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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT TYPES ON TRAVEL INTENTION

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore and understand how social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) influence travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention. The current study also investigates the impact of the likes option on social media account types, which influence traveler perceptions and visit intention. Previous research had not explored three social media account types: DMOs, friends, and individuals based on Source Credibility Theory and the impact of likes on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention. The experimental design was used to test the research model; an experiment with a 3 (social media account types: DMOs vs. friends vs. other individuals) X 2 (the number of likes: high vs. low) scenario-based, between-subject was utilized with six scenarios to collect the data. The results of this study indicated that the credibility of social media account types plays a more essential role than social media account types and that the sub-factors of credibility, especially trustworthiness and expertise, are key sub-facts that determine a social media accounts' credibility. Additionally, this provides further empirical support for the notion that *likes* strongly influences travelers' destination perceptions, especially when the number of likes is low. Therefore, the current study has raised a significant amount of academic and practical attention as a future research direction in the hospitality and tourism context with a more detailed explanation of travelers' destination-decision process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DMOs..Destination Marketing Organizations

DMP.. Decision-Making Process

EFA .... Exploratory Factor Analysis

eWOM ....Electronic Word-of-Mouth

MTurk ....Amazon Mechanical Turk

PCA... Principal Component Analysis

SCT ....Source Credibility Theory

SNS ....Social Networking Sites

SRT .... Social Reinforcement Theory

WOM ....Word-of-Mouth

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the significance of social media in the hospitality and tourism industry, the impact of social media on tourists has been increasing in recent years (e.g., Dieck et al., 2017; Moro & Rita, 2018; Pérez-Vega et al., 2018; Shao et al., 2016; Su et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2017). Social media plays a crucial role in the consumer decision-making process due to its development and increased accessibility (Browning et al., 2013; Fotis et al., 2012; Gupta, 2019). Current studies in hospitality and tourism have continually dealt with the use of social media in decision-making (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019), which involves users browsing travel postings as one factor in choosing a destination during travelers' pre-decision stage (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Peters et al., 2013). People are more likely to search for destination information on social media, which influences their decision (Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019). The previous studies on social media in hospitality and tourism have focused on the factors that influence travelers' use of social media on decision-making, visit intention, and revisit intention (Dieck et al., 2017). As such, several extant studies have investigated the influence of social media content on the visit intention and decision-making of tourists regarding destination specifically (Chung et al., 2015; Cox et al., 2009; Mariani et al., 2019; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Due to the significance of social media as an information-searching and decision-making tool (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019), related studies have been increasing in recent years

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in the hospitality and tourism industry. The importance of searching for others'
experiences through social media as a part of travelers' overall destination decision-
making has begun to draw increasing attention from researchers (Perles-Ribes et al.,
2019; Zach et al., 2016). Furthermore, social media account types are one of the
influential determinants in destination decision-making, which impact consumers'
subsequent behaviors and intentions (Borah & Xiao, 2018). Despite the significance of
social media account types' impact on decision-making, there is lack of studies on this
topic especially in hospitality and tourism. There are many different social media account
types in social media, from organizations to individuals. Specifically, Destination
Marketing Organizations (DMOs) use social media as a promotion tool, friends update
their postings to share with their friends, and other individual users freely post their daily
life on social media. This study intends to understand the influence of three social media
account types: DMOs, friends, and other individuals.

This exploration of the different impacts of social media account types is based on
Source Credibility Theory (SCT), which explains how the perceived credibility of the
communication's source influences the communication's persuasiveness (Berlo et al.,
1969; Hovland & Weiss, 1952). There are three dimensions of SCT: trustworthiness,
expertise, and attractiveness (McCracken, 1989). These dimensions are influential
determinants that lead to users' subsequent consumer behavior and intention (Yoon et al.,
1998). Therefore, credibility of social media accounts can play an essential role which
influences travelers' destination perceptions. However, there are extremely limited
studies focusing on the credibility of social media account types on consumers' behavior
and intention. Though this research sheds light on the travelers' trust and source

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credibility of social media, this research is not on social media accounts, but on online recommendations, hotel reviews, and loyalty from affective commitment, respectively (Fan et al., 2018; Lo & Yao, 2019; Nusair et al., 2013). Therefore, SCT's dimensions (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) indicate how social media accounts' credibility influences travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention in this study.

Minimal literature exists in hospitality and tourism that seeks to understand each account type's impact on the destination decision during the pre-trip decision-making process. Social media account types are defined by a few standards, such as the number of followers - celebrities and non-celebrities - (Fath et al., 2017), the types of influencers - online celebrities and traditional celebrities - (Schouten et al., 2020), the degree of similarity - similar and dissimilar - (Liu et al., 2019) and so on. Furthermore, even though researchers investigate the influence of social media account types, only one or two account types are explored simultaneously; there is no literature comparing more than three social media account types. Specifically, Fath et al. (2017) explore the impact of social media influencers, which uses only one account type - online celebrities - and compares the result with other individuals' accounts. Another previous study compares two account types, categorized by people who are similar to the participants and those who are not similar (Liu et al., 2019) and other previous research studies two types of influencers: online celebrities and traditional celebrities (Schouten et al., 2020). However, no previous research investigates and compares three social media account types' credibility: DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations), friends, and other individuals. DMOs have utilized social media as an effective promotion tool with their accounts,

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social media users frequently check their friends' accounts and are influenced by them, and users often check other individuals' destination posting by searching what they want to visit. This study fills the research gap about the importance of DMOs, friends, and other individuals in practical ways. Therefore, the current research explores three social media account types to provide a valuable social media strategy for destination marketers and promoters.

While most existing research concentrates on how destination images impact visit intention (Chen & Lin, 2012; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hung & Petrick, 2011; Molinillo et al., 2018), only a few studies have focused on travelers' destination perceptions and its effect on their behaviors (visit intention). For example, Jiménez-Barreto et al. (2020) investigate how online destination brand experience (sensory, behavioral, intellectual, and affective) affects destination brand credibility and behavioral intention toward the destination by moderating the presence of previous visitation. The previous studies have applied destination image to measure consumers' behavioral intention; Veasna et al. (2013) test a comprehensive theoretical model for destination branding based on the concepts of brand credibility, brand image, brand attachment, and satisfaction to explore their relationships. Travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) are also closely related to visit intention (Abubakar, 2016; Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Abubakar et al., 2017; Su et al., 2020); however, there are limited studies exploring travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention. Travelers are likely to influence their visit intention by travelers' destination perceptions; in other words, destination trust influences revisit/visit intention (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Abubakar et al., 2017) and destination attractiveness is considered the most important indicator, rather than tourists'

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overall satisfaction, influencing visit intention positively (Um et al., 2006). Therefore, this study concentrates on the impact of travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) on visit intention.

The impacts of social proof cues on destination traveler perceptions and visit intention shed light on its importance. Social proof cues are defined as social interactional aspects of social media, which can influence consumer reactions and behaviors (Lee et al., 2015). Comments, the thumbs-up option, the like option and so on are social proof cues on social media. Social proof cues on social media enable users to express their feelings and thoughts (Baksi, 2016; Hilverda et al., 2018). When users are interested in posting, these cues play social reinforcement roles, increasing or decreasing subsequent users' reactions and behaviors (Lee et al., 2015). As such, the number of likes shown below the posting is an influential factor in users' subsequent behavior (Tiggemann et al., 2018). However, while extant studies have raised interest in likes (Lee et al., 2015; Mochon et al., 2017; Naylor et al., 2012; Oh et al., 2017), few studies investigate visit intention by travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) through social media, specifically as they are significantly affected by the number of likes. Additionally, few researchers have explored this aspect of social media reinforcement in the hospitality and tourism industry. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how the number of likes impacts social media users' visit intention during their pre-trip decision-making process.

