

The Influence of Social Media Use and Travel Motivation on The Perceived Destination Image and Travel Intention to Taiwan of The Thai People

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Abstract

The economic impact of travel and tourism is quite important in global economic growth. This study presents a comprehensive view of the impact of social media use and travel motivation in tourism promotion. Findings suggest that social media is an effective tool to influence people's travel intention and destination image, and people who frequently use social media to get traveling information seem to have better destination image and higher travel intention. On the other hand, the positive influence of travel motivation is also proved in this study. Moreover, it is revealed that the role of destination image as an important mediate factor between social media and travel intention is also confirmed.

Keywords: travel intention, destination image, social media, travel motivation

1. Introduction

It is well known that the economic impact of travel and tourism is quite important in global economic growth. The contribution of travel and tourism to a country's GDP, employment, and exports are significant.

According to The World Tourism Organization, tourism has been a major player in international commerce and became the main income source for many developing countries (The World Tourism Organization, n.d.). In Narayan's study, it is found that a 10% increase in tourist expenditure in Fiji would increase its GDP by 0.5%. The positive relationship between tourist expenditure and economic growth has existed (Narayan, 2004). Other significantly positive effects to the locals were also proved. For example, production increases, welfare improves and capital revenues increase (Seetanah, 2011; Blake & Sinclair, 2003; Archer and Fletcher, 1996).

As a matter of fact, the importance of tourism has been emphasized for decades, and studies on travel intention have been one of the main topics in tourism research for years. Many studies discuss and analyze the influential factors of travel intention. It is proved that the media use habits is an important factor to influence an individual's travel intention and their tourism decision-making process. The information received from the media will influence an individual's willingness of visiting the specific place. In relevant studies, perceived image of destination is frequently mentioned as a mediate factor to explain the effect of media uses on travel intention (Baloglu, 2000; Chon, 1990; Telisman-Kosuta, 1989).

Owing to the information explosion, the amount of information that an individual could reach has been rapidly increased, especially after the rise of social media use in recent years. The relationship between social media use, perceived destination image and the users' travel intention to visit specific destination is not examined evidently. As a result, the relationship of these three variables is the focus of this paper. However, the information source is not the only factor affecting an individual's travel intention, many researchers also mention about consumer's factor, which is the travel motivation an individual has (Crompton, 1979; Baloglu, 2000; Jang, Bai, Hu & Wu, 2009). It is also a critical factor that should be applied when discussing travel intention.

For this reason, the objectives of this study are as follow: (1) To examine the effectiveness of social media as a promoting tool on travel intention. (2) To examine the influence of social media use and travel motivation on travel intention. (3) To examine the mediating role of perceived destination image in the relations between social media use, travel motivation, and travel intention.

The research targets in this paper are Thai people and their travel intention to visit a specific country, Taiwan. Quantitative methodology is applied, and the sample will focus on the population who has the ability to travel and ever use social media. Both male and female are the targets of this paper.

The findings of the study will help tourism authorities and tourism companies to realize the influence of social media on travel intention. Tourism marketers could make decisions on whether to use social media or not and how much budget is reasonable based on the findings of the current study.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the previous studies and summarizes the following topics: (1) Travel intention, (2) Social media use in tourism, (3) Travel motivation, and (4) Perceived destination image. Hypothesis and theoretical framework are also proposed in this section.

2.1 Travel Intention

Intention is something that we want and plan to do. An individual's travel intention plays an important role in traveling destination choosing process. In the path model of visitation intention formation of Baloglu, travel intention is determined by three elements, which are travelers' perceptual/ cognitive and affective evaluation, amount and type of information sources used, and socio-psychological travel motivations. In the paper, travelers' perceptual/ cognitive and affective evaluation refers to the destination image (Baloglu, 2000).

The influence of destination image is not limited to the stage of destination selection, but it also affects the behavior of tourism in general. It is proved that destination image appears to have the most important effect on intention to revisit a place and the willingness to recommend the destination to others after personal travel experience (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Apart from destination image, the effect of stimuli and consumer's factors was also proved by Baloglu (2000). The stimulus was referred to information sources while consumer factors are travel motivations of the person.

