

## Factors Influencing Intention to Use Social Media Sites for Holiday Destination Selection by the Young Generation

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### Abstract

The main objective of the study was to examine the factors that influence attitude towards usage of social media for holiday destination selection by the young generation, specifically university students and to explore the antecedents of behavioural intention to use social media sites. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data for this study, yielding a total of 350 responses suitable for analysis. Regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that social presence, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment all positively influence attitude towards use of social media sites. Revealed by the results also is that perceived behavioural control, subjective norm and attitude also positively influence behavioural intention. Social media developers should develop sites, which are attractive, fun and exciting so that the young generation can be attracted. Moreover, destination marketers must ensure that all the important information is posted on their social media sites pages. Studies have been conducted on the usage of social media sites for searching travel related products, but limited research has been done focusing specifically on the usage of these sites by the young generation, such as university students in the South African context.

**Keywords:** Media sites, holiday, destination, young generation, intention

### Introduction

The last decade experienced an exponential growth of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Vibe, Pinterest, Instagram. Since the invention of social media, its adoption has grown exponentially (Dzandu, Boateng, Agyemang & Quansah, 2016) and is now being used by millions of users (Richard & Guppy, 2014). Statistics indicate that in 2019, there were 3.484 billion users of social media, with Facebook being the most used social networking site (Global Social Media Research, 2019). Users have the opportunity to communicate and react to postings, as well as exchange information freely while accepting emerging technologies and understanding how they can use them in their daily lives (Shirazi, 2013). Likewise, social media sites have become popular tools among the young generation for sharing status, opinions, building social networks, posting pictures and travel experiences as well as for self-indulgence (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2019; Rudež & Vodeb, 2015; Subramanian, Wise, Davis, Bhandari & Morris 2014). Social media significantly influences the travel purchase decisions of the millennials. This technology driven, tech-savvy market has different reasons of engaging



on social media sites as well as different ways of consuming tourism products (Senanayake, 2019). The young generation, especially Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2015) and Y (born between 1980 and 1994) have been described as generations, which are addicted to the screen and understand the world through accessing the internet and social media (MacKenzie, McGuire & Hartwe, 2012 & Williams, 2015). Xiang, Wang, O’Leary, & Fesenmaier, (2015) pointed out that social networking sites and blogs, play an important role in the sharing of opinions, sharing of travel related information as well as recommendations. This has triggered a need for further research on the reason people prefer to use social media, more specifically, what drives users to use social media sites (Leung, Law, Van Hoof & Buhalis, 2013). As mentioned by Dumpit and Fernandez (2017), the behavioural intention of users, particularly students` intention to use social media is unclear.

Social media sites are popular tools among travellers used for sharing their travel experience and getting advice from other tourists who have visited the same destination (Lee, Reid & Kim, 2014). Travel information can be accessed easily on mobile phones and computers and this has some serious implications for businesses in the tourism industry. Previous studies show that people are now bypassing traditional sources of information in favour of social media, for instance in Korea, a 27.6% drop in the number of travellers who use travel agents was realised in 2015 (Lyu & Wang, 2015). It is thus essential for tourism business and social media sites providers to understand what drives people to use social media sites when making travel decisions. As argued by Zavodna and Pospisil, (2018), in order to actively and effectively use any media for commercial marketing purposes, it is crucial to know the media users` behaviour. The literature on the adoption of social media for travel purposes by the young generation in the South African context is scarce, thus it was deemed necessary to carry out this study. Thus, university students were selected for this study since most of the students fall under the young generation, which is a tech-savvy generation.

Since social media is constantly growing, it is crucial to understand what drives people to use these sites for tourism purposes. To unveil these drivers or factors, the proposed study used the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB), which is a combination of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Correspondingly, some additional constructs that are not part of TAM and TPB but have been explored in the literature were included. Combining TPB variables and TAM variables may result in a comprehensive model that includes a considerable number of elements, which can explicitly describe social media adoption behaviour by the young generation, particularly in the South African context. Thus, the study`s main objectives were: 1) to examine factors which influence intention to use social media sites for holiday destination selection by the young generation and 2) to examine factors which influence attitude towards use of social media sites for holiday destination selection by the young generation.

The study contributes to literature by unveiling factors which influence the use of social media sites for travel purpose by the young generation. This study is also crucial to social media sites developers as it reveals what drives users to a particular site. To the tourism destination marketers, the study is also important as it illuminates insights on factors that influence the young generation`s attitude towards the use of social networking sites for holiday destination selection. This information is vital for marketing purposes. A section is provided below to explain the theory used to support the current study.

