# Facebook as a Tool for Travel: Understanding Gender-Specific Factors Influencing Social Media Use

Abstract

This study explores the gender-specific factors influencing Facebook usage for travel-related activities, focusing on how men and women utilize the platform differently. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Media Richness Theory, the research examines variables such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, personal experience, media richness, and trust. Data were collected via an online questionnaire from 347 valid respondents in Facebook travel groups. The analysis reveals significant gender differences: women are more influenced by personal experience, trust, and media richness, while men are primarily driven by perceived enjoyment and usefulness. The results support the hypothesis that different factors affect Facebook usage for activities like asking questions, posting experiences, and responding to posts. Women were found to engage more with detailed, trustworthy, and visually rich content, while men preferred enjoyable and functional content. The study's findings provide practical implications for travel marketers and social media platforms, suggesting the need for tailored strategies that cater to these gender-based preferences.

Keywords

Facebook, Trip planning, Technology acceptance model, Social media, Gender differences

Data are available at: 10.6084/m9.figshare.27134949

1. Introduction

In the modern digital age, social media platforms play a crucial role in decision-making processes and travel planning, and it became the leading source for data (Lo & Yao 2019, Perez-Vega et al 2018). Traveling abroad involves uncertainty and therefore requires prior planning. Platforms like Facebook serve as essential sources of information for travelers, enabling them to plan their itineraries, purchase various travel services, receive advice from fellow travelers, and share personal experiences with a wide audience. Much of the travel-related content in Facebook groups is user-generated (Nguyen, 2023; Dedeoğlu et al., 2020), as people can easily share pictures, stories, audio and video of the trip (firat 2019). This user-generated content is often considered more enjoyable, up-to-date, reliable, objective and trustworthy than content produced by travel companies (Hyung-Park et al., 2007, Filieri et al., 2021).

Unlike traditional websites, Facebook is interactive, allowing users to share their experiences and opinions during and after their trips (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017; Mendes-Filho, Mills, Tan, 2018; Narangajavana et al., 2017). This interactive nature enables people to use recommendations from others as well as ask for advice when planning their vacations, reducing the risks and uncertainties associated with travel (Jadhav, 2018; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017; Mendes-Filho, Mills, Tan, 2018; Narangajavana et al., 2017).

Tourists uses social media in general, and Facebook specifically for information gathering and as a base for decision making before and during the trip (Filieri et al 2021). In addition, they can share their own experience during or after the trip (Arica & Corbaci 2020). Most of the tourists that uses social media only read posts while only a few of them share and post information themselves (Wang et al 2021). The studies that explored the factors influencing the use of social media, particularly Facebook, for travel planning focused on different uses of Facebook. Some focused on gathering information, while other studies focused on the factors effecting experience sharing and responding to posts.

Mariani, Ek Styven, and Ayeh (2019) used theoretical models to study young travelers' intentions to use Facebook for travel decision-making in Italy and Sweden. They found that traditional constructs from the technology acceptance model (TAM), such as perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and intention, were relevant, while ease of use was not. Similarly, Sakshi et al. (2020) developed a model incorporating variables from three theoretical frameworks: 1) trust and perceived risk from the utility framework; 2) perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), and behavioral intention toward social media usage from TAM; and 3) media richness from media richness theory—all of which influence social media use for travel planning. Additionally, Singh et al. (2023) examined what drives Indian travelers to use social media for travel planning, focusing on TAM, social capital (SC), perceived ease of use (PEOU), perceived usefulness (PU), and perceived trust.

The researchers that focused on the tourists who posts information online found that demographic variables effect certain behavior regarding information sharing (Chou & Hsu , 2018, Zhang et al 2017). Moreover, the importance attached to content sharing has an affect as well (Dedeoglu et al 2020a, Dedeoglu et al 2020b). Oliveira et al (2020) and Arica et al (2021) used a holistic approach to include the different factors that affects tourist decision to share information on the social media.