Travelers appear to receive abundance of information from many sources before they actually visit the place. The amount and type of external information sources would directly or indirectly influence the receiver's travel intention. Among all the information sources, according to Baloglu, the influences of advertisement and professional advice were evident. Tourism advertisement will create a positive image of the destination and motivate the potential travelers' preference for the destination and raise the intention to visit the advertised destination (Kim, Hwang and Fesenmaier, 2015).

The influences of online information sources have been discussed a lot in recent years. One of the prevalent topics is the influence of electronic word-of-mouth in tourism (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008; Doosti, Jalilvand, Asadi, Khazaei Pool&MehraniAdl, 2016; Jalilvand&Samiei, 2012). Apart from the electronic word-of-mouth, there are many other types of online information sources that a person could reach easily. The influence of social media is a topic of concern in tourism. It has become an increasingly important source for travelers to search related information when planning a trip (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The importance of social media in the online tourism domain was confirmed, but the evident impact of it on travel intention is still waiting to be verified. Therefore, to examine the influence of social media use on an individual's travel intention is the main objective of this paper.

The other important factor is consumer factors, which is also called travel motivations in some papers (Crompton, 1979; Baloglu, 2000). It is defined as a satisfaction that an individual expects to derive from their traveling (Iso-Ahola, 1982). According to Crompton (1979), motives will influence the selection of travel destination, and it could be classified into two categories, socio-psychological motives and cultural motives. Unlike socio-psychological motives, cultural motives were concerned with the destination itself rather than the psychological status of the individual (Crompton, 1979).

To sum up, there are three factors that will influence a person's travel intention to visit a specific place which are information sources, travel motivations, and a mediating factor which is destination image. Among all the information sources, the impact of social media is the main focus of this paper.

2.2 Social media use in tourism

Social media is generally defined as a group of internet-based applications which content is publicly available and created by internet users instead of by marketers or suppliers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It is also referred to as consumer-generated media that information on these sources is created, shared, exchanged rapidly. Because of the nature of social media, the information on it is perceived to have more credibility than other traditional information sources in promoting tourism, such as official tourism website, travel agents or advertisement (Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012).

A classification of six social media types, including blogs, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities, and virtual game worlds was proposed (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). With different levels of social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure, each type of social media has their own features (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). However, along with the constantly updating of applications, the division between the different types of social media has become less clear. Facebook is in the classification of social networking sites that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles and sending instant messages between each other, and they also provide the same function as content communities (Facebook, 2017).

The influence of social media on tourism is growing. It is a primary information source for travelers when people search for traveling related information online (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The influence of social media on tourists' travel planning behavior is existing. The use of social media in the travel planning process is not limited for searching traveling information before the trip, but also a tool for sharing personal traveling experience after the trip (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto & Buultjens, 2009; Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012).

and Buhalis (2013) examined the social media use of top ten international tourism destinations indicated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and suggested that utilizing social media effectively could foster the communication with travelers.

As stated earlier, an individual's travel intention is highly related to the amount of received information or channels where the people get information (Boulding, 1961; Gartner, 1994). The purpose of current paper is to fill the unexplored area about this topic and to analyze the effectiveness of social media as a tool to influence an individual's travel intention. Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed as follows.

H1: Social media use significantly influences travel intention.

2.3 Travel motivation

Travel motivation is defined as a satisfaction that an individual expects to derive from their traveling (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Numerous studies have demonstrated the influence of motivations on travel intentions. It is an important factor to influence travel intention (Crompton, 1979; Baloglu, 2000; Baloglu, 2000; Jang, Bai, Hu & Wu, 2009). There are two classifications of travel motives, including socio-psychological motives and cultural motives. The type of motives that an individual has will influence the person's selection of travel destination (Crompton, 1979).

The socio-psychological motives are related to the psychological status of the individual, while cultural motives are more concerned with the destination itself. Socio-psychological motives are a push factor for travelers to seek satisfaction of certain needs, on the contrary, cultural motives is a pull factor that is partially aroused by the particular qualities that a destination offered. Some researchers focus more on socio-psychological motives as the dependent variable to explain the process of traveling destination selection (Baloglu, 2000). Crompton (1979) suggested that there are seven influential types of socio-psychological motives and two types of cultural motives (Crompton, 1979). Socio-psychological motives are escaping from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The two types of cultural motives are novelty and education.

In addition to information sources, travel motivation is another key independent variable that assumed to be influential on travel intention in this paper. The hypothesis is developed as follows:

H2: Travel motivation significantly influences travel intention.