## **Theoretical context**

### ***Decomposed theory of planned behaviour***

The Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB) is derived from TPB but it contains a number of constructs from TAM. Though it explains technology adoption as TPB model, its



predictive power is somewhat better than TAM and TPB models (Taylor & Todd, 1995). DTPB gives a better understanding of behavioural intention since it focuses on constructs that have a high probability of influencing system use (Taylor & Todd, 1995) and makes it easier to understand the link among beliefs, attitude and behaviour intention thereby making it possible for the model to be applied to a variety of situations (Al- Gaith, 2015). From the model, one may get a comprehensive picture of the factors, which influence consumers` behavioural intention; an integrated model that captures both factors that influence attitude and behavioural intention is needed. Thus, this study proposed a model which included variables from the TBP (Attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norm and intention) model together with TAM variables (perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness) and other mostly used constructs, social presence and perceived enjoyment to examine the usage of social media by college students.

Of late, attempts have been made to blend other theoretical models, particularly those which focus on the adoption and acceptance of technologies, with TPB so as to come up with a model which best explains the behaviour of people towards system use. Lu, Zhou and Wang (2009) combined TAM and TPB variables to investigate the users` behavioural intention to use Messenger (a Facebook messaging chat platform). Their study confirmed that usefulness was significantly influenced by ease of use whereas usefulness had a significant influence on attitude and behavioural intention to use Messenger. It was also shown by Lee (2009) that this combined model offers a good predictive power on Internet banking usage intention. The study further integrates social presence into the model. The sense of being psychologically involved in social media sites and the feeling of being together are very crucial perceptions for being involved in social media activities and interactions (Al-Gaith, 2015). From the above, this study adopted the integrated model (TAM and TPB) with two more constructs from the literature, perceived enjoyment and social presence to examine usage of social media sites for destination choice by university students. All the constructs used are explained in the following subsections.

### ***Social presence and attitude towards use of social media sites***

The concept of social presence has been described as “as the degree of feeling, perception, and reaction to another intellectual entity in the computer-mediated communication environment” Tu and Mcisaac (2002:133). It is strongly related to emotional sense of belonging (Wei, Chen & Kinshuk,2012). Hassanein and Head (2005) mentioned that the impacts of social presence on the intention to use internet technologies have been established by previous studies. Hassanein and Head (2005) established a positive effect of social presence on the antecedents of attitude. Xu et al. (2012) also established a significant positive relationship between social presence and usage of social networking sites. Al-Gaith, (2015) found that social presence influences usage of social media indirectly through user attitude. Matikiti, Roberts-Lombard and Mpinganjira (2016) studied drivers of the use of social media sites and established that social presence indirectly influences usage of social networks through perceived enjoyment. It is envisaged in this study, that if social presence can indirectly influence social media usage, it can also have the potential to directly influence users` attitude towards usage of social media. Given this, it is posited that:

***H1: Social presence will positively influence attitude towards use of social media sites***

### ***Perceived ease of use***

Perceived ease of use can be described as one`s feeling and belief that no effort will be required when using a particular system (Davis et al., 1989). Users are more likely to adopt an



application, which does not require much effort or one that they think is easier to use given the scarcity of human effort (Davis et al., 1989). Individuals are willing to learn about features of a new system if it is comparatively easy to use and ultimately intend to continue using it. This is a significantly common and well-known construct in research related to the use of technology in the tourism industry (Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus & Nusair, 2016). In his seminal work, Van der Heijden (2004) studied the adoption of a movie website and confirmed that perceived ease of use strongly influences the intention to use movie websites. Ramirez-Correa, Grandon, Ramirez-Santana and Ordenes (2019) also concluded that social networking sites usage can be predicted by perceived ease of use. A study by Retno, Djoko and Pranowo (2018) revealed that the impact that perceived ease of use exerts on attitude is more than that of perceived usefulness. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

***H2: Perceived ease of use will positively influence attitude towards use of social media sites***

### ***Perceived enjoyment***

One of the reasons that drives people to use social media sites is perceived enjoyment (Hart, Ridley, Taher, Sas & Dix, 2008). Perceived enjoyment is an innate desire that emphasises the usage process and carefully considers enjoyment as well as the pleasure that follows when one uses the system (Praveen & Thomas, 2014). Perceived enjoyment can be described as the extent to which the activity of using a system is perceived as interesting and enjoyable in its own right, regardless of any anticipated performance consequences (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1992). Perceived enjoyment and attitude towards system use are considered to be significantly related (Moon & Kim, 2001). One of the earliest studies by Van der Heijden (2004), established that perceived enjoyment is one of the crucial antecedents to explain movie websites usage intention. Lee and Paris (2016) also established that perceived enjoyment has a significant influence on Facebook usage. It is also expected in this study that perceived enjoyment will influence attitude towards use of social media sites.

