

Impact of Social Media Tourism Advertisement Factors on Visit Intention of Customers

Kiran Khokhar¹

Abida Ellahi²

Abstract

As an increasing trend in tourism, many customers have been showing great interest in it, relying on credible and trustworthy sources of information. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of different advertisement characteristics such as persuasive argument quality and source credibility on the visit intention of a tourist in Pakistan. This research is quantitative in nature. Questionnaire as an instrument of data collection was used to collect data from Travel-related Social Media (TSM) users. The sample size was 415 and SPSS-20 was used for data analysis. The findings of the study state that persuasive argument quality and advertisement credibility has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, which ultimately affects the visit intentions of a tourist in Pakistan. Tourist involvement, which was taken as a moderator, proved significant in the relationship of persuasive argument quality-tourist satisfaction and on the relationship of advertisement credibility-tourist satisfaction. The finding presents significance for academia as it adds knowledge in the research, and can help marketers to make effective strategies in this digital era to improve the tourism industry in Pakistan.

Keywords: Persuasive argument quality, Advertisement credibility, Tourist involvement, Customer satisfaction, Visit intention

Introduction

The tourism industry, without a doubt, has become one of the biggest industries in the world. It is playing a strong role in the economy by creating jobs and earning foreign exchange. According to Statistica's (2018) report, the travel and tourism industry had a global economic contribution (direct, indirect, and induced) of over 7.6 trillion dollars in 2016. The United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) annual report (2018) declares that "2017 was a highly important year for the global tourism community".

The development of Web 2.0 has created significant changes in the manner by which consumers generate, acquire, and share data. The quantity of online platforms (e.g. blogs, wiki, social networking sites, etc.) offering online consumers' reviews about particular products and services has become impressive because it enables consumers to gain information, both from known and unknown people, regardless of any geographical and temporal restrictions (Duan *et al.*, 2008). With the expanding utilization of social

¹ Fatima Jinnah Women University

² Abbottabad University of Science & Technology

media, travelers rely vigorously on consumer-generated online information when making travel-related decisions (Hwang, Park, & Woo, 2018). Travel-related Social Media (TSM) users can give their opinions, reviews, and sometimes suggestions about a particular place, be it a hotel or an airline. Apart from this, they can also leave their comments (Nusair *et al.*, 2013). People find such reviews to be extremely trustworthy (Yoo *et al.*, 2009).

This wide range of online information has also created a concern for information being “accurate, reliable, complete, credible, consistent, and knowledgeable” (Sbaffi & Rowley, 2017). Along with this concern, the involvement of the consumer in obtaining travel-related online information and making the touring-place decision is also of significant importance. A consumer who is more active in making arrangements related to tourism will have high involvement in gathering information through social media about flights, meals, accommodation, etc. as compared to one who is less involved in this activity (Icoz, Kutuk, & Icoz, 2018).

Due to the heavy reliance of consumers on travel-related online comments, reviews, electronic word of mouth, argument quality, and source credibility of tourism advertisement, it is highly important to convince a customer to give positive feedback. Travelers are facing several challenges regarding misleading information or lack of travel guidelines (Crooks *et al.*, 2013), especially in developing countries like Pakistan that has a huge potential for tourism due to its natural landscapes. This indicates a lack of marketing practices in the country to attract enough travelers, who are ultimately beneficial for the country’s economy. From a marketing perspective, it is necessary to understand the role of argument quality and advertisement credibility on the visit intention of travelers in Pakistan, with a specific role of customers’ involvement. The argument quality refers to messages, provided that is embedded with strong, persuasive arguments (Sussman & Siegel, 2003), while source credibility is defined as “the extent to which information source is perceived to be believable, competent, and trustworthy by information recipients” (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006). Keeping in view the need for such an understanding, this study has attempted to explain the effect of online persuasive argument quality and source credibility on travelers’ visit intention to any place, with the moderating role of customers’ involvement and mediating role of satisfaction and perceived usefulness.