Visit intention by three different account types is a field well-fitted to examining the impact of social media marketing strategies. The impact of social media account types on visit intention provides the destination marketers and promoters with information on

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how they should manage their destination marketing and promotion. Therefore, this study differs from previous research by comparing three social media account types - DMOs, friends, and other individuals - at the same time to explore and compare the influence of each of them on one social media platform: Instagram. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of how different social media account types impact visit intention through travelers' destination perceptions.

In summary, this section has discussed several problems and research gaps in the prevailing literature. First, the extant literature lacks a comprehensive discussion regarding social media account types. Furthermore, extremely limited studies have focused on the credibility of social media account types influencing consumers' behavior and intention. Second, there is no previous research about the comparison of these three specific social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) that examines visit intention in the hospitality and tourism field. Third, most existing research on social media account types concentrates on how destination images impact visit intention instead of destination trust and attractiveness. Fourth, relatively little research has been carried out on social proof cues, especially the number of likes, which can serve multiple travel decision-making roles. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the impact of social media account types on visit intention so as to fill the gap in existing literature, and Source Credibility Theory (SCT) is mainly applied in the current study as the theoretical foundation.

1.2 AIMS, OBJECTIVES, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of this research is to explore and understand how social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) and their credibility influence

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travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness), thereby influencing visit intention. The current study also investigates the impact of the number of likes on social media account types, which influences traveler perceptions and visit intention. Figure 1.1 gives an overview of the logic between research problems (or research gaps) and the purpose of this study. Further, this study applies Source Credibility Theory (SCT) to examine the effects of social media account types on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention. This research sits at the nexus of the phenomena of social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) and the number of likes (high vs. low) to identify what impact they have upon travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention. Notably, the research objectives of this study are to:

Objective 1. Explore the impact of social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) on the sub-factors of credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness).

Objective 2. Explore the impact of social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) and their credibility on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness).

Objective 2. Explore the influence of the credibility and social media account types on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness)

Objective 3. Explore the interaction effect of social media account types and the number of likes and that of credibility and the number of likes on travelers'

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destination perceptions and visit intention.

Objective 4. Explore the influence of travelers' destination perceptions on visit intention.

Therefore, in accordance with the research objectives, this study aims to address four research questions:

RQ1. What is the impact of social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) on the sub-factors of credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness)?

RQ2. What is the influence of social media account types and their credibility on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness)?

RQ3. What is the interaction effect of social media account types and the number of likes and that of credibility and the number of likes on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention?

RQ4. What is the influence of travelers' destination perceptions on visit intention?

The independent variables in this study are the credibility and social media account types: DMOs, friends, and other individuals. The dependent variable in this study is visit intention. Furthermore, travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) are the mediators, which affect visit intention. The number of likes (high vs. low) is the moderator, which influences the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables.

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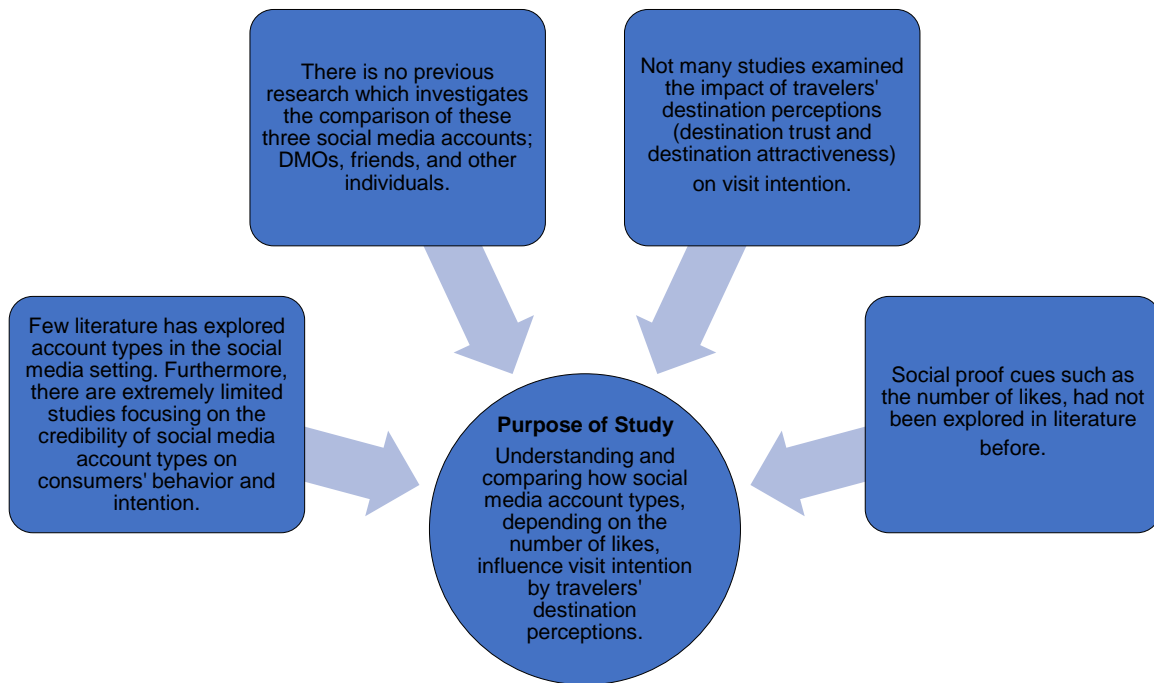
Figure 1.1. Research Problems and Purpose of Study

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study significantly contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the findings of this study will fulfil two research gaps in the current literature. First, this study provides the first conceptual and practical findings of social media account types, specifically DMOs, friends, and other individuals. Even though previous research explored social media account types to discover their influence on consumers' behavior and intention (e.g., Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), existing literature concerning account types is still at its introductory level yet has raised a significant amount of academic attention as a future research direction. Significantly, there is no previous literature dealing with the social media account of DMOs, friends, and other individuals simultaneously. This research explores how social media account

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types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) influence travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention.

Second, this study fills the gap of the limited theoretical discussions on the impact of the number of likes on social media account types in hospitality and tourism. Limited studies have explored social proof cues, especially, *likes* as a significant hospitality and tourism variable, although previous research shows the importance of social proof cues on social media (Baksi, 2016; Borah & Xiao, 2018; Hilverda et al., 2018; Zell & Moeller, 2018). The number of likes was significant in social media when a social media account type has the gain-framed and expertise source condition (Borah & Xiao, 2018). *Likes* plays an essential role in a comprehensive understating of consumers' behavior and intention by social media account types in this study.

From a practical point of view, visit intention by three different account types is a field well-fitted to examining the impact of social media marketing strategies. The impact of social media account types on visit intention enables the destination marketers and promoters to make an effective marketing promotion. This study shows the most effective social media account type to promote a destination and attract tourists through social media. The results from different account types can be a useful tool for destination marketers and promoters to collect insights into travelers' visit intention on social media. Hence, the current study provides destination marketers and promoters with a significant contribution to the most effective marketing strategy. Therefore, this study will contribute to the comprehensive understanding of travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention through social media for both academics and industry practitioners. Specifically, this study's factor that had not been explored before (the number of likes)

can be a significant variable that can influence travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention during the pre-stage of travel.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is defined as "media impressions created by consumers, typically informed by relevant experience, and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable consumers" (Blackshaw, 2006). Photo-based sharing social media platforms have been widely used among Social Networking Sites (SNSs), such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Yuheng et al., 2014). Due to the growth and development of sharing experiences through social media, Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) emphasize that the studies related to the impact of the experiences on social media should be explored. In the hospitality and tourism domain, specifically, the role of social media has already been given attention (Ayeh et al., 2012; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). In fact, social media has been investigated in various fields of hospitality and tourism. Previous research has explored a social media search engine's power for travel planning (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Xiang et al., 2008). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) revealed how important the usage of social media domain is during the pre-travel process.