***H3: Perceived enjoyment will positively influence attitude towards use of social media sites.***

### ***Perceived usefulness (PU) and attitude towards social media sites***

Chinomona (2013: 261) states that ‘TAM contends that perceived usefulness is one of the bases for predicting end-user acceptance of computer technology’. Perceived usefulness can be defined as one’s belief that a system will perform and accomplish a task to the expectation of the user (Hua, Ramayah, Ping & Jun-Hwa, 2017). Hence, in this study’s context, perceived usefulness is explained as the degree to which users believe that social media sites will provide the necessary and useful travel information. Perceived usefulness can predict behavioural intention to use internet technologies (Munir, Idrus, Kadir & Jusni, 2013). Users normally reject technology if they perceived that it is not useful regardless of its ease of use (Dzandu, Boateng, Agyemang & Quansah, 2016). Sigala (2010) and Chung and Buhalis (2008) concur that perceived usefulness is one the predictors of social media sites usage. Sago (2013) concluded that the rate at which people use social media is significantly affected by the perceived usefulness level of the social media services. Matikiti, Mpinganjira and Roberts-Lombard (2017) also established that attitude towards usage of social media is influenced by perceived usefulness. Also, a study by Hua et al. (2017) revealed the same. Against this background, it is expected that this study will demonstrate that perceived usefulness can



influence the students' attitudes towards use of social media for selecting holiday destinations. Thus, it is proposed that:

***H4: Perceived usefulness will positively influence attitude towards use of social media sites***

#### ***Subjective norm and intention to use***

Subjective norm can be described as a concept that emanated from social norms widely studied by social psychologists (Hong, 2018). From sociology's perspective, a norm is regarded as a belief in a society that is considered proper and accepted culturally (George, 2004). In the same way, subjective norm is centred on the expectation that people who are closely related to someone or someone who is important will agree to a particular behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), in this context, approving the use of social media sites for choosing holiday destinations. The perceived social pressure that one gets from others causes a person to behave in a particular manner and to adhere to the opinions of those people. All these determine subjective norms (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Subjective norms can be influenced by friends, colleagues, family and mass media (Ho et al., 2015).

Several studies established that subjective norms influence behavioural intention (Heirman & Walrave, 2012; Hong, 2018; Matikiti, et al., 2017; Sane & Wiese, 2018). Sane and Wiese (2018) examined the influence of subjective norm on user engagement with Facebook advertising and concluded that subjective norm influences intention to engage with Facebook advertising. Likewise, Matikiti et al. (2017) examined social media sites' usage for holiday arrangements and established that subjective norm influences intention to use social media sites. The same was also established by Ho et al. (2018). It is thus expected that subjective norm will positively influence one's intention to use social media sites when selecting holiday destinations. With this in mind, it is hypothesised that:

***H5: Subjective norm will positively influence intention to use social media sites for holiday destination choice***

#### ***Attitude and intention to use***

Ajzen (1989), considered attitude as an individual's mental, positive or negative response to a stimulus. Attitude involves consumers' unselfconscious evaluation, which aids in online buying decision making (Pavlou & Fygensoon, 2006). Attitude can either be one's negative or positive feelings towards a particular object or system (Teo & Noyes, 2011). Attitude influences behavioural intentions to select holiday destination, usage of hotel internet technologies and user-generated content usage for trip planning (Ayeh et al., 2013; Huh et al., 2009; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). tom Dieck, Jung, Kim and Moon (2017) investigated the luxury hotels' usage of social media and confirmed that a significant relationship exists between attitude and continued use of social media sites. The same was also highlighted by Mendes-Filho, Mills, Tan and Milne (2018) study. Yakasai and Jusoh (2015) used the TPB to determine the usage of digital coupons and found that attitude exerts the strongest influence on behavioural intentions compared to other TPB factors. Hence the following hypothesis is formulated:

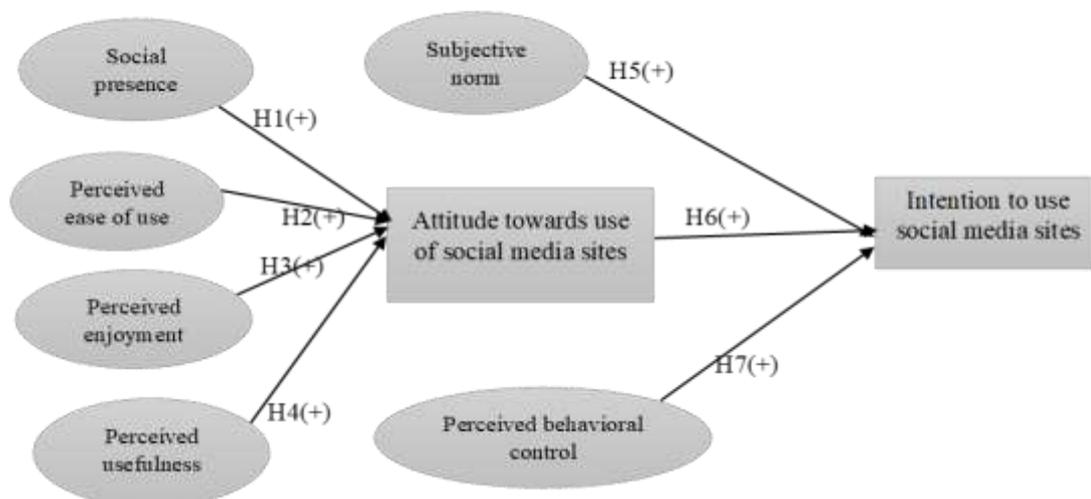
***H6: Attitude towards social media sites will positively influence intention to use social media sites for holiday destination choice***

### *Perceived behavioural control*

Perceived behavioural control can be described as one’s judgment of his/her capacity to perform the behaviour which differs from situation to situation depending on the factors that can help or deter the behaviour (Ajzen 1991, 2006). PBC judgments are guided by the degree to which an individual has access to the assets or resources required to execute the behaviour effectively, dependent on the perceived capacity of each factor to warrant or deter the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Several studies have confirmed that perceived behavioural control is a key construct for predicting behaviour intentions (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Yakasai & Jusoh, 2015; Mendes-Filho, 2018). It is also expected that perceived behavioural control will have an influence on usage intention in this study. It is thus hypothesised that:

***H7: Perceived behavioural control will positively influence intention to use social media sites for holiday destination choice***

To achieve the proposed objectives, the model below (Figure 1) was proposed showing the anticipated relationships of the constructs.



**Figure 1: Proposed model**  
 Source: Authors

The framework used TPB theory and TAM variables. It is proposed that social presence, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness positively influence the intention to use social media sites for destination selection through attitude towards social media sites. Moreover, it is argued that the intention to use social media sites is positively influenced by subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

### **Methodology**

The study used a quantitative research design. The study’s main objective was to examine factors which influence intention to use social media sites for holiday destination selection by the young generation. The relationships among the study’s variables were tested since a model was proposed (Zikmund, 1984). Data were collected through a cross-sectional approach using a structured questionnaire. The target population for this study consisted of Central University of technology students who were in their third year, B tech, masters and doctorate students in the Faculty of Management Sciences. Only those students who fell under the young generation



category, which includes generation Y (born between 1980 and 1994) and generation Z (born between 1995 and 2015) where considered as young generation. Thus, masters and doctoral students who fell under these two categories were included. Thus, these students fall under the young generation category therefore, they were selected. A non-probability, purposive sampling technique was employed. When one wants to focus on a particular characteristic of a population which enables them to answer the objective of the study, a purposive sampling technique is ideal (Hu & Bentler,1999). Since the study was focusing on a particular group of students, purposive sampling was deemed necessary. The researcher administered the questionnaire. Ethical approval was sought from the Faculty Research Committee before data were collected from the students.

To measure the study's constructs, items were derived from previous literature and adapted to suit this study. The list of items used is presented in Table 1. The initial part of the questionnaire solicited biographic information of the respondents and the last part contained questions pertaining to the constructs of the study. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used in the study. The questionnaire was tested on a small scale (pilot testing) on the campus to check the questions' appropriateness on each study level and it was revealed that most of the students were familiar with the terms used in the questionnaire. As suggested by previous researchers, the questionnaire was self-administered, and the researcher explained the requirements of the questions to enhance to ensure that quality responses are obtained (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). In total 400 questionnaires were administered to students in the month of August at different places for instance, in their classes, at dining halls and in the library. Students were given an opportunity to answer the questionnaire during their spare time and return them to the researcher upon completion. A total 370 questionnaires were obtained after making all necessary efforts to get feedback, and 350 questionnaires were retained for analysis since 20 of the questionnaires were unusable, they were found to be incomplete in various aspects.

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed when analysing the data. The study's hypotheses were tested using Regression. The reliability of the constructs was tested using the Chronbach Alpha test and validity of the items used was tested. KMO and Bartlett's test were performed to assess sampling adequacy.