This paper aims to contribute and expand the understanding of this field by comparing the various factors that influence the use of Facebook for different purposes before, during and after travel. Uniquely, this study distinguishes between the factors that affect the different uses of Facebook: use of Facebook for purchasing services, asking advice, sharing experiences, and responding to others' questions. There is some research that explain that the difference between those who read posts and those who post information is based on personality traits, but to the best of my knowledge this is the first attempt to compare these factors based on attitudes toward technology focusing specifically on Facebook and tourism. This study may offer new insights into how Facebook is utilized as a central tool in travel planning. Moreover, since women use Facebook more than men (53.8% versus 46.2% respectively, Statista, 2024) and travel more than men as well as being responsible for 85% of the family travel decisions (Poitevien, 2021,), and 82% of travel decisions in general (Goldfischer, 2024) this study will analyze the differences in Facebook usage separately between men and women.

The identified research gap in understanding the use of Facebook for planning a trip abroad raises the following questions:

1. RQ1. What are the different variables that effect the different Facebook uses.
2. RQ2. What are the different variables that effect men versus women.

This research will analyze the differences between men and women, the different variables that effect the different uses of Facebook for all participants and then the different uses of Facebook for men and women separately.

The present paper is structured as follows: In Sect. 2, I provide an overview of related literature concerning Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Media Richness Theory, literature review regarding various uses of social media and the gender differences in using social media. Section 3 outlines the methods and data used in this study, with the corresponding results presented in Sect. 4. The discussion of these findings appears in Sect. [5](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40558-024-00291-2#Sec11). Finally, Sect. 6 offers conclusions along with several implications.

2. Literature review

In this section I discuss the theories regarding the use of social media in general, the different uses of social media and the gender differences. The use of social media in general and Facebook specifically includes several components involving: gathering information by reading others posted information or asking questions, sharing information by posting recommendations or answering other people questions. The research focused on those activities separately.

**2.1 Using social media**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a framework that explains how individuals accept and use information systems and new technologies. This model, developed by Davis in 1989, is centered around two key components: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance their performance. For instance, in the context of social media, travelers may use these platforms if they believe it will help them make better decisions regarding their trips. Researchers like Mariani et al. (2019) have noted that travelers often consult multiple sources to minimize the risk of their plans falling short of expectations, and they will opt for social media if they perceive it as more useful than traditional methods. This concept has been extensively studied, with findings showing that the availability of information on social media saves time, effort, and money, thereby reinforcing the intent to use these platforms.

Perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which a person believes that using a technology will be free of effort. It has been consistently shown that when technology is easier to use, people are more likely to adopt it. Although some studies, such as those by Venkatesh and Davis (2000), suggest that perceived ease of use is less influential than perceived usefulness, other researchers have found a strong correlation between the two, indicating that as technology becomes easier to use, its perceived usefulness increases. This component is particularly relevant in the context of using Facebook for trip planning, where ease of use can directly impact a user’s willingness to engage with the platform.

Technology convenience, defined as the ease and comfort with which technology can be used, also plays a significant role in technology adoption. Research indicates that when technology is convenient, it is more likely to be adopted, as ease of use directly contributes to perceived convenience. Studies by Lee et al. (2008) and others have demonstrated that technology convenience is a strong predictor of perceived ease of use, and the use of the social media.

Media richness theory is another framework that explains the impact of the type of media on perceived usefulness. Media richness is often defined by the diversity and quantity of information available, as well as the capability of the information source to provide rich, detailed content. In the context of social media, the richness of the media can help bridge the gap between the information needs of travelers and the content provided, reducing uncertainties and enhancing the perceived usefulness of the platform.

Trust is a critical factor for travelers using social media, as it affects their willingness to accept the inherent risks of relying on user-generated content. Research shows that people tend to trust information on social media more than that provided by traditional travel agents, and this trust can significantly influence perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Trust not only reduces perceived risk but also enhances the likelihood of using social media for travel planning.

The perceived risk is defined as the uncertainty in the outcome (Cox 1967). Most research on the subject connects perceived risk to safety/privacy, performance, social, time, financial and psychological loss (Cunningham,1967). While using social media to receive information related to traveling the perceived risk is related to the inaccuracy in the content advertised by the users and the vulnerability that information seekers can be exposed to (Hua et al 2017). Some researchers claimed that privacy issues effect risk and then the behavior intentions (Tandon & Kiran 2019). Schroeder et al (2013) and Pennington-Gray et al (2013) found a negative correlation between perceive rick and PU while searching travel information on the social media. Hua ey al (2017) found a direct correlation between risk, PU and PEOU to using social media when choosing a destination.