2.4 Destination image

Destination image is an important element to influence an individual's travel intention, and it was often regarded as the mediator between travel intentions, information sources used and travel motivation (Baloglu, 2000; Kim, Hwang & Fesenmaier, 2005; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Leisen, 2001; Chon, 1990; Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Since the 1970s, the concept of perceived destination image has been applied to the research area of tourism (Hunt, 1975). Since the concept of image is an abstract idea, the definition of it is not the same in all studies, but most are similar. In this current paper, the definition of perceived destination image is derived from Barich and Kotler's study (1991). It is beliefs, attitudes, and impressions that people have when thinking about a destination and the perception related to a destination in people's mind (Barich & Kotler, 1991). The destination could be a country, city, or a tourist attraction. In this paper, the destination is specifically referred to a country, Taiwan.

There are three dimensions of destination image, cognitive image, affective image and conative image (Gartner, 1994). The first dimension is the cognitive component. It is a key element derived from fact and a set of perceptual evaluations that people hold in mind when thinking about a destination. This represents

individual's thoughts, beliefs, and ideas about the place. External information received about the destination is important in forming cognitive image, so it is highly related to the amount of received information or channels where people get information (Boulding, 1961; Gartner, 1994).

Secondly, the affective component is a critical element when people are making decisions about tourist destination (Goodall, 1991). This component deals with feelings or emotions, such as pleasure, excitement or hate. These emotions are related to motives which determine what people wish to obtain from the travel and will affect tourist's valuation about the destination (Boulding, 1961). In Goodall's model, affective component takes place at the stage of destination selection, people will give high value on those affective components which meet their needs and make their traveling destination decision (Goodall, 1991).

Finally, conative image component centers on individuals acting a certain way towards the destination, such as 'I cannot wait to see the amazing scenery there'. This is an act component of 'to see the scenery' when a person is thinking about a place. It can also be called as behavioral component because it is specific behavior that an individual is thinking about acting (Gartner, 1994). The behavioral component of destination image is similar to visitation intention, both are describing the likelihood to visit a specific place, so, some studies focus on only, and apply only cognitive image and affective image to explain the overall destination image in people's mind (Baloglu, 2000; San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). In this paper, we will use the term 'travel intention' to represent an individual's intention to visit a destination instead of 'conative image'.

The other major issue about destination image is the formation of it. According to Court and Lupton (1997), the perception of a tourist destination is based on the information processed from different sources over time (Court & Lupton, 1997). Combining all the information that people can get from different agents, the destination image in a person's mind will be gradually formed and shaped.

Among all the formation agents, induced agents, such as paid promotion and advertising are believed to have less influence on an individual's destination image, because it is related to marketing efforts of promoters. Autonomous agents are including independently produced news, movies, reports, documentaries. Because of its unbiased presentation, and lesser control of destination promoters, it is assumed to have more influence on destination image development than induced agents. The last and the most influential type of agent of destination image formation is organic agents. They are built from other sources, such as personal experiences and word-of-mouth. This type of information agent does not have vested interest about the decision of traveling and has a higher credibility (Gartner, 1994).

In this paper, destination image will be assumed as a mediated factor between independent variables and the dependent variable. Examining the mediating role of destination image between each variable is one of the main objectives of this paper. Consequently, some hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H3: Destination image will mediate the relationship between social media use and travel intention.

H3a: Cognitive destination image will mediate the relationship between social media use and travel intention.

H3b: Affective destination image will mediate the relationship between social media use and travel intention.

H4: Destination image will mediate the relationship between travel motivation and travel intention

H4a: Cognitive destination image will mediate the relationship between travel motivation and travel intention.

H4b: Affective destination image will mediate the relationship between travel motivation and travel intention.

As noted above, the key factors influence an individual's travel intention includes three aspects, travel motivation, and the mediate factor, destination image. Figure 2.1 is the theoretical framework to show the relationship between all the variables.