Literature Review

Information Adoption Model

To develop the theoretical relationships among variables, the Information Adoption Model (IAM) provides enough guidance in the context of tourism research. The IAM is based upon the Dual Process Theory and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

(Sussman, 2003) and contains two routes of persuasion. In the central route of information adoption, an individual concentrates on the content of a message, actively understands, and assesses the information. The message receiver's behavior can be positively framed towards positive intentions if the quality of the information in the message is high, as the message receiver critically observes the target information to be useful (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). In the peripheral route of information adoption, a customer mainly focuses on the source of the message rather than the quality of the message. A receiver decides to agree if the source of information is attractive, credible, and reliable. When the credibility of the source of information is high, a customer can observe the target information to be useful. Hence, the model comprises of two things, argument quality and source credibility as the two routes of persuasive processing (Li, 2013). The information that is most persuasive and credible from consumer-generated media can make customers more satisfied and increase their visit intention.

Argument Credibility, Customer Satisfaction, and Visit Intention

In information system research, many dimensions of information or argument quality have been proposed. For example, McKinney *et al.* (2002) proposed three elements to evaluate information quality (reliability, understandability, and the usefulness of the information) as factors to explain website satisfaction. In another study, Tseng (2015) showed that in the context of web-based self-services, perceived information quality and system quality positively affected user satisfaction, thereby having a positive influence on the user's usage intention. In the context of online travel review websites for hotel booking behaviors, Hwang, Park, and Woo (2018) found that *"If users who have utilized online consumer reviews for their travel objectives are satisfied with what they acquired/experienced from the online review website, their revisit intentions to the online review website can be influenced positively"* (p.6). In the case of tourism research, it can be argued that if online information/argument quality is perceived by the travelers who use online sites, they can be satisfied; if they are satisfied with the information obtained, they can have a positive intention of visiting that place. A strong persuasive argument can give the satisfactory impression to a customer on which they can rely and this can cause positive visit intentions. Even if a tourist, from the well-structured arguments, finds out that ITA is effective and useful for them, definitely it can cause some positive attitude towards visit intentions (Lee, 2017). According to Hwang, Park, and Woo (2018), *"the information quality of online review platforms is more associated with extrinsic motivation, as the determinants to evaluate the information quality are related more to the reinforcement value of the outcomes rather than the pleasure and inherent satisfaction derived from the activity"*. Thus, satisfaction here plays a mediating role between argument quality and visit intention.

In the background of Web 2.0, the results of Hossain and Silva (2009) confirmed that when a user perceives social networks and virtual communities to be helpful and useful, they have an additional positive attitude towards the use of that system for getting relevant information. Hence, it can be proposed that:

H₁: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on the visit intentions of customers

H_{1(a)}: Persuasive argument quality has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

H_{1(b)}: Customer satisfaction mediates the impact of persuasive argument quality on the visit intentions of customers

Advertisement Credibility, Customer Satisfaction, and Visit Intentions

Among college students, Park *et al.* (2009) state that socializing and one's involvement in various groups of Facebook or other social networking sites is a basic need these days. In source credibility, the information source is perceived to be trustworthy, believable, and competent by the information recipient (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). In ELM literature, many peripheral cues have been suggested, counting the credibility of messages, sources, source likeability, and source credibility. Source credibility facilitates the TSM users to gain their entertainment motive and have a good pass time using videos, photos, and comments.

By using social media, consumers learn about various services, people, places, and events (Luo *et al.*, 2011). Because without getting any information, no user can be satisfied enough to show their interest towards visit intentions. For informative tools, social media is somewhat an interesting means to obtain knowledge and information about the different places' consumers plan to visit. This information should be sufficient to convince a customer, because if a customer is convinced and satisfied with the information shown in social media, then they can show interest towards the travel intentions. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: Advertisement credibility has a positive impact on customer satisfaction in Pakistan

H_{2(a)}: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship of advertisement credibility and the visit intention of customers in Pakistan

Tourist's Involvement as a Moderating Variable

In the marketing context and consumer behaviors, the construct of involvement is relevant as it has been used as a multidimensional construct in tourism literature (Beaton, Funk, & Alexandris, 2009). Researchers have assessed tourists' involvement with interest in tourist activities, for example, skiing and visiting parks (Dimanche, Havitz, & Howard, 1993), shopping (Hu & Yu, 2007), and with touristic familiarity (Gross & Brown, 2006).

