

# Antecedents and Consequences of Social Media Adoption in Travel and Tourism: Evidence from Customers and Industry

Mohamed A. Abou-Shouk, Mahamoud M. Hewedi

**Abstract**—This study extends technology acceptance model (TAM) to investigate the antecedents and consequences of social media adoption by tourists and travel agents. It compares their perceptions on social media adoption and its consequences. Online survey was addressed to tourists and travel agents for data collection purposes. Structural equation modelling was employed for analysis purposes. The findings revealed that the majority of tourists and travel agents involved in the study believe in the usefulness of social media adoption for travel planning and marketing purposes. They agree that adopting social media could change the attitude of tourists towards specific destination or attraction and influence their purchasing decisions. This study contributes to knowledge by extending TAM and provides some managerial implication to marketers.

**Keywords**—TAM, social media, travel, tourism, travel agents.

## I. INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL media has become popular in travel and tourism business where travellers can share their experiences online in various forms including forums, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It is believed that social media makes markets interact faster. Facebook has witnessed 220% yearly growth [1]. YouTube has more than 800 million visits a month, 4 billion videos are viewed each day [2] and is the second largest search site after Google [3]. Given that the most trusted communications come through word of mouth, social media has its unique feature of creating and distributing contents by users. Additionally, customers are happy to spread their experiences about a product or service; either satisfied or not [4]. As a result, social media made customers an active part of marketing exchanges and proved how they can affect the purchasing decision of their peers.

In travel and tourism context, social media can be used to persuade potential visitors to select a destination or attraction. Therefore, it has become a challenge for the traditional marketing practices of tourism businesses [5]. As there is a shift from product-oriented approach to a consumer-oriented approach in marketing focusing on consumer opinions, companies, using social media, are encouraged to deeply reaching customers, affecting their beliefs, behaviours and

values that lead to more commitment to the company [4]. Additionally, it helps companies to understand consumers' reaction to their offers and competitors' products [6]. For businesses to understand why consumers engage in social media, they start to think as a customer, and want to discover why customers choose social media to interact with companies [7]. On the one hand, this understanding will help businesses to adopt marketing practices described as cost-effective, efficient, and actively engaging with customers [3]. Additionally, social media turned consumers as producers and distributors of online content and they are now called prosumers, and understanding their online behaviour is the core of successful marketing [8]. Furthermore, online reviews help hospitality businesses to learn about their weakness, and help travel planners to consider customers' opinions [9]. On the other hand and although businesses' benefits of using social media, and how can social media affect the attitudes and behaviours of travellers, many businesses think that it is useless in marketing leading to unwillingness to use these social network sites for marketing purposes because they lack the control over content [8]. Understanding why customers use social media might help businesses to discover how useful to use and include it as a part of their marketing strategies, particularly, when there is a belief that online customers are entirely different from offline customers where they have the power of transparent information.

Build upon the effect of social media on traveller's behaviour; this study aims to investigate the factors predicting customers' and travel agents' adoption of social media and adoption consequences. The study also responds to the claim that there is a lack of research studied why customers prefer using social media over traditional marketing channels to obtain travel information [5]. The study compares the opinions of customers and travel agents regarding the antecedents and consequences of social media adoption. This comparison will provide insights to marketers on why to use social media to affect travellers' decisions.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media plays a significant role in various aspects of tourism, especially in information search and decision-making, tourism promotion and interacting with consumers [10]. In travel and tourism context, social media has changed the way travellers search information and subsequent decision [6]. It provides travellers with the tools to both produce and distribute information [11]. Furthermore, it has become a vital

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component of tourism where it enables the sharing of visitor experiences [12]. Meanwhile, social media offers businesses a great chance to use social networking and invest in social media marketing as an effective way to gain customers [13]. This section discusses the benefits of using social media by both customers and travel agents. Challenges of adoption will be argued as well.

