TOURISTS' ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, DESTINATION ADVOCACY AND REVISIT INTENTION

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Abstract. Social media has become an effective engagement tool for businesses and organizations in the tourism sector. This study examines the influence of social media engagement behaviors at various levels (consumption, contribution, creation) on destination advocacy and revisiting intention. Survey results from 273 tourists reveal that consuming behaviors influence destination advocacy and revisiting intention; creating behaviors only influence destination advocacy, and contributing behaviors do not significantly impact destination support and the intention to revisit. The study facilitates a deeper understanding of consumer behavior on social media and aids businesses and effective marketing organizations on social media platforms.

Keywords: engagement behaviors, social media, destination advocacy, revisit intention

1   Introduction

Social media have become popular tools of communication for tourists before, during, and after their trips. It has become an essential source of information for tourists when making tourism-related decisions such as travel packages, airline tickets, hotel reservations, excursions, and other destination-related features [1]. During the trip, they can exchange travel information with other tourists nearby or globally [2]. After the trip, they can easily share their travel experiences by text or images on Tripadvisor or Booking.com.

Many tourism businesses and organisations have established their presence online on social media and try to create and sustain effective tourism promotion campaigns with their customers [3]. Social media page owners encourage tourists to engage on their pages to read the information posted and exchange ideas and experiences about tourism products with relatives, friends, or strangers [2]. Companies and organisations leverage customer engagement strategies to strengthen customer-brand relationships [4].

Although numerous studies recognize the complexity of social media engagement, some oversimplify it by relying on basic metrics such as the number of likes or shares [5]. [6] used the metric engagement rate, which is the percentage of the number of followers, posts, likes, comments, and shares in a specific time on the total engagement. [7] employed Word-of-Mouth

(WOM) to gauge customer engagement behavior. Besides, the consumers' online engagement behaviors can affect brand-related outcomes, such as brand trust [8] and purchase intention [9]. However, the outcomes of the tourists' engagement behaviors with tourism destinations have not been explored.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by utilizing the comprehensive framework known as the "Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities" (COBRAs) [10] to thoroughly examine tourists' engagement behaviors on social media within the tourism context. Moreover, this study will investigate the effects of tourists' behaviors on social media on further brand-related aspects, including destination advocacy and their potential actions with tourism destinations, such as the revisit intention. This study has practical contributions by providing insights for tourism businesses and organizations to enhance their marketing strategies, specifically regarding engaging with tourists on social media. These insights can help increase tourist support for tourism destinations, benefiting the industry as a whole.

2   Literature review

2.1   Tourists' engagement behaviors on social media

Engagement is a multifaceted concept explored in psychology, organizational behavior, sociology, etc. It is diverse in many contexts, such as community engagement, employee engagement, or social engagement [11]. Engagement usually includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral states.

Brand engagement is the activity between customers and brands to contribute directly (purchases) and indirectly (referrals, chats, recommendations) to the enterprise's value [12]. Brand engagement can comprise 3 dimensions: cognition, emotion, and behaviors [13]. Cognitive engagement refers to mental processes related to attention and attraction towards things and phenomena. Effective engagement involves displaying enthusiasm and interest. Behavioral engagement is demonstrated through positive actions such as sharing, learning, and advocacy [14]. Brand engagement can be a challenging idea to comprehend as it's not easy to quantify customer cognition and emotion. Therefore, it's recommended to concentrate on the behaviors to exhibit social media user engagement [15].

Social media engagement behavior pertains to how consumers interact with a brand on social media platforms, and this can be demonstrated through various degrees or levels [16]. According to [10] categorization, brand engagement behaviors can be divided into three groups: consumption, contribution, and creation. The lowest level is consumption, which involves activities such as reading content or watching videos. The next level is contribution, which encompasses interactions between consumers and content or between consumers themselves.

The strongest level is creation, which involves generating and publishing content on social media platforms.

In tourism, social media has risen as a key tool for enhancing engagement behavior [17]. Tourists can engage tourism destinations by following, commenting, and sharing posts on social media. Tourists' engagement behaviors are viewed as a potent indicator of tourist loyalty and intention to visit the destination [18].