**2.2 Posting information**

Studies shows that there are many reasons that effect people’s decisions to share information on social media. The difference in the motives leads to a different type of usage and social media content sharing (Bulut & Dogan 2017, Malik 2016, Shao & Kwon, 2019). These reasons include self-perception and social interactions, economic reward, providing helpful information and advice seeking (Lee et al 2019). Perceived enjoyment has the largest affect on the decision to share travel experiences online (Oliveira et al 2020) on the other hand, people with low self esteem or those with lower levels of technology convenience or those who worry about privacy are less likely to share on social media. Reading information shared by other tourists positively affect the decisions of the tourist to share their own experiences (Arica et al 2022). Some research focused on the personality traits that distinguish between those who read posts and those that post information. Those who only read posts usually have low self-esteem, and lack of confidence (sun et al 2014) or the need to remain anonymous because of privacy concerns (Yoo & Gretzel 2011).

Based on the above I hypothesis that

H1: Diverse variables affect the different Facebook usage: asking questions, posting experiences, responding to posts and using Facebook for purchasing.

**2.3 Gender differences**

Gender differences exist in many areas of life and specifically regarding social media in the ways people share information and use the information in social media to make decisions (Yoo & Gretzal 2008). Several researchers studied the differences between men and women in technology acceptance and social media usage. Regarding technology acceptance the researchers found that women are influenced more by perceived ease of use while men are influenced by perceived usefulness (Venkatesh & Morris 2000). Regarding the benefits and risks the researchers found that men are influenced by perceived benefits, while women are affected from privacy risks (sun et al 2015, Malik et al 2016). Regarding usage it was found that women tend to express their feeling and opinions subjectively more than men (Ahang et al 2013), and the decision to use Facebook is based on factors like ease of use and perceived reputation that are weighted differently across genders (Lin et al 2013). Lin & Wang (2020) found privacy risks, social ties, and commitment played a more significant role in shaping women's attitudes toward information sharing compared to men. Gender acts as a significant moderator in the relationship between individuals' perceptions of information sharing and their intentions to share information. Similarly, Dedeoglu et al (2018) found that men and women have different perceptions of the quality of information and the credibility of the source and therefore have different attitudes toward social media. In addition, Gretzel and Yoo (2008) found that women use travelers’ reviews to obtain information more than men, believing the information help them reduce uncertainty and risk. Moreover, women make more detailed searches on social media, search in more places and make their decisions based on the information found (Kim et al 2007).

Based on the above I hypothesis that

H2: men and women have diverse variables affecting the different Facebook usage.

1. Materials and Methods

This study uses quantitative data based on data collected by questionnaire and analysed using linear regression models. This study was conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire distributed among members of various Facebook travel groups. The questionnaire link was shared through posts in these groups, with the purpose of the research, anonymity assurances, and its use for academic purposes clearly stated. Data collection occurred between July and September 2023, resulting in a total of 389 responses, out of which 347 were deemed valid. Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the academic institution to which the author is affiliated.

**3.1 Questionnaire Design**
The questionnaire included several key sections:

1. Demographic Information: This section collected basic demographic data, including gender, number of children, education level, and income.

2. Facebook Group Usage: Questions in this section focused on the respondents' interactions with the Facebook group, such as the duration of group membership, frequency of posting questions and information, and whether they remained active in the group post-trip.

3. Theoretical Model Components: The third section comprised questions derived from various theoretical models, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Utility Framework, and Media Richness Theory. Specifically, it assessed perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, media richness, trust, and perceived usefulness. These constructs were measured using validated items from prior studies. For instance, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment , perceived usefulness and media richness were measured based on the work of Ayeh et al. (2013). Trust was measured using items from Gefen et al. (2003). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 5 indicated strong agreement with the statements provided.

4. Use of Facebook for Travel Planning: This section assessed the extent of Facebook’s role in planning trips by asking respondents about their use of the platform for specific services (using links provided in the group), such as car rentals, hotel bookings, attractions, tour guides, asking questions in the group, posting experiences and answering questions.