**Table 1: List of items used in the study**

Construct	Items	Source
Social presence (SP)	SP1. There is a sense of human contact on this social media site. SP2. I feel comfortable in using this social media site to search for trip information. SP3. There is a sense of human warmth on this social media site. SP4. I was able to appreciate the humor of other members of this social media site. SP5. This social media site allows its members to engage in blog discussions.	Tu & Mcisaac (2002).
Ease of use (EU)	EU1. This social media site is easy to use. EU2. My interaction with this social media site is clear and understandable. EU3. Interacting with this social media site does not require my mental effort.	Davis (1989)
Perceived enjoyment (PE)	PE1. Spending time on this social media site is exciting. PE2. Spending time on this social media site is pleasant. PE3. Spending time on this social media site is interesting. PE4. Spending time on this social media site is enjoyable.	Novak, Hoffman, Yung (2000)
Subjective Norm (SN)	SN1. Most people close to me think I should use social media sites when planning and organising a trip. SN2. People whom I trust recommend me to use social media sites when searching for tourism destination.	Dholakia, Bagozzi, Pearo (2004).



	SN3. Other people I know expect that people like me should use media networking sites when planning and organising trips. SN4. People whose opinion I value would prefer me to use social media sites when searching for tourist destinations.	
Perceived Behavioural control (PBC)	PBC1. I can easily use social media sites when planning and organising trips. PBC2. I have the knowledge and ability to use social media sites to search for travel information. PBC3. I am confident that I can use social media sites for planning and organising trips. PBC4. I am confident that I can successfully use social media sites to organise a trip.	Dholakia, Bagozzi, Pearo (2004).
Perceived usefulness (PU)	PU1. Using social media sites would help me quickly get information on tourist destinations. PU2. Using social media sites would make it easier for me to make trip arrangements. PU3. I would find social media sites to be useful when searching for tourist destination sites. PU4. Using social media sites would help me to keep track with emerging tourist destination sites.	Moore, C. & Benbasat, I. (2001); Davis (1989)
Attitude towards use (ATT)	ATT1. I am positive towards the use of social networking sites for trip organisation. ATT2. I like the idea of using social networking sites for trip organisation. ATT3. I think the idea of using social networking sites for search for tourism destination is wise. ATT4. It makes sense to use social networks when planning and organising a trip.	Davis (1989)
Intention to use social media sites (INT)	INT1. I plan to continue using social networking sites when planning and organising trips INT2. I predict I will continue use social networking sites for trip organization INT3. I am sure that I will use social networking sites to search for tourist destinations in future INT4. I intend to use social networking sites in planning and organising trips in the future	Davis (1989)

### **Sample description**

Out of the 350 students who completed the questionnaire, 56,5% were females and 43.5% were males. In terms of study level, the majority of the students were 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (69.6%) followed by B tech honours students (21.7%). 7.4 % of the students were at masters level and only 1.3% were doctoral students. In terms of age, most students were in the 18-22 age category (73.9%). In the 23-27 age category only 19.1% of the students were found. 5.7% of the students were in the 28-32 age category and 1.3% of the students were studying towards doctoral degrees. Students were asked to state the social media sites they normally refer to when searching for tourism destination, the results revealed that Facebook (78.3%) was cited as the most popular site used by students when checking tourism destinations, students also cited Instagram (52.2%) as another site they use when checking destinations. This is in line with the findings of Tong (2018) which revealed that Instagram is emerging as one of the most popular sites amongst the youth for the travel decision making process.

### **Reliability of the constructs**

The reliability of the variables was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha test. The results revealed that all the variables scored alpha coefficient values above 0.7, which is cut-off value according to Hu and Bentler (1999) implying that the scales were reliable and had high internal consistency. Reliability results are displayed in Table 2, with the values ranging from 0.789 to 0.961.



**Table 2: Reliability results**

Construct	No of items	Cronbach Alpha
Social presence	4	.879
Ease of use	3	.941
Perceived enjoyment	4	.961
Perceived usefulness	4	.902
Attitude	4	.789
Subjective norm	4	.912
Perceived behavioural control	3	.845
Intention to use social media	4	.796

The obtained Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO for the scale items was 0.823, as in Table 3, higher than the recommended minimum value of 0.6, indicating an acceptable level. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity measure (Chi-Square = 3921.967,  $p < 0.000$ ) is significant (Herington & Weaven, 2007; Hair et al., 2006), validating the size of the sample of 230 used in this study.

**Table 3: KMO & Bartlett’s test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.823	
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3927.967
	Df	46
	Sig.	.000

Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to conduct simple correlation amongst the variables of the study. This was performed to check the constructs’ discriminant validity. As shown in Table 5 all the inter-construct correlation values are less than the square root of the AVE for each construct confirming discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker (1981). The square root values are the diagonal italicised values in Table 5. Regression model was used to test multicollinearity by checking collinearity statistics specifically Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance.

