

The Relationship between Social Networks, Social Responsibility in the Reflect of Perceived Sustainability, and Tourists' Destination Decision: A Case of 5 Tay-Nguyen Provinces, Vietnam

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Abstract: *Research into the influence of tourists' social networking and perceived sustainability upon destination decision is still vague, and its prediction value has not been defined yet. Thus, it is necessary to build a theoretical model to test the relationship of (1) social networks, (2) social accountability in the reflect of perceived sustainability, (4) travel intention and (5) destination decision, which aims at clarifying, gaining and improving the sustainable perception of tourists in particular, and of consumers in general to develop sustainable tourism in the near future.*

Keywords: Social Network, Perceived Sustainability, Travel Intention, Tourism Destination Decision, Tay-Nguyen

1. Introduction

Social networks are concerned by researchers of the tourism field for both its positive and negative effects on tourism (Litvin et al., 2008). Multiple social networks are sources of customer-stored information so that actors can access that information in need (Assenov & Khurana, 2012). However, there have been still no research focusing on the positive correlations between social network and social accountability of each individual in order to reduce the negative effect of the networks.

As stated by Twumasi & Adu-Gyamfi (2013), to tourists, to come up with the decision on the destination, it is required a considerable amount of information and a big number of searches, hence, the effort to search for information is a part of planning the tour. Searching information is an important part of the tourist's experience. It can be seen that searching for information plays a key function in the tourists' choice of destination in terms of minimizing risks and uncertain about tourism service.

Tourism development in Tay-Nguyen is urged on ensuring its positive effects on economic and society, including a format to reserve cultural heritages, cultural environment, and encourage responsible tourism models to gain and share benefits, maintain and reconstruct the ecology environment, deal with climate change.

The paper aims at defining the relationship between social networks, social accountability in the reflect of perceived sustainability and the tourist destination decision in Tay-Nguyen provinces.

2. Hypotheses and theoretical research model

2.1 Correlations of Tourists' Social Network and Travel Intention

Social networks bring remarkable effects on tourists' travel intentions because they can assist organizations who manage tourist destinations to build positive images, and more important, social networks encourage potential tourists to travel. Moreover, social networks also encourage tourists to come back to the destinations. (Jalivand et al, 2012).

Hypothesis H1: *Social network (SN) positively affects travel intention of tourists (TI).*

2.2 Correlations of Tourists' Social Network and Travel Intention

According to Zhang & Zhang (2018), social network certainly affects the relationship between the awareness of sustainable development and the future plan of tourism companies and tourists. The destination managers must acknowledge the importance of regular communication with tourists via business development strategies that give them a clear view of the tourists' needs, from that, they will take reasonable action to increase the satisfaction of tourists and influence on tourist's decisions on traveling. (Zhang & Zhang, 2018)

Hypothesis H2: *Social networks (SN) have a positive effect on tourists' perceived sustainability (SP).*

2.3 Correlations of Sustainable Perception and Travel Intention of Tourists

Dolcemascolo & Martina (2011) stated that tourism quality is influenced by tourists' awareness of sustainability. Tourists who concern about the destinations tend to care much about protecting the environment, preserving local cultures, cultural heritage, and protect the image of the destinations. This concern has a huge influence on their choice of tourist destinations (Huang & Liu, 2017).

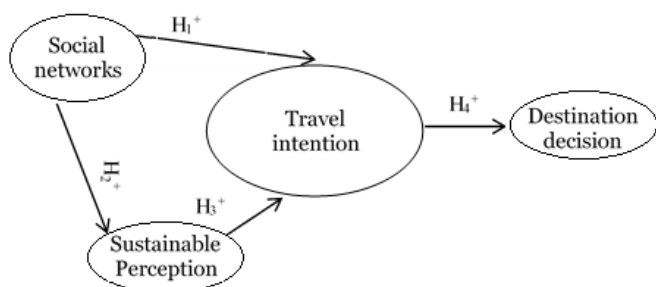
Hypothesis H3: *Perceived Sustainability (SP) positively affects tourists' travel intention (TI).*

2.4 Correlations of Tourists’ Travel Intention and Destination Decision.

Expanding TPB (Theory of planned behaviour) model by adding the contributing perceived values has shown that the intention and social networking behaviour among social networks have a positive relation to the increased values. TPB states that in terms of behaviours of the social network users, the subjective standard and conscious behavior of a person form their behavior, so it is reasonable to state that the attitude of social network users to tourism destinations, their subjective standard and controlled conscious behavior influence on their destination decision.