#### *A. Benefits of Social Media Adoption*

Making a decision to select destination and other related travel plans is complex in travel and tourism due to the need to extensive information search. This information includes other travellers' experiences, recommendations of others, ad reviews offered in virtual travel communities. Getting this information maximizes travellers' decision confidence and reduces risk of their selections [14]. The main point agreed by researchers is that tourists produce information, circulate, ad share among themselves and this creates a kind of reliability of this information [15].

Travellers use social media before travel as a source of ideas on travel, excursions, and accommodation selection [16]. Social media is used during trips to find out information about attractions, and leisure activities, and to stay connected with friends and sharing experiences. Post-travel, travellers use social media to share reviews, experiences, and photos of their trips [17], [18].

Keeping travellers updated with tourist sites information, possibility of exchanging information about these sites, saving time in searching information, and searching for better prices are other benefits of using social media by travellers [19], [20]. Social media can also be used by customers help other even if to prevent others from using bad products [21]. It is cited [22] that social media supports user interaction, collaboration, and participation. Additionally, social media plays an important role in destination selection due to its interactivity, high quality visualization, and fast messaging and searching [11]. Furthermore, the benefits of social network sites have been divided into three main categories: functional, social, and hedonic [23]. Functional benefits imply the exchange of information, and social communications. Social benefits refer to communication, building relationships, and exchanging information with other members online. Hedonic benefits reflect the usage of social media for organizing and taking vacations. The above-mentioned three types of benefits have been combined in what is called 'relational benefits' [14]. Relational benefits are benefits that customers receive as a result of long-term relationship with a service provider. On the other hand, social media has become important in today's marketing for business. Businesses use social media to connect with the audiences instantaneously, advertising and selling products, creating and promoting brand awareness, promoting special offers, and reaching their target markets [17]. The benefits of social media for business may include building customer relationships and loyalty, promoting brand awareness, learning from customers' opinions, and asking for ideas about products, services, and promotions that help businesses to innovate their products and services, in

addition that social media helps businesses to lower feedback costs and creating ongoing dialogue with customers [24]. Furthermore, using social media helps businesses to adopt cost effective, efficient, and active marketing practices [3]. Posting experiences, comments, and reviews of customers via social media helps businesses to learn about their weakness, and consider customers' feedback [9]. In addition, successful social media campaigns increase revenues [25] and customer loyalty particularly via using social media by companies to reward customers with special deals [14]. Social media helps to shape the reputation of enterprises and has an impact on the decision of booking a journey [26]. Improving sales and growing business partnerships are other benefits that social media marketers agree [27]-[29]. Perceived benefits are main antecedent of social media adoption in travel and tourism.

#### *B. Perceived Enjoyment of Using Social Media*

Another antecedent of social media adoption in travel and tourism is perceived enjoyment. Perceived enjoyment implies fun, pleasure, and entertainment provided to customers by using social networks. It has been found that perceived enjoyment has the strongest effect on travellers' attitude to use social media in destination selection [11].

Enjoyment is an encouraging factor for tourists to engage and participate in social networks as a source of pleasure and entertainment [23]. It is found that *enjoyment of visiting websites is an antecedent of e-loyalty* [30]. Furthermore, it is revealed that enjoying online activities is a motivation for tourists to use social media [21].

#### *C. Challenges of Social Media Adoption*

Although social media could help business to gain marketing benefits, businesses claim that social media is a useless tool of marketing [8]. This could be for some challenges that businesses face to adopt a successful social media campaigns. One challenge of adopting social media is the amount and questionable quality of information offered on social media networks [31]. The quality challenges include irrelevant-information, insufficient, outdated, inaccurate, unsuitable, or not reliable [32]. Lack of reliability of information sources provided on social networks is one the challenge that make customers not confident when making their travel decisions [33].

Individuals and businesses can edit and change the content of their social media sites anytime which leads to information not permanently offered [31]. The lack of skills, knowledge, time, and resources are main barriers to use social media in small and medium enterprises [12]. Businesses' belief that social media is not relevant to their business, uncertainty over the benefits of social media, lack of technical expertise, absence of adequate infrastructure, and unsuccessful past experiences are perceived barriers to social media adoption [34]. In addition, customers do not use businesses' social networks is another barrier.