**Table 4: Multicollinearity test**

Dependent variable	Direction of path	Independent variables	Collinearity Statistics	
			Tolerance	VIF
Attitude		Social presence	.543	1.327
Attitude	←	Ease of use	.457	2.120
Attitude	←	Perceived enjoyment	.721	1.706
Attitude	←	Perceived usefulness	.667	1.243
Intention	←	Attitude	.583	1.131
Intention	←	Subjective norm	.552	1.245
Intention	←	Perceived behavioural control	.708	1.487

The obtained tolerance values were from 721 to 0.457 as shown in Table 4. Collinearity can also be quantified using variance inflation factors (VIF). Some authors suggest that a variance inflation factor (VIF) which is 10 or less than 10 is fine (Asher, 1983; Lee, 2006). It is suggested by Lee (2009) that a variance inflation factor (VIF) of more than 3 signals serious multicollinearity problems. Thus, in this study only VIF values less than 3 were considered appropriate. As shown in Table 4, all the VIF values were less than 3, the values ranged from 1.243 to 2.120. Thus, no sign of multicollinearity was realised.

**Table 5: Correlations of study variables**

	SP	ATT	PE	EU	PB	PBC	SN	INT
Social presence (SP)	<i>0.791*</i>							
Attitude (ATT)	0.612	<i>0.738*</i>						
Perceived Enjoyment (PE)	0.712	0.533	<i>0.745*</i>					
Ease of Use (EU)	0.554	0.640	0.601	<i>0.843*</i>				
Perceived benefits (PB)	0.641	0.577	0.622	0.723	<i>0.767*</i>			

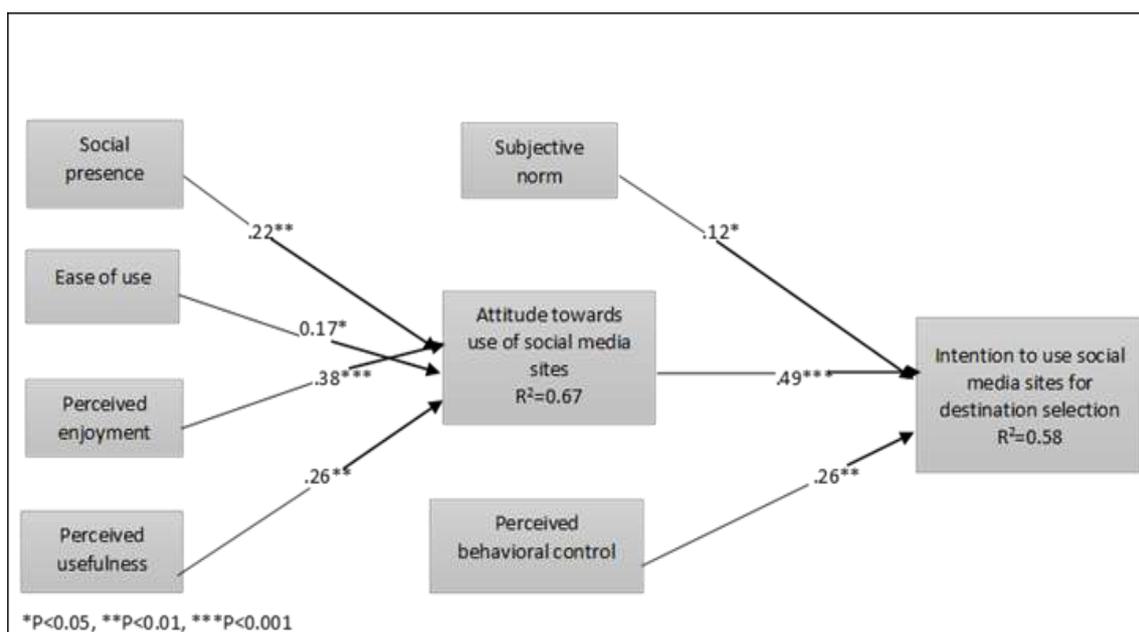


Perceived behavioural control (PBC)	0.611	0.553	0.553	0.714	0.623	<b>0.801*</b>		
Subjective norm (SN)	0.522	0.701	0.665	0.615	0.613	0.661	<b>0.768*</b>	
Intention to use (INT)	0.62	0.673	0.587	0.532	0.643	0.571	0.573	<b>0.781*</b>