Hypothesis H4: travel intention (TI) positively affects destination decision (DD).

Theoretical Research Model



Source: Author

Figure 1: Research model

3. Definition & Scales

3.1 Social Networks

According to Caspary (1987) social network is a network contains relations among people, caused by networking behavior. The scale is designed based on research of Nybakk (2009) including 5 variables. The below Social Network Scale is developed after experts’ contribution:

Table 1 Scales of Social Network

Constructs	Explanations
SN1	I have many interactions with other travelers in my networks
SN2	I often have conversation with other travelers in my networks
SN3	I often discuss common tourism issues in my social networks
SN4	I play a center role in my social networks
SN5	I frequently participate in voluntary work

Note: SN = Social Network.

Source: Author

3.2 Perceived Sustainability in Tourism

According to Ciegis et al. (2009) sustainable development is "development that satisfied the current needs without any negative effect on satisfying the needs of the future generations." Ethical consumers/tourists aware of their responsibility to society and raise their concerns by their consuming behaviors (Oslo Symposium on Sustainable, 1994; 2005). In tourism, destination decision preferred sustainable destinations is a means for tourists to fulfill their responsibility of sustainable development.

The scale of perceived sustainability designed based in research of Zhang & Zhang (2018). The scale below is completed with experts’ contribution

Table 2: Perceived Sustainability Scales

Constructs	Explanations
SP1	Tourism-related business activities should respect, protect and promote the culture of Tay-Nguyen
SP2	Tourism-related business should be responsible for training human resources for Tay-Nguyen
SP3	Tourism-related business should bring more benefits to the local and the local communities in Tay-Nguyen
SP4	Tourism-related business should actively participate in the activities of the Tay-Nguyen communities.

Note: SP = Sustainable Perception

3.3 Travel Intention

Travel intention is the Perception of tourists about a specific destination (Ahn et al., 2013, Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). The intention immerses from personal belief when evaluating tourist products, builds their standard belief on a tourist product and situational factors since the time they start planning their travel or commit to traveling (Moutinho, 1987).

The scale of Travel Intention is designed based on the research of Jalivand et al (2012), the scale below is designed based on experts’ interview contribution

Table 3: Scales of Travel Intention (TI)

Constructs	Explanations
TI1	I expect to travel to Tay-Nguyen next time
TI2	I will travel to Tay-Nguyen instead of other places
TI3	If nothing changes, I am going to travel to Tay-Nguyen

Note: TI = Travel Intention.

Source: Author

3.4 Tourism destination decision

In the tourism field of research, the push and pull factors explained people travel as they are pushed and pulled by certain inherent forces (Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Travelers are under the dominance of ethical factors, social individual responsibility, so that they gain perception of the importance of individual’s behaviours toward society, thereby measuring their travel behavior (Benabou & Tirole), 2009; Ryan & Bonfied, 1980). The paper author applies scale in the research of Dorcic and Komsic (2017). The scale below is designed based on experts’ contribution

Table 4: Destination Decision Scales

Constructs	Explanations
DD1	Social networking assessment helped me in making the right decision about a tourism destination.
DD2	Others gives me advices to choose a tourism destination
DD3	I choose a tourism destination because a friend or a family member of mine want to.
DD4	Others in the group that you usually travel with agree about your destination decision.
DD5	Natural environmental attractiveness is one of the factors to choose a destination
DD6	You want to travel to your chosen destination because that is where others have traveled to

Note: DD = Destination Decision

Source: Author

4. Research Methodology

This research is conducted in mix methods: Both quantitative and qualitative.

Qualitative method employs interviewing experts to analyze independent variables in order to evaluate the model, edit the research scales is needed.

The quantitative method employs a survey by questionnaire designed for chosen objects of the research. Objects were chosen by a convenient method on the internet using Google Docs and the question “Have you ever traveled to Tay-Nguyen?” to filter suitable objects. Data was collected from 6/2018 to 6/2019. After eliminating unvalued answers, the total data includes 557 answers from 557 participants, all of whom have decided to travel to Tây nguyên.

5. Findings

Table 5: Testing the scales with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient

Scales	Cronbach’s alpha
Social Networks	0.947
Perceived Sustainability	0.800
Travel intention	0.871
Destination decision-making	0.890

Source: Author

The findings in figure 5 demonstrates the reliability of the research scales in which the reliability of variables are high and bigger than 0.6, the related variables have the sum bigger than 0.3. Conducting EFA factor analysis for 18 observed variables, 4 factors are drawn, the total variance explained 64.36% (> 50%), KMO coefficient = 0.863 (> 0.5) and Barlett test with Sig = 0.00 (<0.05) indicates the EFA analysis is appropriate.