### III. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Technology acceptance model TAM traces how perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use predict the actual use of a system [35]. Perceived usefulness refers to the belief of users that using a specific system increases their job performance. Perceived ease-of-use reflects to the degree to which users expect the target system will not require effort to use. When it comes to social media adoption, a number of studies employed TAM to investigate the adoption predictors i.e., [36], [11], and [1]. Perceived enjoyment, the pleasure provided to customers through using social media, was used as an antecedent of adoption. Perceived enjoyment has been used as an antecedent of perceived usefulness, and perceived ease-of-use [1]. Furthermore, it is added as a predictor to perceived usefulness and attitude towards social media, meanwhile perceived ease-of-use was used as an antecedent of perceived enjoyment [11].

This study employs TAM model to investigate the antecedents of social media adoption Fig. 1. It incorporates perceived enjoyment, beside perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use, as an antecedent of social media adoption. Causal relationships between perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness, and between perceived ease-of-use and perceived enjoyment. Perceived usefulness used in this study encompasses the potential benefits could be gained via social media adoption by both customers and travel agents. The study extended TAM to investigate the consequences of social media adoption. Consequences of adoption reflect the actual benefits that customers and travel agents would gain from social media adoption.

The conceptual framework encompasses five main constructs: perceived usefulness, potential benefits, perceived ease-of-use, perceived enjoyment, social media adoption, and actual benefits of adoption consequences. Seven causal relationships representing 7 hypotheses were initiated for investigation.

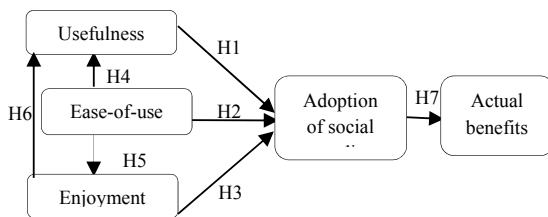


Fig. 1 Research framework and hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are:

- H1: Perceived usefulness of social media is positively affecting its adoption.
- H2: Perceived ease-of-use of social media is positively affecting its adoption.
- H3: Perceived enjoyment is positively affecting adoption of social media.
- H4: Perceived ease-of-use of social media is affecting its perceived usefulness.

H5: Perceived ease-of-use of social media is affecting its perceived enjoyment.

H6: Perceived enjoyment of social media has a positive effect on its perceived usefulness.

H7: Adoption of social media is positively predicting the actual benefits gained from adoption.

### IV. RESEARCH METHOD

Two online questionnaires were designed and validated to measure the constructs of the study. The first questionnaire is used to collect responses from tourists visiting Egypt. This was achieved by offering travel agents and hotels access to circulate the online form to tourists. The second questionnaire was addressed to travel agents Category A with online presence. Both questionnaires were customized to reflect the potential and actual benefits of adoption for customers and businesses.

Twelve potential benefits perceived usefulness and 9 actual benefits consequences of social media adoption, 4 items for perceived ease-of-use, 4 items for perceived enjoyment, 1 item for social media adoption, and 5 challenges to adoption are included in the form for tourists (Table I). Eleven potential benefits, 11 actual benefits, 4 items for perceived ease-of-use, 4 items for perceived enjoyment, 1 item for adoption, and 6 challenges to adoption are included in the form of travel agents Table II. The constructs were built on a 5-point Likert where scale 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

The two forms were revised by a panel of academics versus the aims of the study for validity purposes. Some few comments regarding the language were raised and considered in the final forms. Twenty forms for each of tourists and travel agents were piloted. Corrected item-total correlations and reliability tests were conducted and construct validity is evident. To guarantee the reliability of responses, an online form was used to collect data from respondents.