Regardless of the study, it is evident that social media affects the traveling process in hospitality and tourism (Fotis et al., 2012; Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019). Specifically, travelers often use social media during the pre-trip stage in order to search for travel information (Fotis et al., 2012). During the pre-stage of the trip, potential

travelers can search for photos posted on Instagram that others uploaded during or after their trip or from the account of the official destination website (Krumm et al., 2008). It is noteworthy that shared travel information on social media has been proven to influence tourists' destination decisions (Litvin et al., 2008; Sigala et al., 2012). According to Fotis et al. (2012), travel information on social media helps potential travelers decide where to visit. Consequently, social media is considered to conduct a vital role in consumers' decision-making process (DMP) (Fotis et al., 2012).

Since the importance of the power of different social media account types on consumers' DMP, it is important to explore more various social media account types (e.g., DMOs vs. friends vs. other individuals) in the hospitality and tourism industry. For example, a previous study examines three types (commercial, news/blogs, and private) through Twitter in order to explore cruise travel data (Park et al., 2016). Lim et al. (2012) investigated consumers' destination brand perception by comparing the videos from two types of social media accounts; consumers and DMOs and discovered that DMOs carry a more favorable destination brand image. Even though the previous studies focus on social media account types, and though researchers acknowledge the importance of different social media account types when consumers make a decision, there is a lack of studies that examine three social media account types simultaneously and on the same social media platform.

Specifically, Instagram, a mobile photo-based sharing service, launched in October 2010 and quickly became one of the leading social media networking sites (SNS) (Ting et al., 2015). More than one billion monthly users post their experiences and share more than one hundred million postings per day (Aslam, 2020; Clement, 2019; Nobles et al.,

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2020). Today, due to Instagram's popularity and rapid growth, Instagram content can exert a significant social influence (Hwang & Cho, 2018; Kim et al., 2016). In particular, in the hospitality and tourism industry, Instagram is widespread, and it is incredibly well-used when its users are about to travel (Barbe et al., 2020). For instance, tourists are more likely to express their experiences on Instagram when they want to share or show off not only their daily life but also their trips (Jabłońska & Zajdel, 2020). However, Instagram has not received significant academic attention yet, despite the high amounts of intriguing cases in relation to hospitality and tourism (Smith, 2018). Therefore, Instagram is used in this study to explore the influence of social media account types on visit intention.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents the theories used to provide the framework for this study. First, Source Credibility Theory is discussed, as it is a consumer behavior theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1952) that can be applied to social media account types' impact on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention. Additionally, the current research suggests that a review of other theories that support the proposed research model is required to guide the variables and relationships in this study. Thus, to supplement the proposed research model, the section reviews Social Reinforcement Theory and Social Comparison Theory as well.

2.2.1 SOURCE CREDIBILITY THEORY

Credibility is defined by Chung et al. (2015) as how much an information source is perceived to be believable, competent, and trustworthy. Source credibility refers to how information providers are perceived as trustworthy and expert (Kelman, 1961). Hovland and Weiss (1951) introduced Source Credibility Theory (SCT) based on the source of

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communication, which is the most critical factor in making information effective and reliable in marketing and communication studies in regard to the study of various phenomena (Ayeh, 2015). SCT is an established theory that has been identified to explain travelers' perception (Ayeh et al., 2013). Additionally, SCT has been applied to explore how social media account types impact consumers' intentions (e.g., Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Most studies on source credibility employ two key dimensions, trustworthiness and expertise, which are mainly conceptualized by SCT and support source credibility more definitively in an online context (Fogg & Tseng, 1999; Hovland et al., 1953; Kerstetter & Cho, 2004). Source trustworthiness refers to the extent to which a source is perceived as honest, sincere, or truthful, while expertise, one determinant of source credibility, is defined as the perception of how the source provides the correct information (Bristor, 1990; Giffin, 1967; McCroskey, 1966). Additionally, attractiveness is suggested as the dimension of SCT (McCracken, 1989), which refers to how familiar and likable the source is to the receiver (McGuire, 1985; Yoon & Kim, 2016). Attractiveness describes the physical or social attractiveness of the individual who serves as the media persona (Schiappa et al., 2007). In a way that is similar to social relationship development, individuals are more likely to develop relationships with media personae who are attractive (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005). More importantly, perceived attractiveness also has a positive effect on the quality and intensity of a parasocial relationship (Schmid & Klimmt, 2011) and influences customers' behaviors and attitudes (Ohanian, 1991; Yoon & Kim, 2016). Based on the previous related studies, this study adopts the three-

dimension conceptualization of source credibility to examine social media account type credibility: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.

SCT has been applied in many pieces of literature in various fields, especially in marketing and communication, but few have been in hospitality and tourism. Hovland and Weiss (1952) made the theoretical contribution of discovering that the source strongly influences a message's persuasiveness; the more reliable the information's credibility is, the more trustworthy the source is (Sparkman & Locander, 1980). Research in communication literature applies SCT to compare the credibility of different media channels (Ayeh, 2015; Johnson & Kaye, 2009). Still, limited research is conducted in hospitality and tourism on comparing the source credibility among different social media account types based on SCT. Therefore, Source Credibility Theory is addressed in this study to examine the overall research hypothesis: the source credibility of social media account types will positively impact travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention.

2.2.2 SOCIAL REINFORCEMENT THEORY

Social Reinforcement Theory (SRT) shows that external stimuli, including positive or negative experiences, leads to a response (Lieberman et al., 2001). Social reinforcement includes all that people confront, such as approval, compliments, and awareness (Lieberman et al., 2001). Differential Social Reinforcement Theory states that people imitate those they admire, and human actions are controlled by reinforcement. SRT presents an essential role in many fields (e.g., Kandel, 1980). Tiggemann et al. (2018) investigated the effect of the number of likes on women's body dissatisfaction and found that likes condition had a positive impact on facial dissatisfaction. Especially with

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likes condition, Tiggemann et al. (2018) considered the number of likes as social reinforcement because users use *likes* frequently and commonly (Boyle et al., 2018; Frison & Eggermont, 2017; Hilverda et al., 2018).

In addition, SRT postulates that significant social agents, including media and peers' comments or actions, will reinforce particular attitudes and behaviors (Tiggemann et al., 2018). *Likes* shows consumers' interest and support, which in turn influences their behavior (Tiggemann et al., 2018). Lee et al. (2015) found that *likes* on Facebook has a positive impact on products' sales. Beyond consumer attitude, *likes* has an effect on personal attitudes and beliefs. For example, Jin et al. (2015) found that the number of likes can influence people's attitudes on breastfeeding in public. Therefore, SRT supports that the number of likes in this study can play the role of social reinforcement to influence travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention; a high number of likes can positively (as positive reinforcement) influence travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention.

