) for selecting travel destinations. Additionally, the study aimed to examine the relationship between the perceived usefulness and ease of use of SNS and their relationship to consumer attitudes toward tourist destination selection.

Table 3 shows how respondents use social media to choose. Most prefer Facebook (n=355, Rank 1). However, most respondents (n=204, 49.39%) only explore 1-2 destinations via social media in the past 3 years. Affordability (n=256, Rank 1) is the primary factor they consider when deciding on a tourist destination.

Table 2: Respondents' Usage of Social Networking Sites (SNS) usage in Selecting Travel destinations

SNS Used	Frequency (*f*)	Rank
Facebook	355	1
YouTube	217	2
Instagram	189	3
Messenger	171	4
Twitter	112	5
Others (Tiktok, Whatsapp)	6	6
Length of use of SNS	**Frequency (*f*)**	**Percentage (%)**
below 5 times	169	40.9
5 to 10 times	149	36.1
11 to 15 times	45	10.9
16 to 20 times	17	4.1
20 and above	33	8
Number Of Visited Travel Destinations Browsed Using SNS in the Last 3 Years	**Frequency (*f*)**	**Percentage (%)**
1-2 destinations	204	49.39
3-4 destinations	127	30.8
5-6 destinations	63	15.3
7-8 destinations	19	4.6
Factors considered in selecting tourist destination	**Frequency (*f*)**	**Rank**
Affordability	256	1
Attractions	223	2
Accessibility	207	3
Popularity of the destination	203	4
Safety and Security	176	5
Facilities and Amenities	163	6

Source: Data from the respondents

A) Respondents' Level of Assessment on Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Attitude towards the Use of SNS

Table 3 shows the respondents' level of assessment on the factors of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude towards the use of SNS in selecting travel destinations. Respondents were asked to rank their degree of agreement or disagreement with the various influencing elements indicated, with 6 representing the highest level of cooperation (strongly agree) and 1 representing the lowest level of disagreement (strongly disagree). The average score for overall perceived utility, perceived ease of use, as well as mindset toward the usage of social networking sites is 5.50, with a descriptive rating of strongly agree, according to the study's findings. This suggests that the respondents have a positive attitude towards social networking sites and perceive them as useful and user-friendly.

Table 3: Respondents' Level of Assessment on Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Attitude towards the Use of SNS

Perceived Usefulness (PU) (N=413)	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
PU1. Social networking sites keep me up-to-date with knowledge about a tourist destination selection.	1	6	5.45	0.68
PU2. Social networking sites allow one to reduce costs when searching for travel destinations selection.	1	6	5.45	0.697
PU3. Social networking sites offer the possibility of providing and receiving information about tourist destination selection.	1	6	5.52	0.674
PU4. Social networking sites allow consumers to stay in contact with friends with the same interests.	1	6	5.33	0.781
PU5. Social networking sites give one a strong feeling of belonging to a group.	1	6	5.31	0.785
PU6. Social networking sites can provide direct feedback through electronic word of mouth.	1	6	5.4	0.739
PU7. By using social networking sites, one's relationships with friends with similar interests increase.	1	6	5.46	0.705
Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)				
PE1. Using social networking sites for booking travel destinations will lessen the workload.	1	6	5.47	0.581
PE2. Posting travel destinations on social networking sites is cost-saving.	1	6	5.39	0.721
PE3. I always use social networking sites to look for travel destinations.	1	6	5.45	0.631
PE4. Online advertisements provide easy access to information for tourist destination selection.	1	6	5.48	0.625
PE5. I believe that using social networking sites is an effective way of communication.	1	6	5.51	0.633
Attitude toward using Social Networking Sites (ATUSNS)				
AT1. Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) are essential for selecting travel destinations.	1	6	5.45	0.647
AT2. I believe that social networking sites can significantly affect booking travel destinations.	1	6	5.49	0.606
AT3. I can book a reservation via social networking sites before the travel date.	1	6	5.57	0.585

Source: Data from the respondents

B) Relationship between Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and the Respondents' Attitude towards Using Social Networking Sites in Travel Destination Selection

     Table 4 presents the relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and the respondents' attitude toward using social networking sites in travel destination selection. Data analysis via the Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed that attitude towards using Social Networking Sites (SNS) was positively correlated with perceived usefulness and ease of use. The correlation between attitude towards SNS use and perceived usefulness was r = .444, indicating a moderate positive correlation (p < .001). Similarly, the correlation between attitude towards SNS use and perceived ease of use was r = .561, showing a stronger positive correlation (p < .001). These findings suggest that individuals who perceive SNS as more useful and easier to use tend to have more positive attitudes toward utilizing them.