Travel agents Category A having websites (317 agencies) [37] were contacted via email along with the link of online questionnaire. Tourist's online questionnaire was sent via email to travel agents and hotels to forward it to their customers. Furthermore, the link was sent to colleagues and tourist guides who have friends visited Egypt in the past. Spending 2 months (June and July) circulating the links, 102 and 106 valid questionnaires were successfully completed and submitted by travel agents and tourists respectively. The online questionnaire introduces the study to respondents and stated their rights to withdraw any time from the study, in addition to the confidentiality issues relate to the data collected, names, and other personal information. Structural equation modelling, a valuable and flexible approach in hypothesis-testing and modelling the causal relationships among multiple predictor and criterion variables, is used for quantitative analysis purposes.

## V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

## A. Descriptive Statistics

Findings revealed that 61.6% of tourist respondents are female, while 38.7% are males, 49.1% of tourist respondents are 31-40 years, 26.4% are 18-30 years, 12.3% are 41-50 years, and 12.2% are more than 50 years. 27.4% of tourist respondents are Italians, 23.6% are German, 9.4% are British, 7.5% are Spanish, 6.6% are French, 5.7% are Swiss, 3.8% are American, and the rest of respondents are Hollandaise, Colombian, Singaporean, Jordanian, Norwegian, and Brazilian. 38.7% and 37.7% of respondents are university graduates and college graduates respectively, and 23.6% are post-graduates. For travel agents, 34.1% of agents are 11-15 years old, 32.9% are 6-10 years, 8.5% are 31-35 years, 6.2% are 21-25 years, 6% are 16-20 years, 5% are 26-30 years, 4.8% are 1-5 years, and 2.4% of agents are above 35 years.

Sixty five percent of tourist respondents are frequent users of social media, 22.6% use it sometimes, 6.6% use it occasionally, 1.9% use it rarely, and 3.8% are infrequent users of social media. 87.7% of them use Facebook, 53.8% use Google+, 50.9% use Twitter, 45.3% use YouTube, and 14.2% of them use Flickr. For travel agents, 34.1% of agents are frequent users of social media for marketing purposes, 29.3% use it occasionally, 19.5% of agents use it sometimes, 11% use it rarely, and 6.1% are infrequent users of social media. 73.2% of agents use Facebook, 41.5% use Google+, 25.6% of agents use YouTube, 3.7% use Flickr, and 1.2% use Twitter.

Forty four percent of tourist respondents believe that using social media is useful for marketing travel services, 33% think it is very useful, 15.1% have neutral opinions, and 7.5% of respondents think that using social media for marketing purposes is very unuseful. For travel agents, 39% of agents have neutral opinions, 26.8% believe it is useful, 25.6% think it is very useful, 6.1% see it as unuseful, and 2.4% believe it is very unuseful. Looking at mean values, tourists think that social media is useful for their travel planning (mean=3.95), while travel agents agree that using social media is useful for marketing purposes (mean=3.67).

Looking at the mean values of constructs, tourists and travel agents agree with usefulness of social media (mean<sub>tourists</sub>=3.7 and mean<sub>agents</sub>=3.5). Both tourists and agents agree to social media ease of use (mean<sub>tourists</sub>=4.2 and mean<sub>agents</sub>=3.6). Furthermore, both tourists and travel agents feel enjoyed when using social media (mean<sub>tourists</sub>=3.9 and mean<sub>agents</sub>=3.6). Tourists and travel agents gain benefits of using social media to satisfy their needs (mean<sub>tourists</sub>=3.6 and mean<sub>agents</sub>=3.8).

For the challenges of adopting social media, tourists neither agree nor disagree to these challenges. Challenges include tourists' lack of technical expertise to use social media (mean=3.01), tourism firms do not use social networks (mean=2.94), lack of quality of information offered on social media tourism websites (i.e., accuracy, relevance, and amount (mean=2.81)), and tourists' lack trust of information offered on social media tourism websites (mean=2.70). For travel agents, they have neutral responses on these challenges. These include

customers lack of trust of information offered on social media, and lack of quality of information offered on these sites (mean=2.74), it is not necessary to use social networks (mean=2.73), Customers do not use the businesses' social networks, the lack of technical expertise (mean=2.68), and lack of control of content (mean=2.67).