2.2   Destination advocacy

Brand advocacy is the endorsing behaviors for a specific brand or company by the customers [19]. They not only purchase products/services from a brand but also spread the word and invite others to the brand [20]. Feedback and referrals from customers can help a company uphold its favorable reputation [21].

Brand advocacy is critical because it can facilitate the adoption of a product or service and help create value for the brand owner [22]. In this study, we argue that online engagement of tourists can lead to destination advocacy. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a-H1c: Tourists' online engagement behaviors including (a) consuming, (b) contributing, and (c) creating are positively associated with destination advocacy.

2.3   Revisit intentions

Revisit intentions mean a visitor's desire or willingness to a particular location [23]. It is crucial to measure the tourism destination's success [24]. Revisit intentions have been investigated as a consequence of marketing efforts in various circumstances [25, 26]. In this study, we propose that tourists who are more engaged with tourism destination on social media are more likely to revisit that destinations. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2a-H2c: Tourists' online engagement behaviors including (a) consuming, (b) contributing, and (c) creating are positively associated with revisit intention.

The relationship between brand advocacy and repurchase intention has been examined in marketing studies. However, the influence of destination advocacy on revisiting intention is not popularly investigated. This study proposes that if tourists advocate more for the tourism destination, they are more likely to revisit that destination. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Destination advocacy is positively associated with revisit intention.

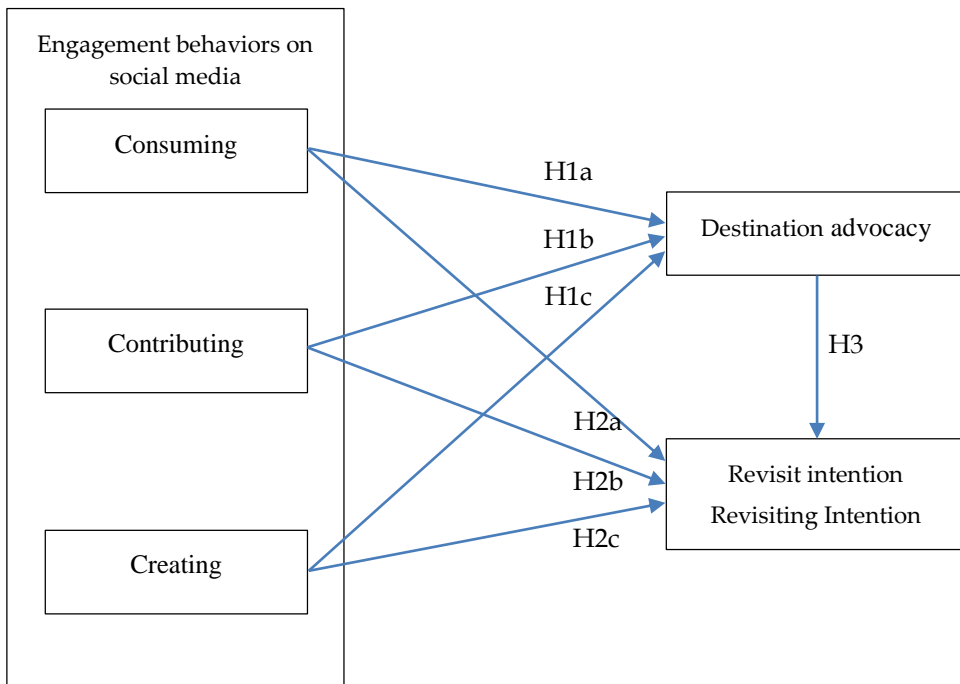From developing the above hypotheses, the proposed research model is presented in the following figure:

Figure 1. Proposed research model

3   Methodology

3.1   Data collection

Hue City was chosen as it is a well-known tourism destination in Vietnam, having more than 2 million tourists annually [27]. Hue City is recognized as a world cultural heritage and has many traditional craft villages. Hue offers a rich cultural experience with over 500 different festivals and art forms. To promote this destination image, Hue City has established its presence and run many campaigns on social media, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube [28].

