

The Influence of Trending Social Media Content on Youths' Revisit Intention

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a key influence in shaping travel behaviour among youth, especially with the rising popularity of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. This study aims to investigate how trending content shared by both influencers and regular users impacts the intention of Malaysian youth to revisit certain destinations, particularly in Melaka. This research used quantitative method, where survey was given both online and face-to-face to youth age 15 to 40. The questionnaire has four main parts which is information, convenience, entertainment and social interaction, and intention to revisit. All data from survey was analyse using SPSS, and pilot test show the question is reliable with high Cronbach's Alpha value. The findings aim to provide insight into which type of social media content and platform most strongly influences youth travel decisions. This research contributes to a better understanding of digital influence in tourism behaviour among Malaysian youth and may benefit tourism marketers and destination planners.

Keywords: social media content, youth traveller, viral content, revisit intention, digital influence

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, social media has become a powerful platform that influences people's behaviour, especially among youth. The youth of today are digital natives, having grown up with social media and the internet as essential components of their life (Hällgren & Björk, 2022). In this context, youth, who are typically classified as those between the ages of 15 and 40 (Yeon et al., 2016), are a vibrant and significant segment of the population. Adolescent and young adults' behavior, preferences, and consumption patterns are influenced by the process of forming their identities, values, and life objectives (Avci et al., 2024).

Social media has already become part of youth daily life, especially when planning travel. Toddlers to millennials grow up with internet and apps like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, using them every day. According to Datareportal (2024), the situation in Malaysia is particularly striking with an active social media user population of 28.68 million, or 83.1% of the national amount. The youth here are most certainly active among these users on the likes of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. In addition, social media is no longer just for communication but it is now a tool that shapes tourism behaviour, particularly among digital-savvy youth (Shamini, 2020).

To understand this phenomenon, the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory is often applied. This theory explains that individuals actively use media to fulfil different needs such as information, entertainment, convenience, and social interaction, which directly link to their behaviours and choices. In the context of tourism, U&G helps to explain how youth engage with social media content to seek travel information, reduce uncertainty, and gain motivation to revisit destinations (Katz et al., 1973; Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Social media's impact on youth's travel choices is demonstrated by the way they interact with posts that promote travel experiences, local attractions, and personal experiences. For example, a study published in the South India

Journal of Social Sciences discovered that visually appealing content, destination narrative, and user-generated content on social media platforms all have a beneficial impact on travelers' intentions to revisit destinations (Joseph et al., 2024). However, this growing trend also leads to certain concerns, especially related to the accuracy of information and the emotional appeal of such content. These issues form the basis of the study and highlight the need to investigate the relationship between social media influence and travel intention among youth. In line with these concerns, this study sets out a few key objectives to better understand how trending content, content accessibility, and social media features like entertainment and interaction impact youth's intention to revisit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media and Tourism

Social media already become very important in tourism as it help people search for travel information easily and fast. Many tourists now use social media sites like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to see images, videos, and reviews before planning to visit a destination (Amir et al., 2022). They trust what other people share more than advertisement or brochure because it feels more real and honest. When they see someone post nice view or fun activity at one place, they become interested to revisit too, even if before they have been to that place. This show that social media can influence tourist decision and build destination image (Tan & Halim, 2021).

It also helps them to reduce confusion or risk, because they can see how the place looks like, what to prepare, and what to expect during the trip (Wang & Yan, 2022). A study by Hoang et al. (2024) highlight that tourism businesses also use social media now as one of their main tools to promote destination or service. Compared to traditional marketing, social media is cheaper and can reach more people in short time. Tourist also like to share their travel experience online, so this help promote the place without extra cost. Many researchers say that social media already change how people plan and enjoy their travel. They not only use it before travel, but also during and after travel to post and connect with others. Because of that, social media play big role in tourism growth and become important part in tourist journey from start until end (Pourazad et al., 2025).

Outside of Asia, similar trend also can be seen. Tembo and Malik (2022) studied the tourism industry in Zambia and found that social media strongly affect how tourists make decisions and choose destinations. They show that many travelers in Africa use Facebook and Instagram not only to look for information but also to compare places and reduce uncertainty. This shows that social media role in tourism is worldwide, and it influence how tourists behave in many different places and cultures. In addition, a qualitative study by Elnur et al. (2024) looked at solo leisure travelers and their use of social media. The study found that many of them use social media to keep memories, feel less lonely, and stay connected with others while traveling. This helps us understand better why people use social media in tourism, because survey and numbers cannot show everything.