## B. Measurement Models

The study has two measurement models of social media usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, and actual benefits for both tourists and travel agents (Table I). Measurement models measure the correlation between indicators and their latent constructs. It is found that loadings of indicators in both models are greater than 0.50. convergent validity of constructs are evident where the values of average variance extracted (AVEs) in both models are greater than 0.50 [38]. Discriminant validity of both models is approved where square root AVEs (SQRT AVEs) are greater than the correlation values among constructs [39]. The constructs of both models are reliable where Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are greater than 0.70 [40], [41].

## C. Structural Models

Structural models measure the causal relationships among the constructs of the model. From Fig. 2, it is revealed that perceived usefulness is positively affecting the adoption of social media in tourists' opinions ( $\beta_{\text{usefulness} \rightarrow \text{adoption}} = .24, p < .01$ ) (H1 supported), perceived ease-of-use is significantly affecting social media adoption ( $\beta_{\text{ease of uses} \rightarrow \text{adoption}} = .40, p < .01$ ) (H2 supported), perceived enjoyment is significantly affecting social media adoption ( $\beta_{\text{enjoyment} \rightarrow \text{adoption}} = .43, p < .01$ ) (H3 supported), perceived ease of use has a significant effect on both usefulness ( $\beta_{\text{ease of use} \rightarrow \text{usefulness}} = .57, p < .01$ ) (H4 supported) and enjoyment ( $\beta_{\text{ease of use} \rightarrow \text{enjoyment}} = .54, p < .01$ ) (H5 supported), perceived enjoyment is positively affecting perceived usefulness ( $\beta_{\text{enjoyment} \rightarrow \text{usefulness}} = .28, p < .01$ ) (H6 supported), and social media adoption is significantly predicting actual benefits ( $\beta_{\text{adoption} \rightarrow \text{actual benefits}} = .75, p < .01$ ) (H7 supported).

It is found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use and perceived enjoyment explain 66% of social media adoption by tourists ( $R^2 = 0.66$ ). 49% of perceived usefulness is explained by ease-of-use and perceived enjoyment ( $R^2 = 0.49$ ), 29% of perceived enjoyment is explained by perceived ease-of-use ( $R^2 = 0.29$ ), and adopting social media explains 58% of the gained benefits of adoption ( $R^2 = 0.58$ ).

For tourists, Fig. 3 reveals that perceived usefulness is positively affecting the adoption of social media by tourists ( $\beta_{\text{usefulness} \rightarrow \text{adoption}} = .24, p < .01$ ) (H1 supported), perceived ease-of-use is affecting social media adoption ( $\beta_{\text{ease of uses} \rightarrow \text{adoption}} = .42, p < .01$ ) (H2 supported), perceived enjoyment is significantly affecting adoption ( $\beta_{\text{enjoyment} \rightarrow \text{adoption}} = .26, p < .01$ ) (H3 supported), perceived ease of use has a significant effect on both usefulness ( $\beta_{\text{ease of uses} \rightarrow \text{usefulness}} = .34, p < .01$ ) (H4 supported) and enjoyment ( $\beta_{\text{ease of use} \rightarrow \text{enjoyment}} = .72, p < .01$ ) (H5 supported), perceived enjoyment is positively affecting perceived usefulness ( $\beta_{\text{enjoyment} \rightarrow \text{usefulness}} = .60, p < .01$ ) (H6 supported), and social media adoption is significantly

predicting actual benefits of adoption ( $\beta_{\text{adoption} \rightarrow \text{actual benefits}} = .72$ ,  $p < .01$ ) (H7 supported).