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with questionnaires. Respondents are tourists who are visiting Hue city and have been using social networks to engage with Hue tourism destinations. Sampling method is convenient in tourist attractions that are frequently visited by tourists. The data was collected from July 2022 to September 2022. This was the period when the COVID-19 outbreak had been controlled, and Hue City was trying to promote its tourism images on various forms of media to recover the tourism industry. The collected results of 273 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis.

3.2   Measurement

The observed variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with (1) being "Strongly Disagree" and (7) being "Strongly Agree". The measurement scale for social media engagement behavior was adapted and modified from Schivinski (2016), the measurement scale for destination advocacy was adopted and modified from Rather [30], and the revisiting intention scale was adapted and modified from Huang & Hsu [31]. The contents of these measurement scales are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Scale measurement

Construct		Statement	Sources
Consuming behaviors	CS1	I read posts related to Hue tourism destination on social media	[29]
	CS2	I read page(s) related to Hue tourism destination on social network sites	
	CS3	I watch pictures/graphics related to Hue tourism destination	
	CS4	I follow blogs related to Hue tourism destination	
	CS5	I follow Hue tourism destination on social network sites	
Contributing behaviors	CT1	I comment on videos related to Hue tourism destination	[29]
	CT2	I comment on posts related to Hue tourism destination	
	CT3	I comment on pictures/ graphics related to Hue tourism destination	
	CT4	I share Hue tourism destination-related posts	
	CT5	I "Like" pictures/ graphics related to Hue tourism destination	

	CT6	I "Like" posts related to Hue tourism destination	
Creating behaviors	**CR1**	I initiate posts related to Hue tourism destination	[29]
	CR2	I initiate posts related to Hue tourism destination on social network sites	
	CR3	I post pictures/graphics related to Hue tourism destination	
	CR4	I write reviews related to Hue tourism destination	
	CR5	I write posts related to Hue tourism destination on forums	
	CR6	I post videos that show Hue tourism destination	
Destination advocacy	**DA1**	I love to talk about the good points of Hue tourism destination to people I know	[30]
	DA2	I would recommend visiting Hue tourism destination to others	
	DA3	I have managed to convince other people to visit Hue tourism destination	
Revisiting intention	**RI1**	I intend to revisit Hue tourism destination in the next years	[31]
	RI2	I plan to revisit Hue tourism destination in the next years	
	RI3	I desire to visit Hue tourism destination in the next years	
	RI4	I probably will revisit Hue tourism destination in the next years	

3.3   Analyzing method

In this study, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was utilized for data analysis, replacing the Covariance-based SEM approach. This decision was influenced by the several advantages of PLS-SEM, including its suitability for small sample sizes and the non-necessity for data to follow a normal distribution [32, 33]. The SmartPLS 3.3.3 software facilitated the data analysis process.

PLS-SEM was employed to assess the congruence between the proposed theoretical model and reality. Further, the SPSS 26 and AMOS 21 tools were employed to carry out descriptive sample analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability test of the measurement scales, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and hypothesis validation through SEM analysis.

4   Result

4.1   Sample description

There were 273 valid questionnaires from the survey. This sample meets the requirements of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) because this analytical method can handle small sample sizes, complex models and has minimal assumptions about the underlying data [34].

Regarding gender, there are 129 respondents are men, accounting for 47.3%, and 144

Table 2. Descriptive analysis

Variable	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	129	47.3
	Female	144	52.7
Age	Under 18	30	11.0
	18 – 29 years old	162	59.3
	30 – 39 years old	50	18.3
	40 – 49 years old	21	7.7
	50 – 59 years old	9	3.3
	Over 60 years old	1	0.4
No of visits	First time	80	29.3
	Second time	68	24.9
	Third time	47	17.2
	From forth time	78	28.6
Monthly income	Under 5 million dong	75	27.5
	5 – 10 million dong	83	30.4
	10 – 15 million dong	49	17.9
	15 – 20 million dong	34	12.5
	Over 20 million dong	32	11.7

Source: Data analysis results

respondents are women, accounting for 52.7%. Regarding age, the majority is from 18-29 years old, accounting for 59.3% of the sample. The number of tourists visiting Hue for the first time, the second time, and the third time are 80 tourists (29.3%), 68 tourists (24.9%), and 47 (17.2%); and 78 of them (accounting for 28.6%) have visited for more than 4 times.