2.2.3 SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY

Social comparisons are shown in various social contexts (Antonetti et al., 2018). It is a natural phenomenon for humans to evaluate themselves by comparing others' abilities, as explained by the Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Social comparison is defined as the process of individuals' self-evaluation compared to others' opinions, skills, abilities, personality traits, and emotions (Festinger, 1954; White et al., 2006). There are two kinds of social comparison based on the comparison target's status: upward social comparison, which is engaged when the target

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is superior; and downward social comparison, which is engaged when the target is inferior (Wood, 1989). According to the self-evaluation maintenance model, people are more likely to improve themselves positively when they feel threatened in upward social comparison (Tesser, 1988), which leads to aspirational consumption behaviors. Benign envy is considered as one of the positive effects of upward social comparison, which affects to mimic others' action and behavior by improving themselves (Van de Ven et al., 2009), that is a central motive in upward standards (Taylor & Lobel, 1989). In this study, a high number of likes may be considered as benign envy, which trigger the consumers' behaviors and intentions.

Social Comparison Theory is rarely used in tourism context as an indicator of status, even though Social Comparison Theory has been applied in previous literature (Siegel & Wang, 2019). In a previous study, Liu et al. (2019) focused on how social media account types' similarity influences the visit intention of a destination based on Social Comparison Theory; they compared two social media account types: those who are similar to the sharer and those who are not similar to them when they share a positive travel experience. However, while the previous literature has used Social Comparison Theory, it has not been used to *likes* on social media in hospitality and tourism.

Therefore, this study deals with the number of likes (high vs. low) as a moderator, which is particularly relevant to upward social comparison. The high number of likes influences and provides an attribute with which users can make upward social comparisons based on benign envy (Van de Ven et al., 2009). Benign envy is correlated with the behavioral tendency of self-enhancement, such as aspirational consumption and

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working harder to keep up with others (Belk, 2011; Van de Ven et al., 2009). Therefore, the high number of likes may trigger both benign envy and more positive travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention than a low number of likes.

2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT TYPES

Prior studies have examined the type of social media accounts in the marketing and communication fields (Chae, 2017; Stephen & Galak, 2010). However, academic attention to social media account types is scarce in hospitality and tourism. A few studies have focused on social media account types, mostly limited to celebrities such as influencers (online celebrities) (e.g., Schouten et al., 2020). The researchers compared online celebrities and traditional celebrities simultaneously and found that online influencers are more influential than traditional celebrities (Schouten et al., 2020). The current study extends previous research by comparing three different social media account types, namely DMOs, friends, and other individuals.

DMOs, as destination experts, have to make an effort to understand and develop the market position to enable themselves to be more competitive in the tourism market, especially in social media marketing (Fortezza & Pencarelli, 2018; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Many researchers have focused on DMOs' social media marketing strategies due to social media development as a destination marketing strategy. Hays et al. (2013) found that social media marketing has been rising, so DMOs should consider it to attract tourists through social media. Additionally, Molinillo et al. (2017) explore two channels of DMOs' online platforms -official websites and social media- and study how the psychological distance variable has an impact on the overall image of a destination. The

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finding shows that cognitive image and affective image, which both form destination images, influence visit intention (Molinillo et al., 2017). Further, both image formation and visit intention are influenced by the marketing platform (Molinillo et al., 2017).

Accounts from friends play an essential role in decision-making in hospitality and tourism; consumers can especially search for travel information from friends (Bigne et al., 2018). Information from friends is considered a "backup" or a "confirmation" source during the pre-trip stage (Ho et al., 2012), especially from close friends. Tie strength is the degree of the bond between members of a network, which is measured by the social relation and the contact frequency (Granovetter, 1973). The relationship between close friends is considered a strong tie-strength, which makes the information more trustworthy (Granovetter, 1973). The bond among close friends strengthens the persuasiveness (Bond et al., 2012; Granovetter, 1973). The research related to destination information source deals with friends (strong tie) and found that friends' role as an information source is significant in the destination decision-making process (Thompson et al., 2017). Similarly, the impact of a strong tie is influential in consumers' subsequent intention; friends' recommendation is significantly tied to trust when purchasing products (Wu & Lee, 2012). Therefore, friends' account significantly influences travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention due to strong ties from this closeness.

Browsing other individuals' postings is common on social media in a practical aspect (Murphy & Chen, 2014). When travelers use social media as a travel information source, they normally navigate to other individuals' posts. However, extremely limited research has examined the impact of social media account types on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention in the previous hospitality and tourism literature. Hence,

specific social media account types should be compared with the accounts of other individuals to find the exact difference in impacts on visit intention in hospitality and tourism. This study contains three social media account types based on how people can be influenced differently. All accounts can be categorized into three account types by this study: DMOs, friends, and other individuals. First, a DMO is defined as the account run by the destination's official marketing organizations. Second, friends in this study are defined as those who have intimate offline friendships with strong ties. Third, other individuals are defined as regular Instagram users who have no offline or online relationship previously. Hence, this study will deal with these three categorized social media account types on Instagram to explore visit intention through travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness).

2.4 LIKES

Instagram is used as a social network where users can give their opinion on a picture with great ease using tools. Comments and likes function as social proof cues which are used as social endorsements and enable users to be involved and engaged with posts (Baksi, 2016; Hilverda et al., 2018). Especially, the likes option encourages users' behaviors and attitudes with interest and support (Tiggemann et al., 2018). On Instagram, the number of likes is located underneath a post's image, where users can see it easily (Frison & Eggermont, 2017). Liking posted material has been extraordinarily popular, with nearly 4.5 billion likes generated daily and half of all users liking at least one post they view every day (Smith, 2014). *Likes* is more common and easier for expressing users' opinions directly on Instagram.

As a social endorsement cue, *likes* plays an essential and integral role in social media, including Instagram (Tiggemann et al., 2018). Tiggemann et al. (2018) indicate that *likes* on social media influences consumer behavior due to high interest and support. For example, the number of likes can serve as a form of influence or social reinforcement on behaviors (Tiggemann et al., 2018). In this way, the number of likes positively influences consumers' intentions, such as the sales rate of products (Lee et al., 2015). It is shown that *likes* reinforces particular attitudes and behaviors, as one of the social proof cues. In addition, a high number of likes encourages travelers' subsequent behaviors and intentions positively by imitation, based on Social Comparison Theory (Van de Ven et al., 2009). Therefore, several studies propose that social media likes effectively changes consumers' attitudes and intentions (Mochon et al., 2017; Naylor et al., 2012; Oh et al., 2017).

Even though there is theoretical and practical value in social media likes (Borah & Xiao, 2018; Zell & Moeller, 2018), few previous studies in the hospitality and tourism field have paid attention to the impact of the number of likes on social media. The high number of likes on a posting makes the destination seem more exciting and grabs other users' attention. Sedera et al. (2017) found that, in the context of tourism, social media likes operate as a psychological mechanism of social influence – *likes* can alter travelers' expectations of their destinations before they have visited them and alter their post-experience perceptions after travel has been completed. Therefore, *likes* on social media posting is an important concept in the hospitality and tourism literature for understanding travelers' behavior. This study seeks to begin the investigation by experimentally investigating the impact of one component, the number of likes on travelers' destination

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perceptions and visit intention, according to three social media account types: DMOs, friends, and other individuals.

2.5 TRAVELERS' DESTINATION PERCEPTIONS AND VIT INTENTION

Previous research has investigated travelers' perceptions of destinations in the context of hospitality and tourism (Liu et al., 2001; Suh & Gartner, 2004; Turner et al., 2002). In the current study, travelers' destination perceptions include destination trust and destination attractiveness as two essential predictors.