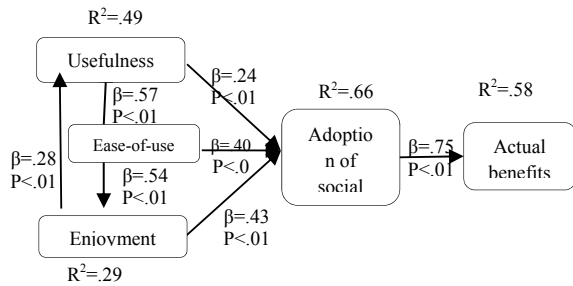


Fig. 2 Structural model of tourists

It is found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use and perceived enjoyment explain 70% of social media adoption by travel agents ( $R^2 = 0.70$ ). 77% of perceived usefulness is explained by ease-of-use and perceived enjoyment ( $R^2 = 0.77$ ), 52% of perceived enjoyment is

explained by perceived ease-of-use ( $R^2 = 0.52$ ), and adopting social media explains 52% of the gained benefits of adoption ( $R^2 = 0.52$ ). To sum up, the seven hypotheses of the study were supported in both models; tourists and travel agents.

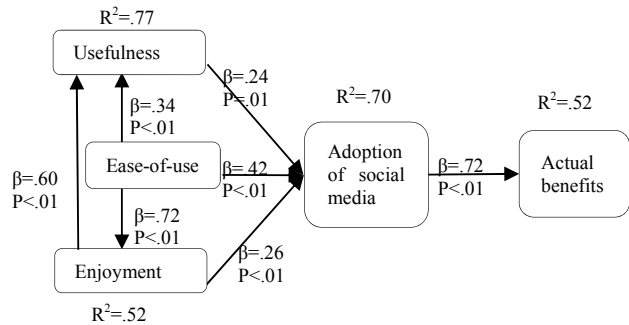


Fig. 3 Structural model of travel agents

TABLE I  
MEASUREMENT MODELS OF TOURISTS AND TRAVEL AGENTS

Tourists							Travel agents						
Construct	Indicator	Loading	AVEs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	SQRT AVEs	Construct	Indicator	Loading	AVEs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	SQRT AVEs
Perceived Benefits	PUS1	0.824	0.581	0.933	0.943	0.762	Perceived Benefits	PUS1	0.939	0.858	0.983	0.985	0.926
	PUS2	0.787						PUS2	0.926				
	PUS3	0.781						PUS3	0.930				
	PUS4	0.739						PUS4	0.905				
	PUS5	0.809						PUS5	0.919				
	PUS6	0.653						PUS6	0.926				
	PUS7	0.552						PUS7	0.916				
	PUS8	0.710						PUS8	0.918				
	PUS9	0.862						PUS9	0.919				
	PUS10	0.854						PUS10	0.950				
	PUS11	0.762						PUS11	0.942				
	PUS12	0.762											
Perceived Ease-of-Use	EOU1	0.904	0.832	0.933	0.952	0.912	Perceived Ease-of-Use	EOU1	0.971	0.941	0.979	0.984	0.970
	EOU2	0.925						EOU2	0.973				
	EOU3	0.895						EOU3	0.969				
	EOU4	0.925						EOU4	0.968				
Perceived Enjoyment	PENJ1	0.899	0.786	0.909	0.936	0.887	Perceived Enjoyment	PENJ1	0.948	0.930	0.975	0.981	0.964
	PENJ2	0.863						PENJ2	0.969				
	PENJ3	0.879						PENJ3	0.978				
	PENJ4	0.905						PENJ4	0.961				
Actual Benefits	ABEN1	0.834	0.619	0.923	0.923	0.786	Actual Benefits	ABEN1	0.867	0.824	0.978	0.980	0.908
	ABEN2	0.813						ABEN2	0.900				
	ABEN3	0.783						ABEN3	0.918				
	ABEN4	0.727						ABEN4	0.939				
	ABEN5	0.806						ABEN5	0.938				
	ABEN6	0.816						ABEN6	0.924				
	ABEN7	0.758						ABEN7	0.890				
	ABEN8	0.787						ABEN8	0.897				
	ABEN9	0.748						ABEN9	0.908				
								ABEN10	0.909				
								ABEN11	0.896				

Model fit and quality indices for Tourists' model: Average path coefficient (APC)=0.460,  $P < 0.001$ , Average R-squared (ARS)=0.503,  $P < 0.001$ , Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)=0.495,  $P < 0.001$ , Average block VIF (AVIF)=1.262, Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)=2.061, Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)=0.620, Sympton's paradox ratio (SPR)=1.000, R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)=1.000, Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)=1.000, and Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)=0.929.