The results in Figure 2 and Table 6 show that the proposed paths are all significant, and the model has good explanatory power, 67% of the variance in attitude towards social media sites is explained by social presence, ease of use, perceived enjoyment and perceived benefits. Attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control explain 58% of variance in intention to use social media sites. After all the above tests were performed, the proposed hypotheses were tested used multiple regression analysis. The four first independent variables, social presence, ease of use, perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness were regressed on attitude towards use of social media sites. The results in Table 6 show all the four constructs, social presence ( $\beta=.221$ ;  $P<0.01$ ), ease of use ( $\beta=.173$ ;  $P<0.05$ ), perceived enjoyment ( $\beta=.379$ ;  $P<0.001$ ) and perceived benefits ( $\beta=.264$ ;  $P<0.002$ ) significantly influence attitude towards use of social media sites. Hence, Hypotheses 1,2,3&4 were accepted. Moreover, Attitude ( $\beta=.488$ ;  $P<0.001$ ), subjective norm ( $\beta=.124$ ;  $p<0,05$ ) and perceived behavioural control ( $\beta=.260$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) also influence intention to use social media sites for holiday destination selection. The implication is that hypotheses 5, 6 & 7 were accepted.

**Table 6: Coefficient results for proposed model**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardised coefficient Beta	T	Sig
		B	Std. Error			
Attitude	Social presence	.238	.031	.221	3.195	.002
Attitude	Ease of use	.194	.066	.173	2.331	.034
Attitude	Perceived enjoyment	.395	.082	.379	6.243	.000
Attitude	Perceived benefits	.282	.041	.264	2.995	.002
Intention	Attitude	.441	.065	.488	16.043	.000
Intention	Subjective Norm	.139	.032	.124	2.865	.003
Intention	Perceived behavioural control	.276	.029	.260	3.001	.004





## Discussion

The main goal was to establish factors that drive university students to use social media sites when selecting tourism destinations. The study adopted TAM and TPB variables to achieve this goal. The results confirmed that a combination of the two theories, together with the other two constructs which are widely used in the literature offers a comprehensive model which can aid in explaining the dynamics in social media adoption in the tourism industry, especially by the young generation. The results revealed that social presence influence attitude towards use of social media sites for tourism destination selection. Previous studies also support this finding as Hassanein and Head (2005) and Matikiti et al. (2016) confirmed that social presence, directly and indirectly, influences attitude towards social networking sites' usage for making trip arrangements. Therefore, the feeling of human contact in most social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram positively influences people's attitude towards social media sites.

Furthermore, the results also revealed that perceived ease of use positively influences attitude towards use of social media sites for destination selection. As stated by Davis et al. (1989) people tend to adopt and develop a positive attitude towards a system which is relatively easy to use, the one which does not require much human effort. This is similar to the findings of previous studies, such as Van der Heijden (2004) who established that perceived ease of use influences users' attitude towards usage of movie websites and Retno et al. (2018) who confirmed that ease of use influences attitude towards technology acceptance. This implies that internet technologies that are difficult to use are likely to be shunned by users (Davis et al., 1989).

Attitude towards social media usage was also found to be influenced by perceived enjoyment. If users are interested and pleased with using a particular media site, they tend to develop a positive attitude towards that site (Praveen & Thomas, 2014). Most social media sites are so attractive to young adults for instance students since they allow people to chat and exchange photos; that social interaction can help enhance user's attitude towards usage of social media (Matikiti et al., 2017). Thus, social media sites developers should ensure that they include features on their sites that allow people to chat and have fun to attract users on their sites. In addition, the results of this study confirmed that perceived usefulness influences users' attitudes towards use of social media sites to search for tourism destination. The more users regard social media sites as useful for providing travel information, the more they have a positive attitude towards them. This result is similar with previous studies such as Hua et al. (2017) and Matikiti et al. (2017), they established that perceived usefulness has a significant positive impact on attitude towards use of social media sites. From all the antecedents of attitude towards social media sites proposed, it was revealed that perceived enjoyment ( $\beta=.38$ ) exerts the most considerable impact on attitude towards use of social media sites for tourism holiday destination selection.

The study further tested the influence of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on intention to use social media sites for holiday destination selection. Revealed by the study is that attitude towards use of social media sites has a strong influence on intention to use social media sites for holiday destination choices. Previous studies also confirmed that a positive link exists between attitude and intention to use sites to seek travel information. Yakasai and Jusoh (2015) also established that attitude towards social media sites exert more influence and attention than other Theory of planned behaviour constructs showing that when users develop a positive attitude towards a site, it also arouses their intention to use that site.

In line with Ho et al. (2018), this study established a significant link between subjective norm and intention to use social media sites when making tourism destination choices. The pressure which comes from peers and relatives can influence one's behavioural intention



(Heirman & Walrave, 2012). It shows that the intention to adopt a particular system is influenced not only by an individual's choice but also by the surrounding people and close relatives (Passafaro, Livi & Kossic, 2019; Vesely & Klocker, 2018). Lastly, it was confirmed by the study that perceived behavioural control again influences intention to use social media sites when making tourism destination choices. When users believe or are confident that they can use a system to execute their task, in this case, to search for holiday destinations their intention to use that system for that particular task is evoked. Similarly, Lam and Hsu, (2006) Yakasai and Jusoh, (2015) and Mendes-Filho, (2018) also established that perceived behavioural control influences behavioural intentions. As revealed by the results, attitude ( $\beta=.488$ ) exerts the greatest influence on intention than subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. Similarly, Yakasai and Jusoh (2015) also established the same. Therefore, attitude plays a key role in the determination of behavioural intention.