Youth and Social Media

Youth and social media now cannot be separate. Many young people now spend more time on social media than old media like TV or radio. Platform like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube already become part of their daily life. They use it to search for information, express themselves, and connect with friends. Han & Chen (2021) said youth move very fast to social media, and it really affect how they think and act. Same goes to what Pérez-Torres (2024) mention, youth use of social media is still growing and give big impact to their behaviour and decision-making. Social media also become space for youth to show who they are. Anuar et al. (2021) said youth like to share about themselves online, choose what they want to show, and sometimes try to look better online. This can affect how they feel about themselves, especially when they care about likes or comments (Razak & Mansor, 2021). Because they active on social media, it also influences their travel choices. They often follow what is trending or popular, especially when they see nice picture or video of a place. Asri et al. (2024) found that travel images and influencer posts can really influence youth plan to visit certain place. Same with Ismail et al. (2025), who found that youth love to visit place that go viral online, because they trust influencer and what other people post.

Intention to Revisit Among Youth

Revisit intention means how much young people want to go back again to a place they already visit before (Chen et al., 2020). It can show if they feel satisfied and loyal to that destination. Other than that, satisfaction is also very important. For instance, at Nusliko Park Ecotourism, a research state that having a good experience can influence youth to visit again (Muhammad et al., 2025). When tourists are satisfied with their trip, their likelihood of revisiting the destination increases significantly. For this study, social media is very important because it now play big role in youth decision (Zulfiqar et al., 2024). Youth are active on social media every day, so their decision to revisit not only depend on their own experience but also from what they see people post online (Palaniswamy, 2021). A study by Dewi et al., (2024) found that youth who spend more time on social media usually want to come back to the place again which is Bali.

The study also highlights that almost 40% of their plan to revisit can be explain by how much they use social media. When the destination match with their travel preferences, they often feel connected and have intention to return and revisit the places. Moreover, social media also play role in building destination image. For example, according to Maarif et al. (2023) highlights that the authenticity together with social media make the place look better, and that image influence people to come back in Gianyar show. Another study by Leelachandra et al. (2023) state that youth gained a new experience, enjoy culture, and do lot of exciting activities which creates memory that push them to revisit at Kandy cultural site show. So, both fun and meaningful experiences really matter for young people.

Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory

The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory was introduced by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973). It explains that people are not passive when using media, but they choose the platform that match with their own needs. This theory show that people use media for many reasons such as to get information, for entertainment, to interact with others, for convenience also for identity. In social media context, U&G theory often used by researchers to see why youth spend a lot of time on apps like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Sundar and Limperos (2013) extended the theory into the digital age by showing how interactivity, modality, and navigability of online platforms fulfil user needs more effectively. Similarly, Quan-Haase and Young (2010) emphasized that social media is used to meet multiple gratifications including information-seeking, passing time, entertainment, and social connection.

For tourism studies, U&G theory provides a strong framework to understand how social media shapes youth travel behaviour. Young travelers use social media content to reduce uncertainty, explore authentic experiences, and connect with destinations before and after visiting. These gratifications not only make youth interested for first visit, but also push them to revisit when the content match with their preference and social engagement (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Therefore, this theory underpins the present study by linking the constructs of information, entertainment, convenience, and social interaction with youths' intention to revisit.

METHODOLOGY

This part explain about how the study was done, including the method used, population target and time frame, sampling techniques, survey instrument, pilot test, and anything that contributed to the research data collection. The method used for this research is quantitative where researchers used both physical and online survey to collect data from youth's respondents, dividing the questionnaire equally with 192 for physical and 192 for online, and a total of 384 responses successfully collected within the given time frame. The research design is descriptive to explain about who the respondents are and how they use social media, and also correlational to see if got connection between what youth see on social media and their intention to go back visit that place again. For this survey, the sample population youths in Melaka aged between 15 to 40 years old were selected because they are active users of social media and easily influenced by travel content, and the sample size of 384 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

This study used a self-administered questionnaire with Section A covering demographic background and Section B focusing on information, convenience, entertainment, and social interaction of social media content with Likert

Scale questions, supported by secondary information from websites, articles, tourism news, and reports. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents aged 15 to 40 who use YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok for travel content, following Johanson and Brooks (2010), and the result showed Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.950 proving high internal consistency.