Model fit and quality indices for Travel agents' model: APC=0.471,  $P < 0.001$ , ARS=0.625,  $P < 0.001$ , AARS=0.618,  $P < 0.001$ , AVIF=2.746, AFVIF=3.441, GoF=0.755, SPR=1.000, RSCR=1.000, and NLBCDR=1.000.

Looking at the differences between constructs' paths of the study, and using t-test, Table II depicts the effect size and differences among constructs of the structural models.

TABLE II  
PATHS DIFFERENCE AND EFFECT SIZE

Constructs	t-value	Sig.	Effect size	
			Tourists	Travel agents
PU--AD	0.051	0.480	0.145	0.181
EOU--AD	-0.138	0.445	0.257	0.323
PEN--AD	1.276	0.102	0.258	0.193
AD--ABE	0.309	0.379	0.575	0.519

From Table II, it is clear that there is no significant difference between the effect of perceived usefulness (PU), ease-of-use (EOU), perceived enjoyment (PEN) on social media adoption (AD) in both tourist and travel agent models. In addition, adoption's effect on actual benefits is not significantly different in both models.

For effect size, Table II shows that perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, and perceived enjoyment have medium effect size on social media adoption in both models (i.e., tourists and travel agents), and adoption has a large effect size on actual benefits in both models [39].

## VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Using social media adoption is useful for both tourists and travel agents. Tourists use social media pre, during, and post their travel. It is a source of information and ideas for them. Travel agents use social media to market their products and services. Findings revealed that both tourists and travel agents use Facebook and Google+ as their first choices of social media tools. YouTube is another choice for tourists and travel agents. These tools are common social media tools worldwide.

For tourists, it is found that enjoyment and ease of use are the factors that have significant effect on their adoption of social media. Users of social media find it attractive if they have fun, pleasure and feel enjoyed.

This finding is concurrent with a previous study [11] in which it is found that perceived enjoyment is greatly affecting the attitude of customers to use social media when selecting destinations. Feeling enjoyed encourages and motivates customers to engage in social media for travel purposes as discussed by literature studies [23] and [21]. Further effect of perceived enjoyment is on perceived usefulness. Entertainment and pleasure of usage is positively affecting the perceived usefulness of social media as revealed by a previous study [1]. In addition, having no effort to use social media is a significant motivation of usage by customers. When it is easy to learn, easy to use, customers will be motivated to engage in social media. This result is agreed with an extant study [36]. Furthermore, easiness of use increases the enjoyment perceived of social media adoption. It is claimed that finding a system easy-to-use improves the feelings of pleasure and entertainment of using social media. This result is concurrent with a previous study [11] who used perceived ease-of-use as a predictor of perceived enjoyment. Furthermore, ease-of-use influences the perceived usefulness of social media adoption.

This means that easiness to use social networking sites maximizes the perceived usefulness of it. This result is in line with an extant study [36]. These findings explain that there is a kind of interactions among perceiving social media adoption as easy-to-use, enjoyed, and the perceived usefulness of that networking sites. These results also are in line with the causal relationships initiated in TAM. This interaction is not only considered by customers (i.e., tourists) but also by business (i.e., travel agents).

Looking at the usefulness of social media adoption, tourists use social media as a source of ideas on holiday destination, and leisure activities. They seek information on accommodations, and attractions. Tourists use it to read about other travellers' experience, share their experience, evaluate their holidays, and receive updates about tourist destinations. These benefits are useful to tourists when they plan their travel for holidays. Using social media offers a variety of sources of information which may be created by other customers or businesses. The easiness of getting such information, and the extent to which this information is useful in decision-making process motivate customers (i.e., tourists) to use social media in travel planning.

Categorizing information required for travel planning, pre-travel information includes ideas on destinations to select, ideas on excursions and leisure activities, and to select accommodation. This finding is in line with an extant study [16].