Trust arises when someone is confident in others' reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). According to Pavlou and Fygenson (2006), trust is defined as the notion of "the degree to which consumers believe that a company acts favorably, ethically, legally, and responsibly" (pp. 123). Many hospitality and tourism researchers have considered trust as an important concept (Artigas et al., 2017; Bordonaba-Juste & Polo-Redondo, 2004; Flavián et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2014). Especially, destination trust is a significant concept since destination trust influences travelers' intentions, such as visit intention (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). Destination trust can be defined as overall travelers' destination perception of a multidimensional construct based on travelers' comprehension of a destination with honesty, benevolence, and competence (Marinao et al., 2012; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010; Su et al.,2020). Therefore, this study defines destination trust as the travelers' willingness to rely on the destination to perform its qualified tourism destination with reputation, competence, and credibility, which significantly influences visit intention.

Previous literature shows that destination trust influences consumers' behavior, place attachment, and visit/revisit intention. Keh and Xie (2009) show that consumer trust

influences consumer identification and purchase intention. Additionally, purchase intention is more influenced by trust when combined with highly positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (Lin & Lu, 2010). In hospitality and tourism, existing literature shows that destination trust influenced travel intention (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010) and revisit intention (Kim & Oh, 2002). Travelers are more likely to visit a destination when they think it is reliable in the hospitality and tourism context (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010). According to Abubakar and Ilkan (2016), trust in a destination is a crucial antecedent of customers' travel intention. Similarly, Abubakar et al. (2017) found that destination trust significantly influences revisit intention through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Therefore, it is expected that destination trust (i.e., reliability, integrity, competence, and quality assurance) may influence visit intention in this study.

Destination attractiveness encourages a willingness to visit and stay for the holidays at a destination, which plays a significant role in a tourist's destination decision, including feelings and behavior (Henkel et al., 2006; Kim & Hong-bumm, 1998; Lee et al., 2010). Destination attractiveness is also one of the evaluation determinants of destination choice (Um et al., 2006). According to Hu and Ritchie (1993), destination attractiveness reflects individuals' destination perception to satisfy their special vacation needs. Destination attractiveness is one of the determinants or pull factors for travelers, which leads to selecting a travel destination (Buhalis, 2000; Kozak & Rimmington, 1998; Lee et al., 2009). Therefore, destination attractiveness has been studied in practical and theoretical ways (Formica & Uysal, 2006; Gretzel et al., 2006; Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2017). Many researchers define destination attractiveness as the perceived

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ability to satisfy individuals' benefits and needs (Kim & Perdue, 2011; Mayo & Jarvis, 1982; Taplin & Ross, 2012; Vengesayi, 2003). Destination attractiveness is the overall result of a combination of internal psychological and external destination determinants (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). In the hospitality and tourism literature, there are two streams of destination attractiveness research. One is evidence of a destination's physical attributes or an inventory of objective tourism resources (Formica & Uysal, 2006; Kim & Perdue, 2011). The other is the source of the travelers' perceived image of a destination, reflecting their feelings, beliefs, and opinions (Buhalis, 2000; Formica & Uysal, 2006; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981).

Travelers generally have an idea about a destination at the pre-trip stage, as various works of literature claim (Ma et al., 2018). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) report that the media image of a destination influences travelers' perception of a destination. A destination's attractiveness plays an essential role in travelers' overall satisfaction, and their demographic background may influence the relationship between overall satisfaction and destination attractiveness (Codignola & Mariani, 2017). The convenience of a destination and its competitive advantage leads to student visitors' interest in purchasing products (Hsiao et al., 2016). Additionally, it is noteworthy that destination attractiveness is one of the predictors of revisit intention (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998; Sparks, 2007; Um et al., 2006). Visitation is anticipated by how impressed visitors are with a destination (Lee et al., 2009). It is shown that destination attractiveness affects travelers' visit intention significantly, and Ladhari and Michaud (2015) show that positive feedback leads to a greater trust in a destination. Hence, this study deals with destination trust and destination attractiveness as two significant predictors in travelers'

destination perceptions to analyze the impact of social media account types' credibility and the influence on visit intention.

Visit intention is one of the behavioral intentions. Behavior intention is an individual's decision on how likely he or she is to react or decide as a response to any objects (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). Measuring visit intention as a construct is well-used (Zhang et al., 2014) because it provides an essential outcome variable with a significant relationship to travel behavior (Kim et al., 2007). It is critical to investigate visit intention and understand its impact on tourists' behavior (Liu et al., 2016; Su et al., 2020). Goodall (1991) explores how a negative image of a destination influences travelers' decision-making process negatively; a positive image regarding a destination makes travelers more likely to visit a destination (Tan & Wu, 2016). However, there is extremely limited literature regarding travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention, even though there could be a significant relationship between them. Therefore, visit intention will have a significant relationship with travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness); it is also influenced by the number of likes, which, as previously stated, can be perceived as positive or negative feedback.

2.6 HYPOTHESES AND PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

This study has formulated the hypotheses exhibited in table 2.1. Figure 2.1 below shows how the proposed model has comprised theses hypothesized relationships.

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Table 2.1. Proposed Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement
H1a	A friend's account has the highest trustworthiness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least trustworthiness.
H1b	The DMO's account has the highest expertise, followed by a friend's account, and another individual's account has the least expertise.
H1c	A friend's account has the highest attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least attractiveness.
H2a	The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination trust.
H2b	The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination attractiveness.
H3a	Different social media account types have different impacts on destination trust. More specifically, the DMO's account has the highest impact on destination trust, followed by a friend's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.
H3b	Different social media account types have different impacts on destination attractiveness. More specifically, a friend's account has the highest impact on destination attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.
H4a	The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.
H4b	The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.
H5a	The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.
H5b	The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.
H6	Travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) have a positive impact on visit intention.

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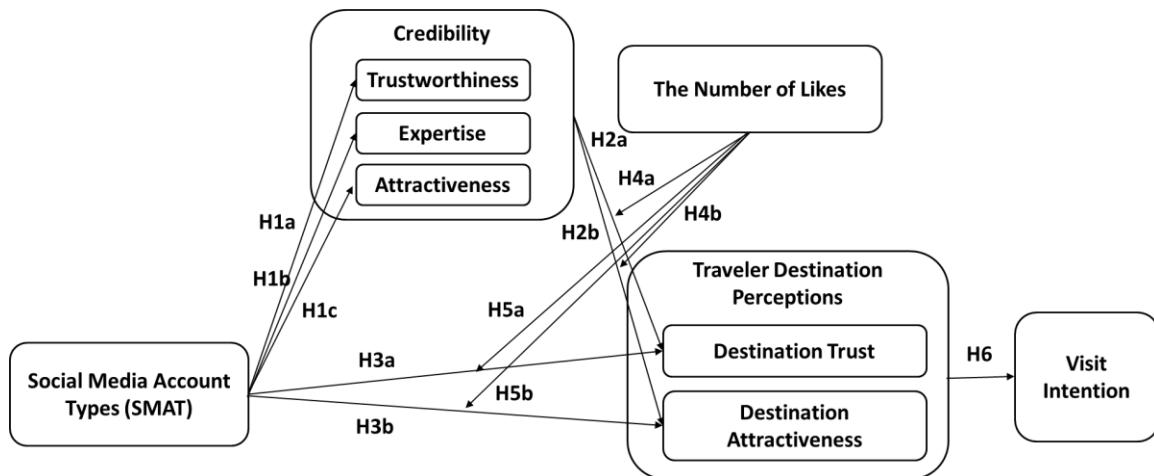
Figure 2.1. Proposed Research Model

2.6.1 HYPOTHESIS ONE

H1a: A friend's account has the highest trustworthiness, followed by the DMO's

account, and another individual's account has the least trustworthiness.