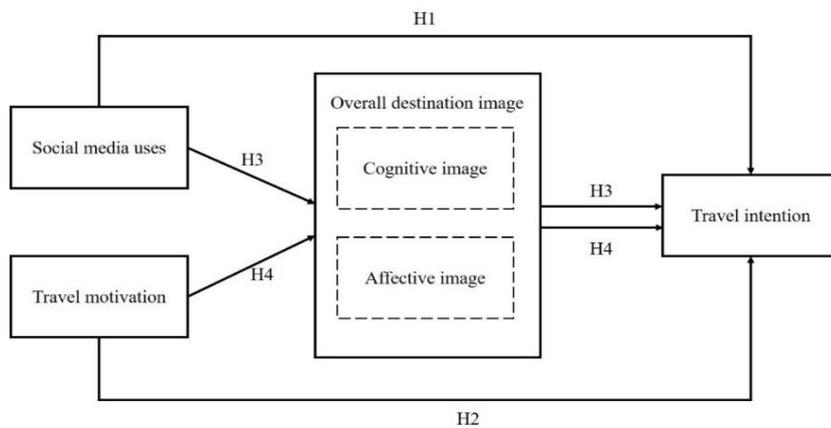


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample Selection

The research target of this study is Thai people. There are around 68 million Thai people in Thailand. The researcher defines people from 15 to 64 years old to be the target of this study, which is around 49 million people (The Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.). According to Yamane's (1973) formula, when the population is 49 million, to lower the possibility of having an error above .05, the researcher needs a sample size of $N=399$. With 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval, 426 samples are collected for this study.

The questionnaire was distributed with snowball sampling technique starting from the researcher's friends who were qualified with the studied target in order to get back more valid questionnaires. Online survey was utilized to reach out more respondents and data were gathered from September to October in 2017. Eventually, 426 completed questionnaires were collected, of which 420 were valid samples.

3.2 Research Instrument

A self-administrated questionnaire was designed to measure the research framework variable constructs. Each variable (e.g. social media uses, travel motivation, destination image, and travel intention) was measured by using multiple items. The survey instrument consisted of five parts covering the following issues: demographics of respondents, social media use, travel motivation, destination image, and travel intention.

The first section is about demographic characteristics of respondents. The respondents were asked to fill in basic demographic information, including five items: age, gender, level of education, travel experiences, and monthly income.

The second section is about social media use of the respondents. Four social media platforms were selected because they have the most users in Thailand, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube. It is reported that there are 47 million Facebook users registered in Thailand. Facebook is absolutely an essential part of daily life for most Thai people and worth to be analyzed. Following Facebook, users on Instagram and Twitter have also increased every year, and have respectively 11 million and 9 million users on each platform (BangkokPost, 2017). The last platform is Youtube because it is one of the most popular social media with a high penetration rate in Thailand (Statista, 2016). To understand the influence of social media, respondents were asked about their frequency of using each social media as their information sources before planning a trip (e.g., I use Facebook to get traveling information; I use Instagram to get traveling information)

with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never use) to 5 (always use).

Next, in the travel motivation section, there are two categories and a total of nine items that were adapted from Crompton's (1979) study. The two main categories are socio-psychological motives and cultural motives. Seven items were included in socio-psychological motives and two items were categorized in cultural motives, all the items are presented in Table 3.1. A five-point rating scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was employed to measure respondents' traveling motives.

Table 3. 1 Items of travel motives

Classification on motives	Items of classification
Socio-psychological motives	1. escape from a perceived mundane environment
	2. exploration and evaluation of self
	3. relaxation
	4. prestige
	5. regression
	6. enhancement of kinship relationships
	7. Facilitation of social interaction.
Cultural motives	1. Novelty
	2. Education

The fourth section deals with the measurement of destination image of Taiwan. The image attributes' choice process is generally based on the literature review. According to recent studies, cognitive and affective image attributes are the main category method applied to test detailed destination image. There are a total of 12 items of destination image extracted from previous studies. The scales of cognitive image are derived from the paper of Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) study. Eight dimensions were applied to measure the cognitive destination image of Taiwan (e.g., Taiwan is a safe and secure country; the culture in Taiwan is similar as in my country). On the other side, the scales to measure affective image were adapted from Baloglu and Brinberg's (1997) study, and there are four dimensions (pleasant, relaxing, arousing, and exciting). To measure the level of agreement with these image attributes, respondents were asked to check the degree of each item with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The last section is about travel intention, there are three items that were adapted from Jalilv and Samiei's (2012) study to understand the influence of different social media use on respondents' travel intention to visit Taiwan, which are 'I expect I will visit Taiwan in the future', 'I would visit Taiwan rather than any other tourism destination', and 'If everything goes as I think, I will plan to visit Taiwan in the future'. Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Internal consistency and reliability were examined by Cronbach's alpha coefficients and showed that all sections were above .70, which is considered satisfactory for exploratory studies.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis consisted of three stages. First, descriptive statistics and reliabilities for multi-item variables were computed, reliability test was conducted in the section of instrument pretest and results showed that the reliability of each variable was acceptable. Second, bivariate Pearson Correlation was used to test the hypothesized relationship between independent variables (social media use and travel motivation) and

dependent variable (travel intention). Finally, path analysis was employed to test the hypothesized mediating role of destination image between variables.