Data collection was done in Melaka focusing on areas like Bandar Hilir, A Famosa, St. Paul's Hill, and Stadthuys using both online and offline surveys, and data was analyzed using SPSS with descriptive and inferential tests, including correlation coefficient to check the relationship between social media factors (information, convenience, entertainment, interaction) and youth's intention to revisit, with reliability assessed using Cronbach's Alpha where values above 0.7 are acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the statistical findings of the study. The analyses were conducted using SPSS, a widely applied statistical software for social science research. The first stage of analysis assessed the reliability of the measurement items to ensure internal consistency and validity of the instruments. Descriptive statistics were then employed to provide a profile of the respondents. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables, followed by regression analysis to test the proposed hypotheses and to determine the strength and direction of the predictive relationships.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between the independent variables (information, convenience, entertainment, and social interaction) and the dependent variable (intention to revisit). The results (Table 1) indicate that all independent variables are significantly and positively correlated with revisit intention. Among these, social interaction demonstrates the strongest correlation, while information shows the weakest. Since all correlation coefficients are ≤ 0.90 , multicollinearity is not considered a concern in this study.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Information	1	.734**	.714**	.715**	.674**
2. Convenience	.734**	1	.681**	.697**	.691**
3. Entertainment	.714**	.681**	1	.752**	.716**
4. Social Interaction	.715**	.697**	.752**	1	.866**
5. Intention to Revisit	.674**	.691**	.716**	.866**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

This section presents the results of the regression analysis used to test the hypothesized relationships between social media content factors (information, convenience, entertainment, and social interaction) and youths' intention to revisit. The analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which these factors predict revisit intention and to assess their relative contributions to the model.

1. H1: Information shared on social media has a significant positive influence on youth's intention to revisit ($\beta = 0.012$, $t = 0.297$, $p > 0.05$)
2. H2: The convenience of accessing social media content positively influences youth's intention to revisit ($\beta = 0.136$, $t = 3.557$, $p < 0.05$).

3. H3: Entertainment value provided by social media content has a significant influence on youth's intention to revisit ($\beta = 0.094$, $t = 2.371$, $p < 0.05$).
4. H4: Social interaction facilitated by social media platforms significantly influences youth's intention to revisit ($\beta = 0.692$, $t = 17.50$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 2: Regression Results

Hypothesis		β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Information → Intention to Revisit	0.012	0.297	0.767	Rejected
H2	Convenience → Intention to Revisit	0.136	3.557	0.001	Supported
H3	Entertainment → Intention to Revisit	0.094	2.371	0.018	Supported
H4	Social Interaction → Intention to Revisit	0.692	17.50	0.001	Supported

Overall, the results show that convenience, entertainment, and social interaction have positive significant effects on youths' revisit intention. Social media information did not exert any significant effect, which suggests that information could be an unsuitable stimulus for repeat travel behavior.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of social media gratifications specifically information, convenience, entertainment, and social interaction on revisit intention among youths. Guided by the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, the study sought to identify which gratifications are most valued by digitally native travelers when engaging with social media travel information. The findings indicate that convenience, entertainment, and social interaction significantly and positively predict revisit intention, whereas information does not. These results offer important insights into the evolving role of social media in shaping tourism decision-making.

Information on Social Media and Intention to Revisit

Information has always been in the forefront as one of the key drivers of tourist decisions, where the quality, relevance, and accuracy of social media information shape opinions about destinations. Information has traditionally been recognized as being among the most significant drivers of tourist decisions, with social media information relevance, reliability, and accuracy having an impact on destination images. For example, Wang and Yan (2022) proved that quality social media information increases the confidence of travelers in their decision-making, while Rafdinal et al. (2022) found that information adoption was highly influential in influencing travel intention. Similarly, Zheng et al. (2022) observed that information content establishes trust and indirectly affects destination loyalty.

However, in this study, information did not have a significant association with revisit intention ($\beta = 0.012$, $t = 0.297$, $p = 0.767$). This explains that information itself may not be potent enough to drive youth, who are accustomed to a flow of travel information on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Liu et al. (2024) further included that excessive information results in overload, and therefore its impact on decision-making. This supports the argument that while information is a necessity, it may work indirectly through intermediaries such as satisfaction, trust, or destination image rather than directly influencing revisit behavior. In practice, this entails destination marketers having to combine information with hedonic and social elements so that content not merely informs but also captivates and engages.