Since social media is a personal online space for sharing intimate experiences, the

trustworthiness of a friend's account will be higher than the DMO's account and another

individual's account. First of all, as a close friendship is built on the basis of personal

interaction, the trustworthiness of a friend's account will be high (Granovetter, 1973).

However, the DMO's account is an official marketing organization without any personal

relationship. It is believed that the trustworthiness of the DMO's account will be lower

than a friend's account (Deng, & Li, 2018). Similarly, the trustworthiness of another

individual's account will be the lowest because there are no relationships.

H1b: The DMO's account has the highest expertise, followed by a friend's account,

and another individual's account has the least expertise.

Since the DMO's account is the account of the official destination expert, the

DMO's account will have the highest expertise among social media account types. A

destination posting by the DMO's account (an official destination marketing

organization) will be considered more expert because the posting is about their specialized field (Cobos et al., 2009). A friend's expertise will be lower than the DMO's expertise since people focus on the relationship rather than their expertise, even though friends could be experts. However, the expertise of a friend's account will be higher than another individual's expertise because users do not have any information or background to judge its expertise.

H1c: A friend's account has the highest attractiveness, followed by DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least attractiveness.

A friend's account is expected to have the highest attractiveness since users already have high intimacy (Granovetter, 1973). Therefore, the posting of a friend's account will be more attractive because users are more likely to mimic close friends' experiences and share similar experiences with them (Taylor & Lobel, 1989; Van de Ven et al., 2009). However, the DMO's account is easily recognized as a marketing tool for destination promotion, so the attractiveness of the DMO's account will be lower than the attractiveness a friend's account (Amaro et al., 2016; Fatis, 2012). The attractiveness of another individual will be the lowest because users are not interested in those with whom they do not have any relationship.

2.6.2 HYPOTHESIS TWO

H2a: The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination trust.

H2b: The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination attractiveness.

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Based on SCT (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland & Weiss, 1952), a social media account that has more credibility will have higher travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) (Thompson et al., 2017). Higher credibility of social media accounts leads to positive destination trust and destination attractiveness (Guido et al., 2011). Travelers will have more positive destination perceptions when the social media accounts are credible.

2.6.3 HYPOTHESIS THREE

H3a: Different social media account types have different impacts on destination attractiveness. More specifically, a friend's account has the highest impact on destination attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.

It is expected that destination trust of the DMO's account will be the highest among social media account types because the DMO is a destination expert (Cobos et al., 2009). As an official organization, DMO has publicity which increases destination trust. On the other hand, a friend's account is expected to have lower destination trust than the DMO's account. Trustworthiness of a friend's account will not lead to destination trust, even though a friend's trustworthiness is high; users expect that a friend's account has less expertise than the DMO's account, which influences destination trust overall. Finally, the impact of another individual's account on destination trust will be lowest because users do not have much interest.

H3b: Different social media account types have different impacts on destination attractiveness. More specifically, a friend's account has the highest impact on

destination attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.

A friend's account will have the highest destination attractiveness among social media account types because a posting by a close friend creates a desire to mimic their experience (Van de Ven et al., 2009). This phenomenon expects that users will be more likely to visit a destination if their friend does (Thompson et al., 2017). In the case of the DMO's account, users might easily think that the posting by the DMO's account could be different from the original destination since the DMO's account is officially aimed at destination promotion (Amaro et al., 2016; Fatis, 2012). However, destination attractiveness of another individual's account will be the lowest because it is a social media account type that does not relate to users and generates less interest.

2.6.4 HYPOTHESIS FOUR AND FIVE

H4a: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

H4b: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

When social media accounts' credibility increases, users will be more motivated to mimic the posting shown. Additionally, the desire to imitate increases when a posting has a high number of likes because it stimulates the desire to imitate positively (Ayeh et al., 2013). A high number of likes can generate higher credibility, while having high credibility creates synergy, resulting in higher travelers' destination perceptions and

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higher visit intention (Van de Ven et al., 2009). Conversely, if credibility shows a low number of likes on destination posts posted by low accounts, it will reduce credibility.

H5a: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

H5b: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

Since the number of likes can enhance the credibility of social media accounts, travelers' destination perceptions of an account with a high number of likes will be higher than with a low number of likes (Van de Ven et al., 2009), even though it is the same social media account type.

2.6.5 HYPOTHESIS SIX

H6: Travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) have a positive impact on visit intention.

Destination trust and destination attractiveness are closely related to visit intention (Codignola & Mariani, 2017; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010). Since destination trust and destination attractiveness affect visit intention significantly, travelers' destination perception will positively impact visit intention (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010; Um et al., 2006).

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

In order to address the research objectives and questions, this study employed an experimental design adopted widely in many fields. Experimental design has played an important role in hospitality and tourism because it can explore the effects of several different types of variables on some responses while controlling other factors. Much hospitality and tourism research related to social media platform has been using experimental design (e.g., Liu & Mattila, 2017; Wu et al., 2017). For example, Casado-Díaz et al. (2020) used experimental design to explore how different web care strategies influence the viewer's attitude towards hotel and booking intention through TripAdvisor and Twitter. Additionally, Bowen et al. (2015) adopted experimental design to understand how Facebook can be effectively used by examining whether consumer's process information from Facebook communication in the hospitality industry. Liu et al. (2019) also adopted this experimental design to examine how Millennials decide their travel destination consumption by sharing with their peers on social media platforms. Therefore, an experimental design is used as an important survey design for understanding social media users' travel behavior in hospitality and tourism.

There are two kinds of experimental designs: between-subjects experimental design and within-subjects experimental design (Li et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2016). Between-

subjects experimental design has different samples for each assigned scenario, whereas within-subjects experimental design is limited to one sample group for all situations in the study (Li et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2016). For example, Kim and Baker (2019) adopted the between-subjects experimental design and eight scenarios by examining three employee attributes (employee attractiveness, eye contact, employee courtesy) in customer employee relationships and their interaction effect on rapport and subsequent customer satisfaction. The within-subjects experimental design was used by Bae and Kim (2014) to examine how offering menus while customers wait influences their perceived waiting time. The current study will adopt the between-subject factor in this experimental design because each sample group is allowed for each scenario (e.g., Kim & Baker, 2019; Liu & Mattila, 2017; Wu et al., 2017).

3.2 POPULATION, SAMPLING, AND DATA COLLECTION

Since people are likely to search and get travel information through social media at the pre-stage, the target population of this study is defined as those who have traveled domestically or internationally at least once in the past and who have any social media accounts such as Instagram.

The sample consists of Instagram users who have traveled domestically or internationally in the past. The sampling of this study needs to meet the following criteria to be more relevant to this study: (1) participants are 18 or above; (2) participants have their own Instagram account; (3) participants must have traveled at least one night away from home within the past three years to show willingness of traveling.

This study employed an Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) survey to collect the data. The sample included 386 respondents (at least 50 participants per each scenario):

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(1) who are 18 years old or above; (2) who already had Instagram accounts; (3) who have traveled at least one night away from home within the past three years. Therefore, for the main study, Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was utilized to collect 386 responses, which can provide qualified data from a varied nationwide pool (Buhrmester et al., 2011).