4.2   Measurement model

Reliability

According to [32], the composite reliability coefficient (CR) is more suitable than the internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) in the PLS-SEM model. The composite reliability coefficient (CR) must be equal to or greater than 0.7 for the scale to achieve reliability [35].

The results in Table 3 show that all composite reliability coefficients (CR) of all scales are greater than 0.7. This shows that the scale used in the model has the required reliability.

Table 3. Internal reliability Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability coefficient (CR)
and average variance extracted (AVE)

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
CS	0.907	0.930	0.728
CT	0.904	0.929	0.723
CR	0.928	0.944	0.737
DA	0.919	0.949	0.861
RI	0.942	0.958	0.852

Source: Data analysis results

Convergence validity*

According to [36], the AVE coefficient (average variance extracted) must be greater than or equal to 0.5 to confirm the convergence value. Based on the data in Table 3, we see that the extracted variance AVE of all the scales from 0.723 to 0.861, are greater than 0.5. Therefore, all scales used in the model meet the requirements of convergence value.

Discriminant validity

Fornell & Larcker [36] suggest that the scale achieves discriminant validity when the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is higher than the other correlation values in the model. The results in Table 4 show that the square root of the AVE values of the factors are all larger than the correlation coefficient between that factor and the remaining factors. Therefore, the factors used in the model achieve discriminant validity.

4.3   Structural model

According to Hulland [35], the model is considered to fit the actual data when the SRMR is less than 0.1. The results of data processing obtained SRMR = 0.070 < 0.1, showing that the obtained data is consistent with reality.

Table 4. Discriminant validity (Fornell – Larcker criterion)

|	CS	CT	CR	DA	RI
CS	**0.853**				
CT	0.464	**0.850**			
CR	0.671	0.584	**0.858**		
DA	0.318	0.363	0.307	**0.928**	
RI	0.289	0.375	0.295	0.720	**0.923**

Source: Data analysis

To be able to generalize the research results to the whole, the study uses the bootstrapping method with a repeat sample of 5,000. Different levels of engagement behaviors have different effects on Destination advocacy and Revisit intention. The consumption behaviors have positive influences on both Destination advocacy (β = 0.261, p = 0.000) and Revisit intention (β = 0.119, p = 0.031). Therefore, hypotheses H1a and H2a were supported. In contrast, the Contribution behaviors do not have significant influences on both Destination advocacy (β = 0. 041, p = 0. 613) and Revisit intention (β = 0. 012, p = 0. 855). Therefore, both hypotheses H1b and H2b cannot be supported. The Creation behaviors only has a positive influence on Destination advocacy (β = 0.170, p = 0.039), and does not have a significant influence on Revisit intention (β = 0.013, p = 0. 825). Thus, the hypothesis H1c was supported while the hypothesis H2c was not. Finally, Destination advocacy has a strong impact on Revisit intention (β = 0. 669, p = 0.000), so the hypothesis H3 is supported.