The dependent variable in this study were the different uses of Facebook including: responding to posts (opinion giving), posting experiences (opinion passing), asking questions in the groups (opinion seeking) (chu & Kim 2011) and summary of Facebook uses (using links to book car rental, accommodation, experiences etc.)

3.2 Data Analysis

Following data collection, only fully completed questionnaires were included in the analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS 28 to perform independent t-test to compare men and women and linear regression to identify the variable that effect the different dependent variables on th full sample and for men and women seperatly.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the analysis starting with the descriptive statistics and t-Tests, followed by linear regression models for all participants and for men and women separately.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics of the demographic variables and data regarding the use of Facebook for trip planning are included in Table 1.

 Table 1. Description of sample by demographic data.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable |  | **N** | **%** |
| Gender | Men  | **82** | **23.6** |
| Women | **265** | **76.4** |
| Marital status | Single | **62**  | 17.9 |
| Married | **285** | 82.1 |
| Income | Below Average  | **53** | **15.3** |
| Average  | **75** | **22.3** |
| Above Average | **208** | **62.4** |
| Education | **12** years of school | **41** | **11.8** |
| Higher education | **306** | **88.2** |

The data indicate that 75% of the respondents were women, and further analysis shows that this percentage is consistent with the general composition of women in these Facebook groups, which exceeds 70%. Among the 347 valid responses, the average number of trips abroad per respondent was 2.43. Approximately 60% of participants reported that using Facebook facilitated their trip planning. More than 70% of respondents indicated that they asked questions within the group (70.4%), and a majority (57.9%) shared their personal travel experiences after completing their trips.

4.2 T-tests analysis

Table 2: T-test results of the differences between men and women regarding the dependent and independent variables.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Gender | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Summary of Facebook Use | Men | 1.74 | 1.18 |
| Women | 2.0 | 1.36 |
| Asking Questions in Group | Men | 0.65 | 0.48 |
| Women | 0.73 | 0.44 |
| Posting Experiences | Men | 0.58 | 0.5 |
| Women | 0.58 | 0.49 |
| Responding to Posts | Men | 0.77 | 0.42 |
| Women | 0.76 | 0.43 |
| Technology Convenience | Men\*\*\* | 3.7 | 0.99 |
| Women | 4.09 | 0.88 |
| Perceived enjoyment | Men\* | 3.53 | 1.02 |
| Women | 3.87 | 1.12 |
| Media | Men | 3.77 | 1.05 |
| Women | 3.89 | 1.02 |
| Trust | Men\* | 2.72 | 0.86 |
| Women | 2.97 | 0.84 |
| Perceived ease of use | Men\*\*\* | 3.6 | 1.15 |
| Women | 4.09 | 0.97 |
| Perceived usefulness | Men | 3.61 | 1.17 |
| Women | 3.88 | 1.07 |
| \*P<0.05 \*\*P<0.01 \*\*\* P<0.001 |

The results from Table 2 reveal notable gender differences in several key areas. Women reported significantly higher levels of technology convenience, perceived enjoyment, trust, and perceived ease of use compared to men. Specifically, women found it easier to use technology (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.88) than men (Mean = 3.7, SD = 0.99), with this difference being highly significant (**P < 0.001**). Additionally, women experienced greater enjoyment in using Facebook for travel planning (Mean = 3.87, SD = 1.12) compared to men (Mean = 3.53, SD = 1.02), which was statistically significant (*P < 0.05*). Trust levels also differed, with women showing higher trust (Mean = 2.97, SD = 0.84) than men (Mean = 2.72, SD = 0.86, *P < 0.05*). Lastly, the perceived ease of use was greater among women (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.97) than men (Mean = 3.6, SD = 1.15, P < 0.001). These findings suggest that women generally have a more positive experience using Facebook for travel planning compared to men. Surprisingly, none of the dependent variables showed a significant gender difference.