Consumers, especially those who want to make their visit memorable and entertaining are more interested in tourism advertisements. They always tend to seek information from useful online reviews about the products and services of companies. This looks more significant under high involvement conditions (Park *et al.*, 2007). So, it is important for the service providers to not ignore potential customers because they are more interested in the negative online reviews for their future intentions, as they find these reviews helpful and useful for an overall evaluation (Lee, Jeong, & Lee, 2017). Under this situation, argument quality and source credibility are likely to enhance the visit intentions of a tourist. However, to enhance satisfaction, the tourist's involvement is fundamental. Therefore, it can be postulated that:

H₃: Involvement can positively moderate the relationship of argument quality and customer satisfaction in Pakistan

H₄: Involvement can positively moderate the relationship of source credibility and customer satisfaction in Pakistan

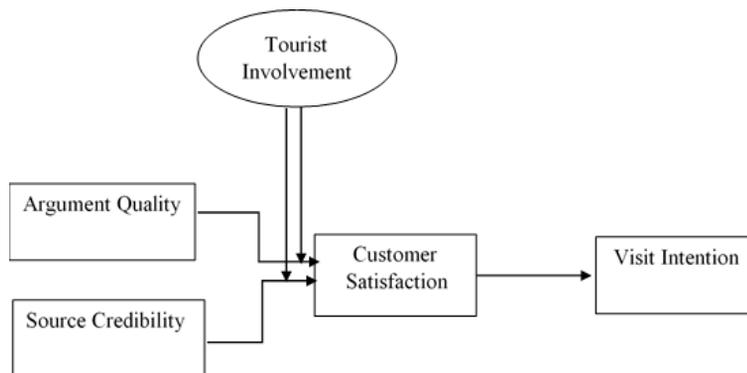


Fig. 3: Research Model

Research Methodology

The study aimed to investigate the impact of persuasive argument quality and source credibility on visit intentions with a mediating effect of tourist satisfaction and a moderating role of involvement. A field survey approach was used where participants (i.e. social media users) were contacted to fill the questionnaires in their natural work environment. The data was cross-sectional in nature. The unit of analysis for this research were the individuals (users of social media) from the twin cities of Pakistan i.e. Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Respondents having some experience or information about online tourism advertisements were chosen for the sampling. Secondly, only those respondents were chosen who were the active users of social media. Hence, purposive sampling was used

because the data was collected only from the travel-related social media users. Initially, the sample size chosen for the study was 435.

Scales and Measures

Questionnaire as an instrument of data collection was used. The measurement items of each construct are adapted from previous studies. To confirm the face validity of the measurement items, opinions of three subject experts are taken to assess and validate them. The independent variables, persuasive argument quality, and advertisement credibility both have 4 items. The moderator, tourist involvement, has 6 items, and the mediator, tourist satisfaction has 5 items. The questionnaire includes close-ended questions using the five-point Likert scale range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data collection

Data were collected in two different ways: the first one was a web-based questionnaire and the second was a manual one. In the electronic survey, an online questionnaire was distributed to online respondents. The second method was the manual data collection in which hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using the SPSS software in which the reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and hypotheses testing were conducted. Different techniques were used to confirm the reliability of the data variables. The Amos software was used for conducting factor analysis which confirmed the validity of the data.

Results

Table 1 explains the correlation between the variables. The statistical values show that perceived argument quality has a strong correlation with advertisement credibility ($r=.748$) and tourist satisfaction ($r=.518$), while a moderate correlation with visit intentions ($r=.392$) and tourist involvement ($r=.329$). Source credibility has a strong correlation with tourist satisfaction ($r=.525$). Advertisement credibility has a moderate correlation with visit intentions ($r=.377$) and tourist involvement ($r=.377$). Tourist involvement has a strong correlation with tourist satisfaction ($r=.581$) and a moderate correlation with the visit intention ($r=.419$). Tourist satisfaction has a strong correlation with visit intentions ($r=.526$). Table 1 also shows the values of the Cronbach alpha, which is a measure of internal reliability. The value confirms that the Cronbach's alpha values of all the variables are greater than .8, which shows that the items used for the measurement of data analysis are reliable.