4. Results

4.1 Findings of Descriptive Analysis

The profile of respondents was found to be mostly aged from 26 to 35, which accounted for 53.3% of the samples. 68.8% of the respondents were female and the remaining 31.2% were male. Most respondents got bachelor's degree, 81.2% got bachelor's degree and 18.3% got master's degree. About travel experiences, 57.6% of respondents had travel abroad experiences for 1 to 5 countries. In terms of travel intention of Thai people to visit Taiwan, it seems to be very high. 52.6% of respondents have been to Taiwan in the past and 68.8% expect that they will visit Taiwan in the future. 33.1% of respondents agree that they would visit Taiwan rather than other countries, and 66.0% plan to visit Taiwan in the future.

Regarding the data of social media use, Facebook is the main platform for Thai people to get traveling information, 50.2% of respondents always use Facebook as a tool to get traveling information. YouTube is the second platform that 46.9% of respondents use very often or always use as traveling information searching tool. Instagram is another tool that Thai people use when looking for traveling information, 21.4% sometimes use it, but 24.5% never use it to get traveling information. It is worth mentioning that although Twitter has 9 million users in Thailand (BangkokPost, 2017), it is the last platform with 60.0% of respondents never using it to get traveling information.

Last, the perceived destination image of Taiwan in Thai people's is generally positive. For cognitive image, the beautiful scenery and natural attractions of Taiwan is strongly agreed by 42.9% of the respondents. Good tourist facilitation is another significant cognitive destination image that 42.1% strongly agree with. Safe and secure country is the third significant cognitive destination image which 41.4% of respondents strongly agree with. For affective image, rather than an exciting and interesting place to visit, 48.1% of respondents strongly agree that Taiwan is a relaxing place to visit and 43.1% of respondents feel that Taiwan is a pleasant place to visit.

4.2 Hypotheses Finding and Other Finding

This study demonstrates that travel intention is determined by social media use, travel motivation, and destination image. Bivariate Pearson Correlation was used to test the hypothesis 1 and 2. As shown in Table 4.1, based on Pearson Correlation, H1 was supported. There was a significant but weak positive correlation between social media use and travel intention ($r = .173, p < .01$). Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. Second, for hypothesis 2, the correlation between travel motivation and travel intention was also proved. Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level, the influence of travel motivation on travel intention was positive and stronger than the influence of social media use ($r = .307, p < .01$).

To test hypothesis 3 and 4, the mediating effect of destination image in this study was tested with the technique of Baron and Kenny's (1986) four steps approach. Regression analysis was employed to test the direct and indirect effect between variables. In Tsai, Chu and Kobori's study (2017), the four steps testing procedure was clearly demonstrated. X in the equation is independent variables (social media use and travel motivation), Y is dependent variable (travel intention), and M is mediating factor (destination image).

Step 1: Conduct a simple regression analysis with X predicting Y , $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + e$

Step 2: Conduct a simple regression analysis with X predicting M , $M = \beta_0' + \beta_1' X + e$

Step 3: Conduct a simple regression analysis with M predicting Y , $Y = \beta_0'' + \beta_1'' M + e$

Step 4: Conduct a multiple regression analysis with X and M predicting Y ,

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + e$$

Several regression analyses were conducted to compute the above equation in order to conclude the mediating role of destination image. From Table 4.2, it shows that social media use and destination image could individually predict travel intention at a significance level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) which $\beta = 0.173$ and 0.467. At the same time, social media use can also predict destination image at a significance level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). However, social media use is no longer significant when destination image is controlled; therefore, the mediation effect can be confirmed accordingly. The results indicated that destination image will mediate the relationship between social media use and travel intention, supporting Hypothesis 3. From Table 4.3, when the cognitive and affective image are separately examined, the results stay the same, Hypothesis 3a and 3b were also supported.