Table 5. Hypotheses testing results

Relationship	Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	t value	Significant	Result
CS -> DA	H1a	0.261	4.146	0.000	Supported
CT -> DA	H1b	0.041	0.506	0.613	Not supported
CR -> DA	H1c	0.170	2.069	0.039	Supported
CS -> RI	H2a	0.119	2.169	0.031	Supported
CT -> RI	H2b	0.012	0.183	0.855	Not supported
CR -> RI	H2c	0.013	0.222	0.825	Not supported
DA -> RI	H3	0.669	15.145	0.000	Supported

Source: Data analysis
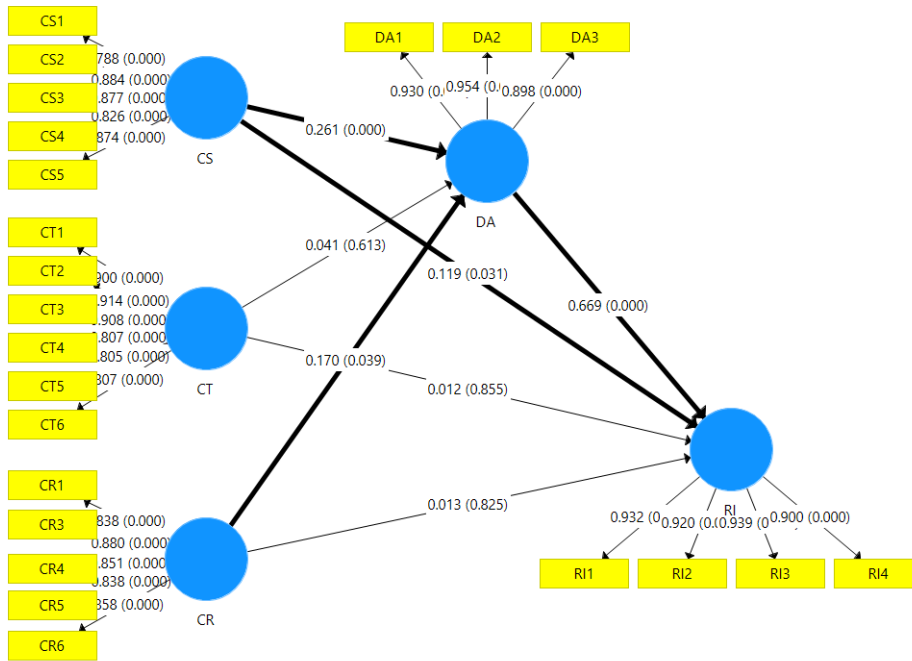
Figure 2. PLS-SEM result of social media engagement behaviors, destination advocacy and revisiting intention

Source: Data analysis

5   Discussion and conclusion

This study contributes to the existing academic literature by empirically examining various aspects of tourist engagement on social media, including consumption, contribution, and creation, in relation to their destination advocacy and revisit intention. This study has enriched the understanding of tourists' engagement behaviors with destinations on social media and its effect on destination advocacy and revisit intention. This research has developed a theoretical model and test hypotheses based on data from 273 domestic tourists who come to Hue and engage on social networks.

Our findings are consistent with previous studies by [37], which highlighted the positive impact of consuming and creating content related to a brand on social media. However, we observed that contributing behaviors on social media had no significant impact on destination advocacy and revisit intention. This finding aligns with the perspective of [38], who suggested that customer engagement may have a relatively weak influence on the intention to repurchase. It's worth noting that our results differ from previous research, such as studies by [9], which emphasized the importance of contribution in stimulating consumers' behavioral intentions.

The study provides implications for destination management organisations, travel agents, and tour operators to enhance tourists-destination engagement behavior positively, thereby enhancing destination advocacy and revisit intentions. Metrics associated with consuming behaviors, such as view counts, video watch time… can provide valuable insights into tourists' destination advocacy and intention to revisit. Tourism businesses and organizations can consider referencing metrics associated with creating behaviors, such as the number of posts and the number of uploaded videos, as these metrics can potentially provide insights into tourists' advocacy for a destination. However, it's important to use data related to contributing behaviors, such as the number of likes and comments, with care, as these may not be reliable indicators of tourists' intentions and behaviors in the future.

This study also has some limitations. First, this study is restricted to a specific tourism destination, i.e. Hue city. Each tourism destination has its own characteristics and social media strategies, so the result might be different in other destinations. Future research should be conducted in different destinations in Vietnam or all around the world. Second, the questionnaires are collected from domestic tourists only. Therefore, future research should cover other sources of tourists with different attitudes, cultural backgrounds and behaviors.

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