Table 1: Correlations Analysis

Variables	M	D	1	2	3	4	5	Cronbach's Alpha
Argument Quality	.33	.71	1					.83
Source Credibility	.20	.80	.74**	1				.82
Involvement	.17	.96	.32**	.37**	1			.84
Satisfaction	.13	.75	.51**	.52**	.58**	1		.81
Visit Intention	.69	.87	.39**	.37**	.41**	.52**	1	.83

Validity Analysis: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

For the validity analysis, CFA using Amos was conducted. The values of factor loadings are shown in Figure 2. All the values are favorable, except the values of items 9, 14, and 15, whose values are .4, .38 and .5 respectively. The items with low loadings were deleted. The values of the goodness of fit indices are shown in Figure 2. For the goodness of fit model, the model was examined using the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA ≤ .08), chi-square value, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI ≥ .95), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR ≤ .08). The results indicated the close and satisfactory goodness of fit of the data. For this, recommendations provided by (Brown, 2006) were followed.

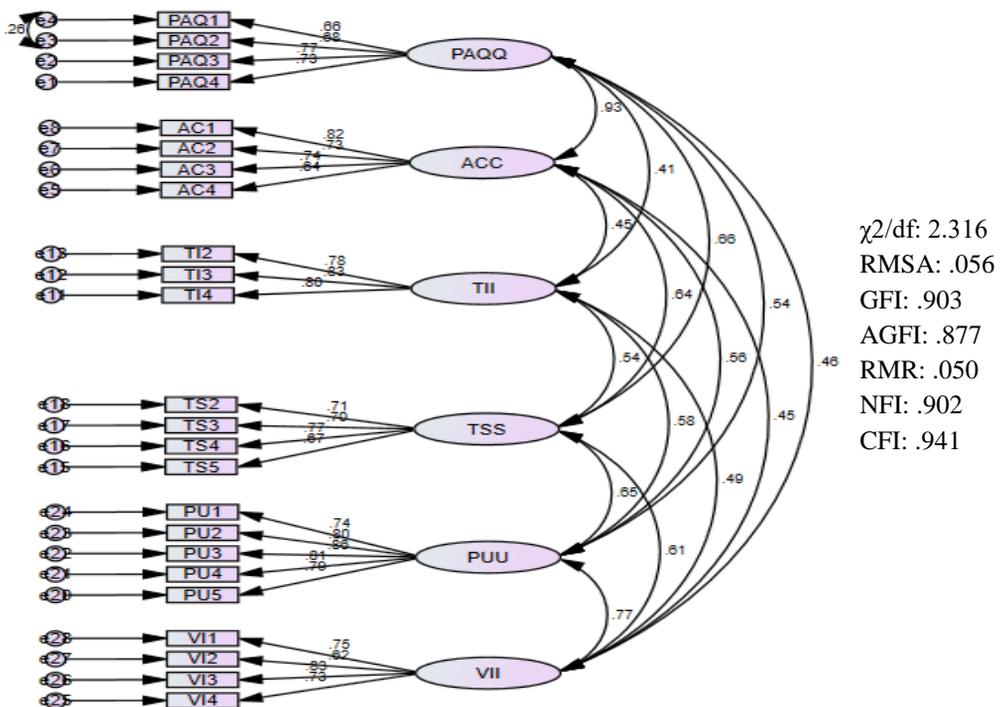


Fig. 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were formulated based on theoretical background and previous literature. The acceptance and rejection of the hypotheses were tested through the statistical approach of SPSS Process Macro by Hayes and Preacher (2014). To test the mediation analysis, Model 4 was applied (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). The Process Macro developed by Preacher and Hayes (2014) includes all the strong parameters like bootstrapping, direct and indirect effects, and the interactions terms.

Mediation Analysis of Customer Satisfaction

In the following table, the results of the independent variable and mediation analysis are shown.

Table 2: *Mediation Analysis of Customer Satisfaction on Relation of Argument Quality-Visit Intentions*

Predictor	β	(SE)	t	p	R	F	R ²
Perceived Argument Quality---- Satisfaction	.578	.046	12.47	.00	.523	153.6	.273
Satisfaction----Visit Intention	.454	.054	8.35	.00	.525	78.67	.276
Perceived Argument Quality----Visit Intention	.479	.055	8.66	.00	.392	75.0	.153
Perceived Argument Quality---- Satisfaction----Visit Intention	.216	.060	3.60	.00	.525	86.6	.276
Bootstrapping for Indirect Results	Effects	SE	<u>LLCI</u> (95%)		<u>ULCI</u> (95%)		
Tourist Satisfaction	.262	.039	.19		.34		