The mediating role of destination image between travel motivation and travel intention is shown in Table 4.4, it shows that there is no mediation effect of destination image between travel motivation and travel intention. p Value of travel motivation is still significant ($p < 0.05$) when destination image is controlled, the effect of travel motivation is still existing. Destination image did not mediate the relationship between travel motivation and travel intention, therefore, not supporting Hypothesis 4.

When the mediating role of each component of destination image was examined, the predicting role of travel motivation in cognitive image and affective image are also significant at a level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) with $\beta = 0.137$ and 0.160. From the Multiple Regression Analysis in Table 4.5, travel motivation is still significant ($p < 0.05$) when the cognitive image or affective image is controlled. Cognitive destination image and affective image will not mediate the relationship between travel motivation and travel intention, not supporting Hypothesis 4a and 4b.

From above data analysis, it was confirmed that social media use and travel motivation are both significantly influencing an individual's travel intention. There was a significant and positive correlation between them. Moreover, destination image is the key mediating factor in the relationship between social media and travel intention. Both cognitive image and affective image will mediate the relationship between social media use and travel intention.

Different from the social media use, a person's travel motivation will positively and directly influence travel intention. The mediating effect of destination was not proved. Whether with the cognitive or affective image, the mediating effect was not found in the study.

Table 4. 1 Pearson Correlation analysis on the relationship between travel intention, social media use, and travel motivation.

Variables	Travel intention		Hypothesis test
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Social media use	.173	.000	H1 supported
Travel motivation	.307	.000	H2 supported

Table 4. 2 Regression Analysis between social media use, destination image, and travel intention

Coefficients ^a						
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	Travel intention	11.266	0.472		23.873	0.000
Social media use		0.136	0.038	0.173	3.591	0.000
(Constant)	Travel intention	5.300	0.713		7.437	0.000
Destination image		0.164	0.015	0.467	10.787	0.000
(Constant)	Destination image	40.443	1.327		30.478	0.000
Social media use		0.483	0.106	0.217	4.536	0.000
(Constant)	Travel intention	4.846	0.759		6.386	0.000
Destination image		0.159	0.016	0.450	10.185	0.000
Social media use		0.059	0.035	0.075	1.707	0.089

Table 4. 3 Regression Analysis between social media use, cognitive image, affective image, and travel intention

Coefficients ^a						
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	Travel intention	4.952	0.758		6.536	0.000
Cognitive image		0.268	0.025	0.460	10.600	0.000
(Constant)	Cognitive image	25.926	0.801		32.383	0.000
Social media use		0.313	0.064	0.232	4.871	0.000
(Constant)	Travel intention	4.564	0.795		5.738	0.000
Cognitive image		0.259	0.026	0.444	9.965	0.000
Social media use		0.055	0.035	0.070	1.573	0.116
(Constant)	Travel intention	7.478	0.586		12.756	0.000
Affective image		0.328	0.035	0.418	9.412	0.000
(Constant)	Affective image	14.518	0.602		24.116	0.000
Social media use		0.170	0.048	0.170	3.522	0.000
(Constant)	Travel intention	6.707	0.669		10.019	0.000
Affective image		0.314	0.035	0.400	8.927	0.000
Social media use		0.083	0.035	0.105	2.342	0.020

Table 4. 4 Regression Analysis between travel motivation, destination image, and travel intention

Coefficients ^a						
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	Travel intention	7.413	0.842		8.804	0.000
Travel motivation		0.153	0.023	0.307	6.585	0.000
(Constant)	Travel intention	5.300	0.713		7.437	0.000
Destination image		0.164	0.015	0.467	10.787	0.000
(Constant)	Destination image	38.436	2.479		15.502	0.000
Travel motivation		0.218	0.068	0.155	3.199	0.001
(Constant)	Travel intention	1.594	0.947		1.683	0.093
Destination image		0.151	0.015	0.430	10.170	0.000
Travel motivation		0.120	0.021	0.240	5.688	0.000

Table 4. 5 Regression Analysis between travel motivation, cognitive image, and affective image