3.3 PRETEST

A pretest was conducted by MTurk before the main data collection to reduce errors and improve the main study. 150 participants of the pretest study were included, resulting in 25 participants for each scenario. Among the 316 potential respondents, 150 respondents completed the pretest survey, indicating a response rate of approximately 47%. A series of exploratory factor analyses (EFA) of the refined 20 items with the collected pretest data was carried out. All 20 items were analyzed utilizing Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. All factor loadings were greater than 0.8, all retained factors had an eigenvalue greater than 1, and represented approximately over 60% of the total variance.

For Hypothesis 1, there was a significant difference of social media account types on trustworthiness ($F = 6.642$, $p = 0.002$) and it showed that a friend's account was more trustworthy than another individual's account. On the other hand, there were no significant differences of social media account types on expertise ($F = 2.898$, $p = 0.059$) and attractiveness ($F = 0.377$, $p = 0.687$). For Hypothesis 2, there were significant differences of credibility on destination trust ($F = 94.834$, $p < 0.001$) and destination attractiveness ($F = 15.128$, $p < 0.001$). For Hypothesis 3, there were not any significant differences of social media account types on destination trust ($F = 0.125$, $p = 0.883$) and destination attractiveness ($F = 0.210$, $p = 0.811$). For Hypothesis 4, there were no

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moderated mediation effects of likes between credibility and destination trust (b = -
0.095, 95% boot CI [- 0.275, 0.074]) and between credibility and destination
attractiveness (b = - 0.101, 95% boot CI [- 0.298, 0.047]). For Hypothesis 5, the results
showed that there were no moderated mediation effects of likes between social media
account types and destination trust and between social media account types and
destination attractiveness. For Hypothesis 6, travelers' destination perceptions
(destination trust and destination attractiveness) positively impacted visit intention (F =
2.167, p = 0.002). The pretest results showed that all scales and the impact of the
relationships were reliable so that the main study could be conducted as the pretest
process.

3.4 STUDY DESIGN

To test the research model (Figure 2.1), an experiment with a 3 (social media
account types: DMOs vs. friends vs. other individuals) X 2 (the number of likes: high vs.
low) scenario-based, between-subject full-factorial design was utilized with six scenarios.
At the beginning of the survey, screening questions were asked to ensure respondents
were 18 years old or above, had an Instagram account, and had traveled for at least a one-
night experience within the past three years. Once they passed the screening questions,
participants were randomly assigned to one of the six scenarios. The participants were
asked to imagine they had sufficient time and money to have a 7-day vacation. It also was
assumed that the respondents were searching for some travel destination postings for the
7-day holiday on Instagram. The respondents saw the travel destination's photos (namely,
Destination X). They were informed that this was a recent posting (not a top posting),
whose account it was from, and how many likes the posting had received. Once the

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participants had read the scenario, they saw the posting of Destination X. After seeing the posting, the respondents answered three manipulation check questions, including the type of social media account (DMOs, friends, and other individuals), the number of likes condition (high vs. low) on the posting, and if this scenario was realistic. Only those who chose the right answers according to what they see could be included in the study. Participants who failed the screening questions or who failed the manipulation check questions were excluded.

All respondents saw the same photo to avoid their judgment being based on different pictures. The standard degree of the number of likes was adopted from the previous literature that studied consumer behaviors by the number of likes on social media platforms (Borah & Xiao, 2018; De Vries, 2019; Hilverda et al., 2018; Rosenthal-von et al., 2019; Seo et al., 2019; Tiggemann et al., 2018); the high number of likes was more than 5,000 likes, while a low number of likes was less than five.

The questionnaire included four constructs: the credibility of social media account types, destination trust, destination attractiveness, and visit intention, which are adapted from relative literature and listed in Table 3.1. Especially, the average of all items on each sub-factor of credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) was created: three items for each sub-factor of credibility and total nine items for credibility. For the above measurement items, this study used a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Additionally, there were attention check questions (i.e., "This is an attention check question, please choose 1 as your answer for this question.") for the participants to answer to ensure that they were paying attention to the questionnaire; those who failed to answer any manipulation check questions correctly were filtered out

from further data collection. Hence, only those who passed screening questions, the manipulation check questions, and the attention check questions were included in this study. To check the type of social media accounts and the number of likes, the participants were asked, "What is the social media account type on the posting?" and "What do you think of the number of likes on the posting?" Participants who failed to answer any of the manipulation check questions correctly were not able to continue the survey. There was a check for scenario realism with one question: "Do you think the scenario is realistic?" (1 - yes, 2 - no). The participants who answer "no" on the scenario question's realism could not complete the survey.

3.5 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The variables of three factors (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) of credibility, credibility, destination trust, destination attractiveness, and visit intention were created. The quantitative data collected in the survey was analyzed using SPSS to reveal the relationships among the proposed research model variables. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the scales for each construct: the three sub-factors of credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness), destination trust, destination attractiveness, and visit intention. Specifically, the nine sub-factor items were averaged to create an index variable and used it for credibility. Therefore, credibility had total nine items and each sub-factor of credibility had three items. Next, Cronbach's α for data reliability was determined to measure scale reliability (0.70 and above). A series of one-way ANOVA was then conducted to test the influence of social media account types on the three sub-factors of credibility for Hypothesis 1 and the influence of social media account types on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination

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attractiveness) for Hypothesis 3. Linear regression analysis for the influence of credibility on travelers' destination perceptions was conducted for Hypothesis 2. SPSS Process Model 7 was used to test the moderation effect of the number of likes between overall credibility and traveler destination perception for Hypothesis 4 and that of the number of likes between social media account types and each traveler destination perception for Hypothesis 5. For overall model testing (Hypotheses 2 to 5), SPSS Process Model 15 in Hayes' (2017) was conducted. Lastly, multiple regression analysis for the mediation effect of travelers' destination perceptions for visit intention was used for the data analysis used in Hypothesis 6. Additionally, a descriptive analysis was utilized for demographic data.

Table 3.1. Variables and Measures

Variable	Dimensions/ Measure	Sources
Social Media Account Types' Credibility	▪ Trustworthiness (1) Information claims from this type of account are believable. (2) I feel this type of account is honest. (3) I consider this type of account is trustworthy. ▪ Expertise (4) I consider this type of account knowledgeable in their area. (5) I consider this type of account sufficiently experienced to make assertions about their area.	Adopted from Veasna et al. (2013) and Yuan and Lou (2020)

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	(6) I feel that this type of account is an expert in their area.	
	▪ Attractiveness	
	(7) I consider this type of account very trendy.	
	(8) I consider this type of account very attractive.	
	(9) I consider this type of account very stylish.	
Destination Trust	(1) Destination X will meet my expectations as a travel destination.	Adopted from Abubakar et al. (2017)
	(2) I would be satisfied with Destination X as a travel destination.	
	(3) I will not be disappointed with Destination X.	
	(4) I have confidence in Destination X.	
Destination Attractiveness	(1) Destination X gives me a good feeling.	Adopted from Park and Lin (2020)
	(2) Destination X catches my attention.	
	(3) Destination X is attractive.	
	(4) Destination X makes me happy.	
Visit Intention	(1) I would plan to visit Destination X for my holidays.	Adopted from Han et al. (2010)
	(2) I will make an effort to visit Destination X for my holidays.	
	(3) I would like to make a plan for traveling to Destination X for my holidays.	