During travel, tourists use social media to find information about attractions, to stay connected with friends, and sharing experiences. Post travel, tourists use social media to provide reviews and share memories of travel. This finding is concurrent with previous studies [17], [18].

As for the actual benefits tourists get via their adoption of social media, these include receiving information that help them making better purchasing decisions on their destination, holiday, and accommodation. They save time and money while searching this information. These findings are in line with existed studies [19], [20]. Further benefits of adoption are affecting travel plans of tourists, and changing attitude towards destinations and attractions.

Social media offers tourists a variety of benefits; the usefulness of social media adoption for business (i.e., travel agents) includes a number of benefits. These benefits include improving the provision of information about business, enhancing communication process with customers, improving business reputation, improving networking with industry stakeholders, increasing customer loyalty, enhancing the effectiveness in internet marketing, penetrating new markets, providing ideas to innovate services, promoting brand awareness, affecting customer travel plans, and increasing sales and profits. These findings are concurrent with previous studies [24] and [25].

Using social media is useful for customers and business. In a time travel agents provide information about their packages and services, promoting their brands, and improving their reputations, using social media, tourists search this information and make their decisions. Hence, social media

sites are platforms where travel agents and customers interact to get specific benefits. Effective use of social media enables business to increase their sales and improve their customer loyalty while it helps customers to be confident when making their travel decisions.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the perceptions of tourists and travel agents on the antecedents and consequences of social media adoption in travel planning and marketing tourism services. It responds to the claim that social media is useless in marketing travel and tourism services. The findings revealed that both tourists and travel agents perceived social media as a useful marketing tool. For tourists, they use social media in a three-stage travel planning. This includes using it in getting information and ideas about destination selections, holiday plans, leisure activities, and attractions. During travel, tourists use social media to keep connected with friends, sharing experiences, and getting information about tourist sites. Post-travel, tourists use social media to share experiences and provide reviews on their holidays. Social media adoption could change their attitudes towards specific destinations or tourist sites.

For travel agents, they use social media to provide tourists with information about their packages and services; it enhances their reputations, and promotes their brands. Improving communication process with customers and increasing their loyalty to business are other benefits to travel agents of social media adoption. Using social media effectively by travel agents could help to affect the purchasing decision of tourists and changing their attitude towards destinations, and finally increasing their sales and profits. Both tourists and travel agents perceive social media as a source of entertainment and enjoyment in addition to its easiness of use. Perceiving social media easy to use and enjoyable tool affects its usefulness and adoption by both tourists and travel agents.

Contributing to knowledge, this study extends TAM, adding the actual benefits therefore to social media adoption. In addition to usefulness of a system to an enterprise, the actual generated benefits are an evidence of the performance of that innovation. Furthermore, this study provides different insights of social media adoption by identifying, investigating benefits of adoption of tourists on the one hand, and travel agents on the other hand. Although both tourists and travel agents use social media, each has their own motivations and benefits. Comparing antecedents and consequences of social media adoption for two different categories (i.e., tourists and travel agents) enriches the extant knowledge and provides evidence from a developing country.

For managerial implications, this study contributes to the overall understanding of social media usefulness to both tourists and travel agents. The study is clearly identifying the patterns of using social media by tourists and how this usage can affect their attitudes and purchasing decisions of travel services. Understanding the effect of social media on travellers' behaviour, and the information needed to influence

tourist decisions during the planning process of his travel, travel agents need to accurately identify the information tourists seek in their networking sites, update it, and use it effectively to keep connected with tourists pre, during and post-travel. Benefiting from the evaluations, reviews and requesting feedback on tourist experience could help travel agents to improve their services, innovate their packages, and enhance their reputation through word-of-mouth. Promoting travel agents' brands might help them to penetrate new markets and provides extra services which leads in the end to an increase in sales and profits.

## VIII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Similar to other studies, this study has some limitations. It needs to employ qualitative research to understand the extent to which tourists and travel agents benefit from social media adoption. Identifying information that tourists seek on travel agents' networking sites is another area to study. Future research may address these concerns and study the effect of using social media marketing on competitive advantages that travel agents may gain by adopting such tools.

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