Table 4: Test of the relationship between Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and The Respondents' Attitude towards Using Social Networking Sites in Travel Destination Selection

Attitude Towards Using Social Networking Sites	Perceived Usefulness (PU)	Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)
	.444**	.561**
p-value	<.001	<.001

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

     This study investigated the relationship between perceived usefulness and ease of use and the respondents' attitudes toward using social networking sites (SNS) to select travel destinations. The respondents' social networking sites (SNS) usage was also described. Respondents of this study indicated Facebook as their primary social networking site (SNS) for selecting tourist destinations, aligning with Statista's August 2023 report that using social media on a regular basis is essential. Internet users spend 151 minutes a day on average on social media and messaging apps, which is 40 more minutes than in 2015. Market leader Facebook is at present the largest and most popular social media platform globally, having become the first to reach one billion registered accounts. With around 2.9 billion monthly active users, Facebook is currently the most prominent social network globally. The respondents' primary factor in selecting a tourist destination was affordability. Perera et al. (2022) found that affordability is a crucial factor that affects a destination's image and attracts tourists. Similarly, Adesunloye and Arowosafe (2022) emphasized that the availability, affordability, and convenience of tourism transportation infrastructure contribute to a destination's accessibility quality, ultimately leading to its success. Additionally, Melasari et al. (2023) identified affordability as a significant factor influencing tourists' choice of public transportation modes.

     The study's findings also revealed that the respondents have a positive attitude toward SNSs and perceive them as useful and user-friendly. Perceived usefulness positively correlates with respondents' attitudes toward social networking sites

(SNS) in destination selections. Respondents assessed the perceived usefulness of social networking sites (SNS) as applicable for staying connected with friends and family, finding information, or planning activities such as travel. Once they find it helpful, they will favor using SNS for travel destination selection. This finding is supported by the studies of Matikiti et al. (2017), who highlight that perceived usefulness, measured by functional and social benefits, significantly influences attitudes toward using SNS for trip organization. Furthermore, the investigation on e-satisfaction and consumer attitudes towards face recognition payment Zahira & Kurniawati (2022) suggests that perceived usefulness and other variables can explain consumer attitudes toward new technologies and services.

The findings also indicated that the perceived ease of use positively correlates with the respondents' attitudes toward using social networking sites (SNS) to select travel destinations. This indicates that when individuals perceive SNS as easy to use, it will positively affect their attitude to use these sites in their travel destination selections. Research by Shi (2018) suggests a positive impact of perceived ease of use on consumers' attitudes towards SNS advertising. Additionally, studies by Jo (2022) and Hunt & Krishnan (2021) highlight the significance of perceived ease of use in providing utilitarian value to SNS users and increasing SNS use.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate a significant concurrence among the respondents' attitudes about using social networking sites (SNS) for travel destination selection. This suggests that participants generally have a positive perception of using social networking sites (SNS) for such purposes and are more likely to participate in these activities. The data accessible through social networks and tourism activities are positively impacted by social media more and more (Tankovic et al., 2022). Likewise, Matikiti et al. (2017) mention that understanding the factors influencing attitudes toward using social networking sites for trip organizations can provide insights into travelers' perceptions of using SNS for travel planning.

Based on the study's findings, it is clear that users' attitudes toward Social Networking Sites (SNS) are associated with their assessment of perceived usefulness and ease of use. This positive relationship indicates that as these users perceive SNS as more useful and easier to use, their attitude toward using these platforms becomes more positive. These results emphasize the importance of improving how useful and easy it is to use SNS to encourage users' attitudes. Understanding these relationships allows designers and developers to improve the functionality and accessibility of social networking sites, thereby potentially enhancing user engagement and satisfaction. Furthermore, these findings demonstrate the need for more research into additional factors that may influence users' attitudes toward SNS, providing valuable insights for the continued development and enhancement of social networking platforms.

Interest Conflicts
The authors declare no conflicts of interest that could influence research integrity or impartiality.

Ethical Clearance:
In conducting this study, the researcher adhered to the guidelines set by the University's Ethical Review Committee.

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