CFA Analysis

With the total objects of 557 and the variables of 18, when performing the factor rotation with the load factor bigger than 0.5, criteria applied to access the appropriateness of factors analysis is as follows:

Table 6: Confirmatory factors Analysis (CFA)

Index	Validity	AMOS	Evaluation	Note
Chi-square/df (cmin/df)	<5	1,388	Accepted	Hair et al (2010)
CFI	>0.9	,992	Accepted	
GFI	>0.9	,966	Accepted	
TLI	>0.9	,990	Accepted	
RMSEA	<0.05	,000	Accepted	
p-value	≤ 0,05	0,002	Accepted	

Source: Author

Thus, the model scale is matched with the collected data. This means the observed variables of each scale is unidirectional.

Testing theoretical model and research hypothesis by SEM

The method of analyzing: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) by AMOS is applied to test the research model. The model tests the relationship among 4 factors: (1) social networks; (2) perceived sustainability; (3) Travel Intention; (4) travel destination decision.

The SEM result in figure 5 demonstrates the theoretical model achieves the appropriateness with data so that Chi-square = 189,883 (p=.001 < 0,005), Chi-square /df = 1,449 < 2, GFI = ,964, TLI = 0,989, CFI = 0,990 are big, RMSEA = 0,028 <0.08. The scale are tested and shows that the findings are appropriate in the theoretical model inthis research. This will be tested in an official theoretical model along with hypotheses in the linear strutured model (SEM).

As mentioned above, the research includes 4 hypotheses that need to be tested. The result of estimating the relationship between the research concepts shows that all of the factors have a mutual effect at 5%. The hypotheses are presented in Table 7:

Table 7: Study’s hypotheses results

Hypotheses	Factors	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Social networks → Tourists’ travel intention	0.171	0.041	4.161	.0000
H2	Social networks → Perceived Sustainability	0.059	0.026	2.295	0.022
H3	Perceived sustainability → Tourists’ travel intention	0.223	0.082	2.709	0.007
H4	Tourists’ travel intention → Tourism destination decision	0.059	0.028	2.086	0.037

Source: Author

6. Discussion

The research findings demonstrate the sustainable perception of tourists and their travel intention has the strongest relation (0,223), which means when the sustainable perception of tourists is higher than 1, their travel intention tends to increase to 0,223, at the same time, p of this relation is positive.

The effect of social network on the sustainable perception of tourists and the effect of tourists’ travel intention on their travel decision has the weakest relation (0,059), which means when the value of social network increases to 1, the awareness of sustainable development of tourists only raises to 0,059 and p of this relation is positive. Similarly, when the

effect of tourists' travel intention increases 1 unit, their travel destination decision will increase to 0,059. The testing result of cause-effect relationship among the research factors demonstrates that all relations contain statistical meaning, in other words, all hypotheses from H1 to H4 accepted via regressions weights normalizing the relationships between positive factors prove that all these relationships have a proportional effect on each other. To sum up, the theoretical model testing result using SEM shows that the model matches the research data. The estimating result that standardizes the cause-effect relationship of the research concepts in the theoretical model shows that these relationships are statistically meaningful ($p < 0,05$), this means the scale in the research model has achieved the theoretical relative value.

In order to generalize the research result, the result has been retested for its reliability. The testing result bootstrapping from 1.500 observes shows that the original weight is significant to the average weight of bootstrapping because all weights are within the 95% interval confidence. Consequently, estimating in this model can be concluded positive.

7. Conclusion

This research a summary of social network theories, social responsibility reflected in the awareness of sustainable development of tourists, their destination decision in the current business practice. The worth to mention the contribution of this research is it recommends and tests the model of effect of social networks on tourist destination decision. From that, the author proposes management implications to assist tourism management units in Vietnam in general, in Tay Nguyen in particular, to have a broad view in order to design appropriate marketing strategies using social networks, a common useful tool in IoT.

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Author Profile



Luu Thi Thanh Mai received an M.B.A degree from the Economic University of Ho Chi Minh City in 2006. She has been transferring marketing and soft skills lessons to business administration and travel-related-majored students since 2007 as guest lecturers for universities of Ho Chi Minh city. At the same time, she was running her own logistics business for more than 10 years. She participated in projects about tourism and human recourses for the sector. There were many pieces of research of her about tourism such as spiritual travel and also high-quality personnel training.