

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE EFFECT OF INFORMATION
ADOPTION FROM SOCIAL MEDIA
ON CHINA'S DESTINATION
ATTITUDE AND DESTINATION
VISIT INTENTION**

YUAN TIAN

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Business Management)

Faculty of Business and Management

December 2025

ABSTRACT

As Internet technology advances and smartphones become widespread, social media has become a crucial platform for travellers to obtain and share information about tourism destinations. It not only facilitates information exchange but also serves as an effective medium for destination promotion. Although China remains one of the world's major tourism destinations, research on how social media promotes Chinese destinations and influences foreign tourists' travel intentions is limited, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study examines the influence of social media information on the travel intentions of foreign tourists toward China, with a primary focus on non-Chinese citizens aged 18 and older who reside outside of China and have not visited China since the onset of COVID-19. Data were collected using a non-probability sampling method, yielding 311 valid responses. SmartPLS 4.0 software was employed to perform Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) for hypothesis testing. The results reveal that information quality and information credibility have a significant influence on information usefulness, which in turn positively affects information adoption. Information adoption enhances destination image recognition, which in turn shapes destination attitude and visit intention. Theoretically, this study integrates the Information Adoption Model (IAM) and the ABC model of attitudes to construct a comprehensive framework explaining how social media information influences tourists' perceptions and behavioural intentions. Empirically, it offers new insights into how foreign tourists form destination image recognition and travel intentions toward China through social media, thereby addressing a significant research gap in post-pandemic tourism studies. This research contributes original value by extending information adoption theory to the context of international tourism destination marketing, enriching the understanding of how social media information shapes cross-cultural travel behaviour and promoting the global visibility of Chinese destinations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I am genuinely grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Sharifah Nurafizah Binti Syed Annuar, for allowing me to conduct research and for her invaluable guidance. Her dynamism, vision, sincerity, and motivation have deeply inspired me. She taught me the methodology to carry out the research and present the research work as clearly as possible. Working and studying under her guidance was a great privilege and honour.

I would also like to thank my associate supervisor, Dr. Cynthia Annamaria Robert Dawayan, who gave me selfless help when I encountered difficulties. Also, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Hendry Joseph and Dr. Lor Chor Wai, who have been very patient in providing me with advice and help.

I would also like to thank my colleagues and friends for their constant encouragement throughout this project.

Next, I would like to thank my family for the selfless love and support my parents have given me so that I can focus on my research.

Finally, I would like to thank UiTM and all the teachers and students who have helped me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF PLATES	xvii
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xviii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.2.1 The History of Tourism Development	2
1.2.2 Recovery of China's Inbound Tourism	4
1.2.3 The Role of Social Media in Tourism	5
1.2.3.1 <i>Social Media Shifting Travellers' Decision-Making Paradigms</i>	6
1.2.3.2 <i>Social Media Has a Positive Effect on Tourism Recovery</i>	7
1.3 Problem Statement	10
1.3.1 Research Gap in Shaping International Destination Image through Social Media	11
1.3.2 Research Gap in International Tourists' Post-Pandemic Travel Intention	13
1.3.3 Research Gap in Applying the Information Adoption Model (IAM) to Tourism Contexts	15
1.4 Research Questions	16

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the research regarding the usage of social media to market tourism destinations. The emergence of social media has revolutionised the conventional tourism decision-making framework. The platform has transformed the norm of tourism information from a unilateral to a bilateral exchange and enhanced its timeliness; for instance, tourists can promptly share their vacation experiences and reviews of destinations via various social media sites. This research explores the influence of international tourists' adoption of information about Chinese tourist destinations through social media on their destination attitudes and visit intentions.

The first chapter of this dissertation will provide an overview of the impact of social media on visitor's decision-making behaviour, accompanied by a detailed discussion in numerous subsections for clarity. Chapter 1 commences with the study's context; this research examines the evolution of inbound tourism in China alongside the advancement of social media. This study investigates the influence of information adoption on attitudes and intentions to visit a tourist destination, specifically analysing the effect of social media on tourists' decision-making behaviour. Following that, this chapter presents the problem statement, research objectives, research question, and the significance of the study. This chapter also provides precise definitions of the fundamental terms in the subject. At the end of the chapter, it presents a brief overview of the organisation of the remaining chapters.

1.2 Background of the Study

Social media's growing utilisation and endorsement have revolutionised corporate operations, particularly in tourism marketing (Agyapong & Yuan, 2022). Social media is an efficient medium for the tourism sector, primarily for disseminating tourism information to travellers and providers (Leung, 2019). A burgeoning corpus of literature indicates that social media can impact travellers' decision-making and