4.3 regression results for the full sample

Table 3: regression results regarding the different uses of Facebook as a dependent variable

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| Summary of Facebook Uses |

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Asking Questions in the Group |

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| Posting Experiences |

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| **Responding to Posts** |

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| 0.12\*(0.06) | 0.06\*\*\*(0.02) | 0.05\*\*(0.02) | 0.02(0.02) | Personal Experience |
|  | 0.08\*(0.04) |  |  | Technology Convenience |
|  | 0.08\*\*(0.04) |  |  | Perceived enjoyment |
|  | 0.07\*\*(0.03) |  |  | Trust |
|  |  | 0.09\*\*\*(0.03) | 0.07\*\*\*(0.02) | Media |
| 0.13\*(0.07) |  |  |  | Income |
| 0.23\*\*(0.07) |  |  |  | Perceived usefulness |
| \*P<0.1\*\*P<0.05 \*\*\* P<0.01 |

only the best fit model are presented in this table, therefore it can be seen that only part of the independent variable effect each dependent variable.

The results from Table 3 reveal that several factors positively influence different uses of Facebook for travel-related activities:

**Personal experience** is a significant positive predictor across multiple facets of Facebook use. Users who have more personal experience using Facebook for trip planning are more likely to engage in asking questions within the group (0.06, *P < 0.01*) or posting experiences (0.05, P < 0.05). Additionally, personal experience positively impacts the overall summary of Facebook uses (0.12, P < 0.05), indicating that as users' experience increases, so does their engagement with Facebook for various travel-related activities.

**Media richness (M)**, reflecting the richness and effectiveness of the content on the platform, positively affects users' behaviors. It significantly enhances both responding to posts (0.07, *P < 0.01*) and posting experiences (0.09, *P < 0.001*). This suggests that users who perceive Facebook as a platform with rich media content are more likely to actively contribute by sharing their experiences and responding to others.

**Technology convenience**, **Trust** and **Perceived enjoyment** are particularly influential when it comes to asking questions in the group (0.08, P < 0.05, 0.07, *P < 0.*01 respectively). Users who find technology is easy to use are more engaged in seeking information and asking questions within Facebook groups and are more likely to respond to others' posts.

Lastly, **income** and **perceived enjoyment** positively influence the summary of Facebook uses. Higher income is associated with more extensive use of Facebook for travel planning activities (0.13, P < 0.1), while perceived enjoyment also positively affects this usage (0.23, *P < 0.05*).

It is interesting to note that the perceived ease of use does not appear in any of these models. However, this is in line with the results of Venkatesh and Davis (2000). In addition, gender did not appear as a significant variable in any of the regression above. However, due to the results of pervious studies that women’s

4. 4 regression results for men and women separately

decisions are affected from other variables than men it is interesting to analyze each gender separately.

Table 4 include the results pf separate regressions for men and women regarding the different uses of Facebook.

Table 4: regression results regarding the different uses of Facebook as a dependent variable comparing men and women.

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| **Responding to Posts** |

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**Asking Questions in the Group** |

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| **Posting Experiences** |

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| **Summary of Facebook Uses** |

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|  | MenN=87 | WomenN=269 | MenN=90 | WomenN=259 | MenN=86 | WomenN=246 | MenN=68 | WomenN=208 |
| **Personal Experience** |  |  | 0.06(0.04) | 0.05\*\*(0.02) | 0.03(0.04) | 0.04\*(0.02) |  | 0.16\*\*(0.07) |
| **Technology Convenience** |  |  |  | -0.14\*\*\*(0.05) |  |  |  | -0.3\*(0.18) |
| **Perceived enjoyment** | 0.11\*\*(0.05) |  | 0.1\*\*(0.05) | 0.1\*\*(0.04) | 0.11\*(0.06) |  |  | 0.21(0.14) |
| **Percived utility** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0.58\*\*\*(0.22) |  |
| **Trust** |  |  |  | 0.09\*\*(0.04) |  | 0.1\*\*(0.05) |  |  |
| **Media** |  | 0.08\*\*\*(0.3) |  |  |  | 0.1\*\*(0.03) |  |  |
| **Perceived risk** |  |  |  | -0.08\*\*(0.04) |  |  |  |  |
| **Perceived ease of use** |  |  |  |  |  | -0.06(0.04) | -0.53\*\*(0.22) | 0.61\*\*(0.13) |
| **Income** | -0.05(0.04) |  |  |  |  | -0.03(0.03) |  |  |
| **Number of trips per year** |  |  |  |  | 0.04(0.04) |  |  |  |
| \*P<0.1\*\*P<0.05 \*\*\* P<0.01 |

The regression results in Table 4 reveal several significant differences between men and women Facebook users regarding their use of the platform for various travel-related activities. Generally regarding posting on Facebook (asking questions, sharing experiences and answering questions) men are only influenced by their perceived enjoyment. Women are affected from different variables regarding the different uses.