The statistical values in Table 2 show that argument quality ($\beta=.578$, $t=12.47$, $p=.00$) is significantly related to customer satisfaction, thus proving hypothesis H_{1(a)}. The results also indicate that customer satisfaction ($\beta=.45$, $t=8.35$, $p=.00$) is a significant predictor of visit intentions, which in turn proves hypothesis H₁. The effect of persuasive argument quality on the visit intention is ($\beta=.479$, $t=8.66$, $p=.00$). Further, the effect of the variable persuasive argument quality on visit intentions with the mediating effect of customer satisfaction is also significant ($\beta=0.216$, $t=3.6$, $p=.00$). The effect with the inclusion of mediator was lessened from (0.47-0.21), but is still significant, which shows the presence of partial mediation. Thus, hypothesis H_{1(b)} can be accepted. The values of the Sobel test in Table 2 also indicate mediation ($z=6.925$, $p=.00$).

Table 3: Mediation Analysis of Customer Satisfaction between Source Credibility and Visit Intentions

Predictor	β	SE	t	P	R	F	R ²
Source Credibility---- Satisfaction	.517	.040	12.69	.00	.529	161.25	.280
Satisfaction ----Visit Intention	.467	.054	8.515	.00	.519	76.316	.270
Source Credibility ----Visit Intention	.406	.049	8.26	.00	.376	68.28	.141
Source Credibility ----- Satisfaction----Visit Intention	.164	.053	3.078	.00	.519	76.316	.270
Bootstrapping for indirect results	Effects	SE	LLCI	ULCI			
			(95%)	(95%)			
Tourist satisfaction	.24	.03	.17	.32			

Note: Dependent variable: visit intention LL=lower limit; CI= confidence interval; UL= upper limit. N=415; Unstandardized regression coefficient are reported

The statistical results given in Table 2 for source credibility ($\beta=.517, t=12.69, p=.00$) are significantly related to customer satisfaction. The results indicate that customer satisfaction ($\beta=.46, t=8.515, p=.00$) is a significant predictor of visit intentions. The source credibility also shows a positive effect ($\beta=.406, t=8.26, p=.00$) on visit intention. Further, the direct effect of the source credibility on visit intentions with the mediating effect of customer satisfaction ($\beta=.164, t=3.078, p=.00$) is also significant and positive. With the inclusion of the mediator, the effect of source credibility was lessened from $\beta=.46$ to $\beta=.16$. The values are still significant, which shows the partial mediation effect of customer satisfaction. The values of the Sobel test in Table 3 ($z=7.05, p=.00$) also confirm the existence of mediation. Therefore, H₂ and H_{2(a)} are accepted. The values of advertisement credibility and customer satisfaction show the significance of their combined contribution in predicting visit intentions ($F=76.31, p=.00, R^2=.27$).

Moderation Analysis

To confirm the moderating role of involvement on the relationship of persuasive argument quality and customer satisfaction, Model 1 of the Hayes and Preacher Macro was used (Preacher & Hayes, 2014). The statistical values in Table 4 show that the effect of tourist involvement ($\beta=.252, t=7.37, p=.00$) and persuasive argument quality ($\beta=.471, t=10.21, p=.00$) on customer satisfaction are significant. The regression of the interaction term also showed a significant value ($\beta=.08, t=1.87, p=.06$) which indicates that the involvement has a positive moderation effect. Hence, H₃ is accepted. The graphical effect of moderation is depicted in Figure 3.

Table 4: Moderation Analysis of Tourist Involvement on Relation of Persuasive Argument Quality-Customer Satisfaction

	β	SE	T	P	R ²	ΔR^2	F	P
Step 1								
Tourist involvement	.252	.034	7.37	.00	.36		77.70	.00
Persuasive argument quality	.471	.046	10.21	.00				
Step 2								
Tourist involvement × Persuasive argument quality	.080	.043	1.87	.06		.005	3.50	.06