The antecedents of attitude towards social media sites and the mediating role of attitude have been established by the study. Thus, when studying social media adoption for travel purposes both TAM and TPB constructs are important. The study proved that the Decomposed Theory of Planned behaviour is applicable in explaining systems adoption specifically social media adoption for travel purposes.

### **Theoretical implications**

The study has advanced literature on social media usage in the tourism industry. A comprehensive model was developed, tested and validated showing the relationships between the different constructs. The study supports the body of literature (Al Gaith, 2015; Retno et al., 2018; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Matikiti et al., 2017) which shows that TAM and TPB can be used to explain technology adoption. A combination of the two theories can bring a comprehensive understanding of the reason why users adopt certain technologies especially social media technologies. The study also extended the model by adopting other constructs which are widely used in literature, namely social presence and perceived enjoyment, these constructs were tested and validated. Thus, future studies focusing on social media adoption can be recommended to also take into account these additional constructs.

The extended model also proved that TPB constructs are ideal for explaining behavioural intention on usage of social media sites. The study verified the applicability of this theory in explaining users' intentions to embrace a particular system. In addition, the study also paves a way for future studies in the same domain since a little has been done concerning usage of social media sites for travel purposes by university students in the South African perspective.

### **Recommendations**

Emanating from the findings above, the study proposes the following recommendations. The results revealed that perceived enjoyment is one of the greatest factors which influences attitude towards usage of social media for travel purposes. Thus, it is advisable that social media sites developers should make sites that are attractive, fun and exciting so that people can be attracted. Creating sites which support chat groups can enhance enjoyment as people can chat and share their photos and travel experiences. Seeing pictures and reading other people's experiences attract people to social media sites. Thus, social media sites are encouraged to come up with features, which keep people on their social media sites. Social media sites should provide users with enjoyable and pleasant experiences. Moreover, the results revealed that another factor which influences attitude towards social media sites is social presence. Users will be attracted to those social media sites that can allow them to feel as if they are engaged in real-life



communication. Those sites that give users the opportunity to use video calling facility or chatting with each other whilst seeing their photos can enhance the human contact aspect.

Social media sites users frequently use sites which are useful, easy and convenient to them. Thus, social media sites must be simple, user-friendly and beneficial. Users should not struggle to operate the site and they should also find it easy to get the information they will be looking for. Thus, social media sites should be accessed on both computers and mobile devices so that users can access them wherever they are as long as they are online. This is specifically important in order to get the market of university students since they rely most on their mobile devices. When marketing their services on social media platforms, tourism destinations should ensure that all the relevant information is included so that users can get important information quickly, for instance, putting all the service on offer, directions, accommodation facilities, prices and other relevant information on a destination's social media page helps users to access the information easily. Influencing the attitude of people towards the use of social media should be the main agenda of social media site developers as well as tourism destination marketers as it has a strong bearing on users' behavioural intention. For instance, in order to influence the attitude of the young generation, especially the students, social media sites must be fun, exciting and enjoyable so that they find a reason to continue visiting the site.

## Conclusion

The study's main aim was to examine the factors that influence attitude towards use of social media for holiday destination selection by college students. Both TAM and TPB constructs were adopted to come up with the conceptual framework of this study. Results revealed that attitude towards the use of social media sites is triggered by a number of factors which include social presence, ease of use, perceived usefulness as well as perceived enjoyment. Moreover, perceived enjoyment was found to be the factor which exerts the strongest influence on attitude towards use of social media sites. The study also established that attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm influence behaviour intention to use social media sites for holiday destination selection. It is recommended that social media sites developers should consider the aspects of enjoyment and user-friendliness when developing social media sites. Furthermore, tourism destinations are advised to make sure that all the relevant information needed by tourists are available on their social media sites.

Limitations are inherent in any research study as one study cannot cover all aspects. Thus, this present study had some limitations. The study used a sample from only one university so the results might not give a true replica of social media usage by the young generation, but the findings were similar to the findings of previous studies so can be generalised. Again, the study used a cross-sectional approach to collect data, so the results may not show exactly what is happening regarding social media usage. Future studies might need to use a large sample size or include various universities to get a clear picture of what actually drives university students to use social media sites.

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