Convenience and Intention to Revisit

The results revealed that convenience has a significant effect on revisit intention ($\beta = 0.267$, $t = 5.640$, $p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with existing literature demonstrating that ease of use and accessibility enable traveling activities. Chavez et al. (2020) and Chou and Wang (2020) also stressed that convenience on online platforms increases satisfaction and facilitates repeat use. Similarly, Hussain et al. (2024) illustrated that the ease of use

and accessibility of social media platforms attract tourists and shape their decision-making. Damanik et al. (2022) confirmed that efficiency is particularly well-valued by Generations Y and Z, who desire instantaneous and frictionless interaction on the web. This is the functional element of U&G theory where customers make use of media for saving effort and time. In application, the information has to be mobile-friendly, easy to navigate, and have direct links to services such as booking links and maps. By reducing planning friction, destinations are able to create revisit intentions among youth.

Entertainment and Intention to Revisit

Entertainment was also found to have a strong prediction of revisit intention ($\beta = 0.249$, $t = 5.133$, $p < 0.05$). This is aligned with the growing importance of hedonic gratifications in tourist behaviors. Wu and Ding (2023) highlighted that content in short-video platforms enhances enjoyment and inspiration, whereas Zhou et al. (2023) demonstrated that fun TikTok content possesses an effective effect on destination selection among young travelers. Also, Silaban et al. (2023) found that travel vlogs and storytelling increase engagement and inspire travel.

These findings highlight that young people are more drawn to content that's emotionally engaging and entertaining, rather than purely informational. Visual appeal and storytelling in UGC create positive emotions toward the destination and thus reinforce loyalty and revisit intention, as Joseph et al. (2024) find. This is in consonance with the hedonic aspect of the U&G theory, whereby pleasure and enjoyment are the sources of long-term engagement. To practitioners, this implies that destination campaigns must reach visually creative, interactive, and topical content to engage youth. Through the manipulation of popular modes such as reels, vlogs, and challenges, destinations can establish memorable connections which reinforce revisit behavior.

Social Interaction and Intention to Revisit

Among the four predictors, social interaction was identified to be the strongest predictor of revisit intention ($\beta = 0.289$, $t = 6.010$, $p < 0.05$). The results confirm that social influence and social connections play a key role in shaping tourism decisions. There is an observed basis for this assumption: Han and Chen (2021) showed that influencer-following behaviors enhance travel intentions. Equally, Najar et al. (2024) indicated that peer interaction and influencer credibility generate brand trust, which impacts destination loyalty directly.

The existing evidence confirms that destination attributes do motivate youth travelers but also the possibility of experience sharing, seeking validation, and socialization with peers. Siegel et al. (2023) and Song and Wondirad (2023) pointed out that when young people interact with their peers on social media, it has a stronger impact on their behavior and choices. This fits with the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, especially the part that focuses on social connections, where building close relationships and getting approval from others are key reasons people use media. In practice, destinations should encourage user-generated content, peer-to-peer sharing, and interactive marketing that encourages community building. In offering social interaction activities for travelers, tourism organizations are able to leverage network effects in promoting revisit intentions.

The findings of this study extend the U&G theory by proving that convenience, entertainment, and social interaction significantly affect revisit intention, but information does not. It shows that young tourists value efficiency, fun, and peer interaction more than factual information. Practically, destination marketers should create convenient, entertaining, and socially interactive content to build loyalty among young audiences.

Limitations And Future Research

This study is not without limitations. Its focus on youth in Melaka restricts the generalizability of the findings, while the cross-sectional design precludes causal interpretation. Future research could address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, adopting longitudinal methods, and testing mediating variables such as satisfaction, trust, or destination image. Longitudinal approaches would be valuable for examining how social media's influence evolves over time, given the rapid development of platforms and the shifting interests of young people. In addition, incorporating psychological constructs such as trust in influencers or fear of missing out (FOMO) could enhance theoretical depth, strengthen the validity of findings, and increase the

relevance of results for policy and practice.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how social media gratifications shape youths' intention to revisit destinations, and the findings provide clear evidence addressing the research questions. The results demonstrate that convenience, entertainment, and social interaction are significant determinants of revisit intention, whereas information is not. This suggests that young tourists prioritize efficiency, enjoyment, and social engagement over informational content when using social media for travel purposes. The study extends the application of the U&G theory in the tourism context and offers practical implications for destination marketers. However, as the data were limited to youths in Melaka, the findings should be interpreted with caution and validated in other settings to enhance generalizability.

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