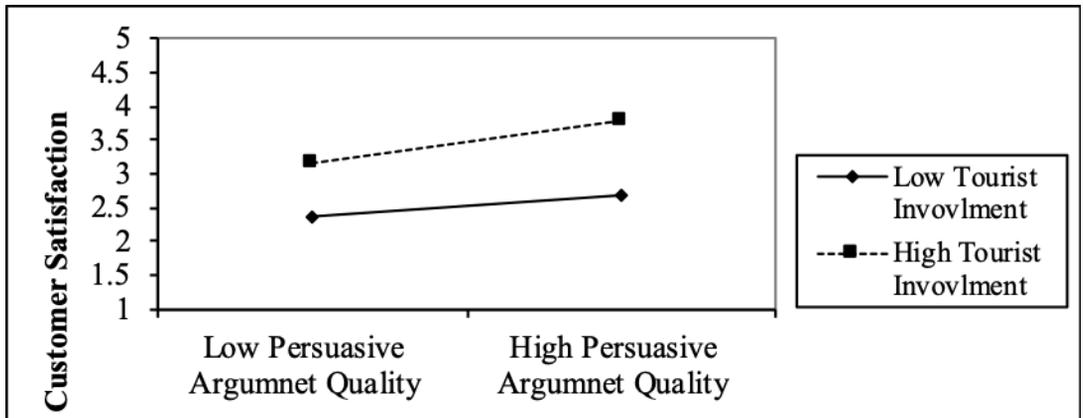


Fig. 3: Moderating Effect of Involvement on Persuasive Argument Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Table 5: Moderation Analysis of Customer Involvement on Relation of Source Credibility-Tourist Satisfaction

	β	SE	T	P	R ²	ΔR^2	F	P
Step 1								
Tourist involvement	.238	.032	6.823	.00	.361		77.52	.00
Source credibility	.413	.034	9.958	.00				
Step 2								
Tourist involvement × Source credibility	.097	.036	2.688	.00		.011	7.22	.00

The statistical values in Table 5 show that the effect of customer involvement on customer satisfaction was significant ($\beta=.238$, $t=6.823$, $p=.00$). The effect of source credibility on satisfaction was also significant ($\beta=.413$, $t=9.958$, $p=.00$). The regression of the interaction term also shows a significant positive effect ($\beta=.097$, $t=2.688$, $p=.00$)

which indicates that the moderation effect has been proven. The statistics of the model fit are ($R^2 = .361$, $\Delta R^2 = .011$, $F = 77.52$, 7.22 , $p = .00$). Hence H_4 is accepted.

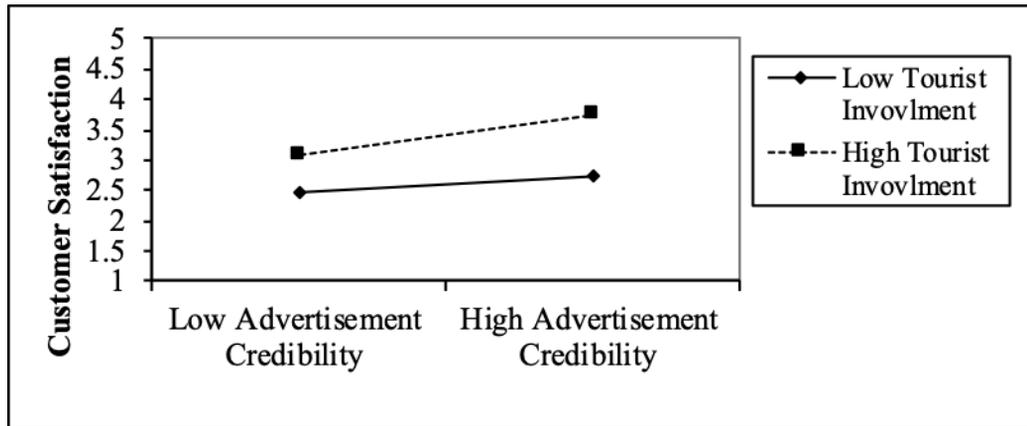


Fig. 4: Moderating Effect of Involvement on Source Credibility and Customer Satisfaction

Discussion

The study investigated the effect of advertisement argument quality and source credibility on the visit intention of tourism customers, with the mediating role of customer satisfaction and the moderating role of tourist's involvement. Broadly speaking, persuasive argument quality and advertisement credibility play a positive role in increasing the visit intentions of a tourist. To avoid the risk, while travel planning, mostly the TSM users willingly spend most of their time getting quality reviews through different credible sources or advertisements (Hur *et al.*, 2017). It means that the TSM users are willing to get information from different competent, trustworthy, and believable sources.