1. Responding to Posts:
	* For men, perceived enjoyment is a significant predictor (β = 0.11, p < 0.05). This indicates that men who enjoy using Facebook are more likely to respond to posts.
	* For women, media richness is the only significant predictor (β = 0.08, p < 0.01), showing that women are more likely to respond when they perceive Facebook content as rich and engaging.
2. Asking Questions in the Group:
	* For men, perceived enjoyment is a significant factor (β = 0.1, p < 0.05), meaning men who enjoy using Facebook are more likely to ask questions.
	* For women, five significant variables influence their likelihood to ask questions:
		+ Personal experience (β = 0.05, p < 0.01) positively effect asking questions in the group. That is those who has more experience asks more questions
		+ Trust (β = 0.09, p < 0.05), those who trust the information on Facebook more, ask more questions.
		+ Technology convenience (β = -0.14, p < 0.05) affects negatively questions asking on Facebook. That is, women who are less convenient with the technology asks more questions on Facebook. Probably because it is more difficult for them to search and find the information independently.
		+ Perceived enjoyment (β = 0.10, p < 0.05), This indicates that women who enjoy using Facebook are more likely to ask questions.
		+ Perceived risk (β = -0.08, p < 0.05), This indicates that women who thinks that using Facebook is riskier are less likely to ask questions.
3. Posting Experiences:
	* For men, perceived enjoyment is a significant predictor (β = 0.11, p < 0.05), meaning men who enjoy using Facebook are more likely to post their experiences.
	* For women, three variables significantly influence the likelihood of posting experiences:
		+ Personal experience (β = 0.45, p < 0.1), positively affect posing experiences. That is those women has more experience post more experiences.
		+ Trust (β = 0.10, p < 0.05), women who trust the information on Facebook more post more experiences.
		+ Media richness (β = 0.1, p < 0.05), showing that women are more likely to post experiences when they perceive Facebook content as rich and engaging.
4. Summary of Facebook Uses:
* For men, two variables are statistically significant:
* Perceived usefulness (β = 0.58, p < 0.01): Men who find Facebook useful for travel purposes are more likely to engage with it for travel-related activities.
* Perceived ease of use (β = -0.53, p < 0.05): Interestingly, men who perceive Facebook as easier to use are less likely to use it for travel-related purposes, which is a counterintuitive result.
* For women, the following variables are statistically significant:
* Personal experience (β = 0.16, p < 0.1): Women with more personal experience using Facebook are more likely to use it for a variety of travel-related activities.
* Technology convenience (β = -0.3, p < 0.05): Women who find Facebook convenient and easy to use are less likely to engage in travel-related activities.
* Perceived ease of use (β = 0.61, p < 0.05): Women who perceive Facebook as easy to use are more likely to utilize it for travel purposes.
1. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the factors that influence the different uses of Facebook for travel-related activities, specifically focusing on gender differences. By employing models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Media Richness Theory, the research examined how variables like personal experience, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, media richness, and trust impact user behavior on the platform. The study gathered data through an online questionnaire, distributed among members of Facebook travel groups, and performed analyses to compare the Facebook usage patterns of men and women for activities such as asking questions, posting experiences, and responding to posts. This research contributes to the understanding of how social media platforms like Facebook are utilized before, during, and after travel.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by deepening our understanding of how Facebook is utilized as a tool for travel-related activities and how different factors influence these uses. The study also reveals significant gender differences in how men and women engage with the platform, offering valuable insights into the role of social media in tourism.

The results largely support both hypotheses proposed in this study. The first hypothesis (H1) suggested that diverse variables would affect different Facebook uses, which is confirmed by the regression analyses showing the varying influence of factors like personal experience, media richness, technology convenience, and trust on different Facebook activities (e.g., asking questions, posting experiences, responding to posts).