Coefficients ^a						
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	Cognitive image	25.507	1.505		16.946	0.000
Travel motivation		0.117	0.041	0.137	2.823	0.005
(Constant)	Travel intention	1.083	0.981		1.103	0.271
Cognitive image		0.248	0.025	0.426	10.110	0.000
Travel motivation		0.124	0.021	0.248	5.888	0.000
(Constant)	Affective image	12.929	1.113		11.612	0.000
Travel motivation		0.101	0.031	0.160	3.307	0.001
(Constant)	Travel intention	3.571	0.892		4.006	0.000
Affective image		0.297	0.034	0.379	8.726	0.000
Travel motivation		0.123	0.022	0.246	5.668	0.000

5. Discussion and suggestions

5.1 Discussion

In this study, a theoretical framework was proposed to identify the influencing factors of an individual's travel intention. It was found that social media use influenced an individual's travel intention directly and indirectly through destination image. On the contrary, travel motivation directly influenced an individual's travel intention. In addition, when examining the effect of cognitive image and affective image separately, the results were constantly unchanged.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in three ways. First, this research confirmed the influence of social media use on travel intention. The most influential social media platform is Facebook. It is the most used social media platform for Thai people to get traveling information. YouTube is the second platform, with Thai people using it from very often to always as a traveling information searching tool.

Second, the findings of this study support destination image as significant mediator between social media use and travel intention. The degree of social media use will bring a difference to the destination image of the person, both cognitive image and affective image, then further affect the person's travel intention. The mediate effect of destination image between social media use and travel intention is proved again in the study, and the results supported several studies that destination image is an important mediator between travel intention and information sources (Baloglu, 2000; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Chon, 1990; Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Finally, the direct influence of travel motivation is proved. It positively influenced destination image and travel intention, that is to say, people with higher travel motivation will have better destination image and higher travel intention. The results provide support for numerous previous studies (San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008; Jang, Bai, Hu & Wu, 2009; Chew & Jahari, 2014). However, there is no mediate effect of destination image in the relationship. That means, travel motivation could directly influence an individual's travel intention without the mediation of destination image. Whether it is cognitive image or affective image, the results were constantly unchanged.

5.2 Recommendation for Further Application

The contribution of travel and tourism to a country's GDP, employment, and exports is significant. However, the tourism industry is becoming increasingly competitive. With new technological advances, national tourism organizations have many ways to promote their countries online. Based on the results of this study, here are several implications concerning the tourism promotion.

First, social media, which is an important tool, should be highly adopted to promote tourism in Thailand. The positive influence of social media is confirmed. More than half of the respondents always use Facebook to get traveling information. Also, the influence of YouTube should not be neglected. Using these platforms effectively could foster the communication with Thai people, create a favorable destination image and raise viewers' travel intention.

Second, the content of promotion need to be designed carefully to achieve the purpose of attracting potential tourists. Tourists' promoters could make the content focusing on the 'destination image'. Since the direct influence of social media use on travel intention is limited, destination image is the key mediating factor. The main objective of social media promotion about tourism should focus more on 'raising a better destination image'.

Last, data analysis showed that the destination image of Taiwan in Thai people's mind is generally positive. But some aspects could still be further studied. For example, respondents are unfamiliar with adventure activities when thinking of Taiwan, which might be the reason why less people connect Taiwan with an exciting and interesting place to visit. This feature might be a good point to be highlighted in future tourism

promoting. Nice climate is another feature that should be highlighted when promoting Taiwan tourism, since less people agree with it than other features. The third destination image worth to be mentioned is about culture. Most Thai people think that culture in Taiwan is similar to Thailand's culture, therefore, tourists' promoters can emphasize more on the unique and special cultural features to attract more visitors.

5.3 Limitations and Recommendation for Further Research

There are some limitations within this study that are important to acknowledge. First, the research only focuses on one specific destination, and respondents are restricted to Thai people only. However, the circumstances in different countries might be different. The method should be replicated in different destinations to validate the results and the conclusions, so they can be generalized.

Second, sampling procedure is another limitation of this study. With snowball sampling and online survey method, the data collection process is feasible to reach more targets. But it may limit generalizability of results. It might be the reason why the sample's composition represents the younger generation. Thus, future research can modify the data collection process to raise generalizability of results.

Last, it was confirmed that the effect of social media use and travel motivation on travel intention exists; however, these two elements might also influence each other. The relationship between social media use and travel motivation was not examined in this study. Further research can have a deeper analysis of the relationship between these two variables to have a more comprehensive understanding about the structural framework.

6. References

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