Previous studies identified the significant impact of persuasive argument quality and advertisement credibility on the satisfaction of a customer. It was found that the satisfaction of a customer could significantly increase the visit intention of a tourist (Lee, 2017). The result of this study can be justified with the information adoption model which states that people make decisions based on central and peripheral routes. The information adoption model explains the perception, attitude, and intention of a tourist for information adoption and could demonstrate the effects of advertisement characteristics i.e. persuasive argument quality and advertisement credibility on visit intentions (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

The statistical results specify that the argument quality and source credibility of travel advertisements could significantly increase customer satisfaction which shapes the

visit intentions of potential tourists. Customer satisfaction here is proven to be having a mediating role between argument quality-visit intention and source credibility-visit intention. In this study, the important aspects of tourism-related online advertisement were confirmed i.e. argument quality and source credibility.

Involvement is taken as a moderator in the study. It is assumed that the satisfaction of a tourist is strengthened by involvement, which can increase the visit intentions. In prior studies, involvement is taken as a moderator and proven to significantly strengthen the relationship of the persuasive route of the information adoption model and the elaborated likelihood model (Filo, 2013). It has also been proven that involvement can significantly strengthen the relationship of persuasive argument quality and source credibility with tourist satisfaction. Today's fast-growing and well aware world service providers pay high attention to online reviews for disseminating influential communication, creating credibility, and persuading user intentions (Xiang *et al.* 2017).

Tourists usually have limited time and resources to choose and visit a particular place. Hence, they are indecisive, especially when it comes to international tourism, as many opportunities exist. They rely on social media related views and advertisements on many online forums. When they find reliable information from credible sources, they are more oriented towards making a particular choice. The study found that argument quality and source credibility could be the essential elements in attracting potential tourists and causing them to visit the destination. The findings confirm the importance of tourism-related advertisement factors in enhancing the visit intention of tourism customers. Trustworthiness, accuracy and complete and reliable information provided through reliable or credible sources can create an urge to visit those places. The moderating effect of involvement demonstrates that tourists can develop a sense of connection or attachment with the destination even through advertisement, prior to visiting the place. The involvement can further enhance the visit intention of tourists.

Conclusion

Technology has played a great role in removing many barriers from human life. Through social networking sites, people can interact with each other through electronic arguments like comments, blogs, and review each other's good and bad experiences. Tourist Created International Travel Advertisement (TCITA) has paved a new way for marketers, as posting a video of their own experiences goes viral within a few minutes. The wide range of information transparency available due to social media, it is not an easy task to deceive customers or tourists by window dressing a company. One of the great advantages of social media is that people are more aware, conscious, and

knowledgeable; hence, while planning a tour, tourists do care whether correct information is being provided by the service provider.

The characteristics of online advertisement i.e. persuasive argument quality and advertisement credibility affect the visit intentions of tourists. If a user finds anything relevant, trustworthy, complete, and reliable, he would make plans to visit that place, thus, advertisement credibility and quality can enhance visit intentions of tourists. Without the satisfaction of customers, no visit intention is possible. Therefore, it is important to prioritize customers' satisfaction. This study offers several theoretical and practical implications for the hospitality industry and the managers in there. In academia, the study can be considered as filling the gaps in the information system research in the hospitality industry. The study has also considered satisfaction as a mediator and involvement as a moderator in the social media context, which can provide further development in the understanding of the online consumer decision-making process in the tourism sector. Companies spend huge sums on advertisements for their promotion. Managers of tourism-related companies should ensure that their advertisements should contain complete and realistic information, and be posted on reliable sources on the online marketing mediums. If users experience that the online advertisement that they have seen is not false and has relevant and credible information, there is a high chance that they would visit that place.

The study has a few limitations. The data collected was from two cities only i.e. Rawalpindi and Islamabad due to the time constraints. Secondly, only Facebook as a social media tool was taken for investigation. The sampling technique chosen in this study has its limitation as well. Future researches can include other social media tools like YouTube, Twitter, WeChat, Instagram, etc. for users as a population or sample. This research only follows the quantitative method, whereas, for the future, a qualitative method or a mix of both can be used.

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