This study aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which emphasizes the roles of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in technology adoption. The findings show that perceived ease of use is more influential for women than men, consistent with Venkatesh and Morris (2000), who found that women are more likely to adopt technology when they find it easy to use. Additionally, perceived usefulness, as predicted by TAM, is a strong determinant of men’s Facebook usage, which corroborates previous research by Mariani et al. (2019), suggesting that travelers are drawn to platforms they perceive as useful for making informed travel decisions.

The study also supports the Media Richness Theory. For women, the richness of Facebook’s content (i.e., its ability to convey detailed, engaging information) significantly influences their likelihood of both responding to posts and posting experiences. This is consistent with the idea that rich media enhances the user’s ability to absorb and engage with information (Perez-Vega et al., 2018), thus fostering a more interactive user experience.

Another significant finding relates to trust as a driver for Facebook usage. The results indicate that women are more likely to trust the information on Facebook, which influences their decisions to both ask questions and post experiences. This finding aligns with research by Filieri et al. (2021), which highlights the importance of trust in user-generated content for influencing decision-making processes in tourism.

The study’s results on gender differences contribute to the growing body of research on how men and women use social media differently and support the second hypothesis (H2) proposed that men and women would be influenced by different variables in their Facebook usage. Women’s decisions are influenced by a combination of personal experience, perceived ease of use, media richness, and trust, while men’s decisions are primarily driven by perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness. These findings are in line with previous studies, such as Yoo & Gretzel (2008), which found that women rely more heavily on social media reviews to mitigate uncertainty and risk when making travel decisions.

Interestingly, perceived enjoyment plays a more significant role for men in all forms of engagement, whether it be responding to posts, posting experiences, or asking questions. This highlights the importance of enjoyment in motivating men’s social media use, a finding consistent with Malik et al. (2016), who found that men are more influenced by the entertaining aspects of social media.

Despite its valuable contributions, the study has several limitations. First, the sample is heavily skewed toward women (76%), which may have limited the ability to detect more nuanced differences in men’s behaviors. Future research should aim to balance gender representation to provide a more comprehensive comparison. Additionally, the study focused solely on Facebook, limiting its generalizability to other social media platforms. Future studies could explore how travelers use different platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter) for travel planning.

1. Conclusion

Overall, this study provides significant insights into the factors that influence Facebook usage for travel-related activities and highlights important gender differences in how the platform is used. The findings underscore the relevance of perceived enjoyment, trust, media richness, and technology convenience in shaping how travelers interact with Facebook, offering practical implications for travel marketers and social media platforms aiming to engage users more effectively.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for both travel marketers and social media platforms. First, understanding that women are more influenced by personal experience, trust, and media richness suggests that marketers should focus on building trustworthy and rich content that appeals to women’s desire for detailed and reliable information. For instance, user-generated reviews and high-quality visuals can foster trust and encourage more active engagement from female users. In addition, it is wise to build online communities where women can ask questions, share experiences, and seek advice will foster trust and long-term engagement with the brand

On the other hand, men's greater reliance on perceived enjoyment and usefulness indicates that marketing strategies aimed at men should prioritize creating enjoyable and entertaining experiences on social media. This could include interactive content such as polls, quizzes, or video content that makes trip planning more engaging and fun. Moreover, it is recommended to develop or highlight tools within social media platforms that allow men to streamline travel planning, such as integrated booking services, price comparison tools, or easy-to-use itineraries.

For social media platforms like Facebook, the findings suggest that improving ease of use is crucial, especially for women. Platforms should focus on intuitive designs and easy-to-navigate interfaces that enhance user experience, making it easier for travelers to ask questions, share experiences, and book services. It is possible to use AI to offer personalized travel recommendations based on past interactions can improve both men’s and women’s experiences by making the platform feel more useful and enjoyable.

Additionally, the fact that perceived usefulness significantly influences men's overall engagement suggests that platforms could benefit from features that highlight the practical benefits of using social media for travel planning, such as integrated booking systems and trip-planning tools. These features could increase user retention and engagement, particularly among male users.

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