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The final sample size for the main study was 386: 131 responses for the DMO's account, 127 responses for a friend's account, and 128 responses for another individual's account. In terms of participant demographics, regarding gender, there were male respondents (53.4%) and female respondents (46.6%). Half of the respondents were within the age range of 26 to 35 (50.5%), followed by 18 to 25 (19.7%), and 36 to 45 (19.7%). The participants more than 45 years old accounted for approximately less than 10%: 46 to 55 (5.2%), 56 to 65 (3.6%), and 66 or above (1.3%). Most classified themselves as married/in a partnership (58.0%), followed by single (37.6%), or separated/divorced/widowed (3.9%), and other (0.5%). Percentages of respondents' ethnicities were diverse, including Caucasian (46.4%), Asian (42.7%), African American (4.4%), Hispanic (3.4%), Native American (1.0%), multi-ethnic (1.0%), and other ethnicities (1.0%). For education, nearly two-thirds (59.8%) of the respondents had earned a bachelor's degree, only 3.1% possessed a high school degree or less, 13.7% had earned a college or associate's degree, and 23.3% held a master's or doctoral degree. Table 4.1 summarizes respondents' demographic information.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	206	53.4%
Female	180	46.6%
Age		
18 to 25	76	19.7%
26 to 35	195	50.5%
36 to 45	76	19.7%
46 to 55	20	5.2%
56 to 65	14	3.6%
66 or above	5	1.3%
Marital Status		
Single	145	37.6%
Married/In a partnership	224	58.0%
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	15	3.9%
Other	2	0.5%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	179	46.4%
African American	17	4.4%
Hispanic	13	3.4%
Asian	165	42.7%
Native American	4	1.0%
Multi-ethnic	4	1.0%
Other	4	1.0%
Education Level		
High school degree or lower	12	3.1%
Some college or associate's degree	53	13.7%
Bachelor's degree	231	59.8%
Master's/Doctoral degree	90	23.3%

4.2 TRAVEL AND INSTAGRAM-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

Most of the respondents traveled 3 to 5 times within the last three years (50.0%), followed by 1 to 2 times (19.4%), 6 to 8 times (17.4%), and more than 8 times (13.2%). When asked about how many times they checked their Instagram, the majority answered that they checked their Instagram at least once a day; specifically, 1 or 2 times (38.3%), 6 times or more (25.6%), and 3 to 5 times (26.4%). Nearly one-tenth (9.6%) of the participants answered less than once a day. As for the amount of time spent on Instagram

a day, most participants checked their Instagram for 30 to 59 minutes (33.9%), followed by less than 30 minutes (28.8%), 1 to 2 hours (21.2%), and more than 2 hours (16.1%). In the case of following Instagram accounts, most of them followed more than 15 other Instagram accounts (58%), followed by 1 to 5 accounts (20.5%), 6 to 10 accounts (12.7%), and 11 to 15 accounts (8.3%); only two respondents did not follow any other accounts (0.5%). The respondents had a varying number of average likes on their posts. The largest group received more than 50 likes (32.9%), and the smallest group received 0 to 5 likes (10.4%); 6 to 10 likes, 11 to 20 likes, and 21 to 50 likes accounted for 17.4%, 16.8%, and 22.5%, respectively. Table 4.2 summarizes respondents' travel and Instagram characteristics.

Table 4.2 Travel and Instagram-related Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Number of times traveled within the last three years		
1 to 2 times	75	19.4%
3 to 5 times	193	50.0%
6 to 8 times	67	17.4%
More than 8 times	51	13.2%
Number of times Instagram checked daily		
Less than once	37	9.6%
1 or 2 times	148	38.3%
3 to 5 times	102	26.4%
6 times or more	99	25.6%
Amount of time checking Instagram a day		
Less than 30 minutes	111	28.3%
30 to 59 minutes	131	33.9%
1 to 2 hours	82	21.2%
More than 2 hours	62	16.1%
Number of Instagram accounts following		
0	2	0.5%
1 to 5 accounts	79	20.5%
6 to 10 accounts	49	12.7%
11 to 15 accounts	32	8.3%
More than 15	224	58.0%

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Number of average likes received		
0 to 5 likes	40	10.4%
6 to 10 likes	67	17.4%
11 to 20 likes	65	16.8%
21 to 50 likes	87	22.5%
More than 50 likes	127	32.9%

4.3 FACTOR ANALYSIS

4.3.1 CREDIBILITY

To determine the underlying dimensions of the correlated social media account types' credibility, the nine items were factor analyzed utilizing Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated that the data was suitable for factor analysis (KMO=0.876; Bartlett's test of sphericity = 2042.390, p=0.000). Therefore, the data was suitable for the proposed statistical procedure of factor analysis (Hair et al., 2010). The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) results with four identified factors explained 78.457% of the total variance (see Table 4.3). All retained factors had an eigenvalue greater than 1, and all factor loadings were 0.7. The three factors were labeled as 'trustworthiness,' 'expertise,' and 'attractiveness.' The 'trustworthiness' factor presented the highest percentage of the total variance (27.369%), followed by 'expertise' (26.478%) and 'attractiveness' (24.611%). All three scales (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) of credibility were reliable, and the scale of credibility, which included three sub-factors, was also reliable. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) are listed in the table below.

Table 4.3 Social Media Account Types' Credibility about Instagram Posting

Scale	Factor loading	Eigenvalue (Explained variance)
Trustworthiness (Cronbach's α=0.885)		2.463 (27.369%)
Information claims from this type of account are believable.	0.833	
I feel this type of account is honest.	0.875	
I consider this type of account is trustworthy.	0.864	
Expertise (Cronbach's α=0.876)		2.308 (26.478%)
I consider this type of account to show a lot about its area.	0.773	
I consider this type of account to reveal sufficient experience to make assertions about its area.	0.818	
I feel this type of account to show expertise on its area.	0.854	
Attractiveness (Cronbach's α=0.812)		2.195 (24.611%)
I consider this type of account very trendy.	0.825	
I consider this type of account very attractive.	0.743	
I consider this type of account very stylish.	0.775	
Total variance explained		(78.457%)

4.3.2 DESTINATION TRUST

For destination trust, a total of four items were factor analyzed by PCA with varimax rotation. The correlation matrix's overall significance was less than 0.001, with a Bartlett's test of sphericity value of 627.648 and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's valued 0.805. Therefore, the data was suitable for factor analysis's proposed statistical procedure (Hair et al., 2010). The result suggested that a unidimensional solution be identified, representing approximately 67.983% of the total variance (see Table 4.4). This had an eigenvalue greater than 1, and all factor loadings were above 0.7. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's α) was 0.841.

Table 4.4 Destination Trust about Instagram Posting

Scale	Factor loading	Eigenvalue (Explained variance)
Destination trust (Cronbach's α=0.841)		2.719 (67.983%)
Destination X will meet my expectation as a travel destination.	0.858	
I would be satisfied with Destination X as a travel destination.	0.835	
I will not be disappointed with Destination X.	0.744	
I have confidence in Destination X.	0.856	
Total variance explained		(67.983%)

4.3.3 DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS

For destination attractiveness, EFA was conducted on four items. KMO and

Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated that the data was suitable for factor analysis

(KMO=0.795; Bartlett's test of sphericity = 455.999, p < 0.001). The EFA result with

four identified factors explained approximately 62.795% of the total variance. Table 4.5

presents the results of the EFA. Considering loadings, destination attractiveness was

composed of four items and had an eigenvalue greater than 1. The overall reliability was

statistically significant, given the threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 4.5 Destination Attractiveness about Instagram Posting

Scale	Factor loading	Eigenvalue (Explained variance)
Destination attractiveness (Cronbach's α=0.802)		2.511 (62.795%)
Destination X catches my attention.	0.780	
Destination X is attractive.	0.789	
Destination X makes me happy.	0.794	
Destination X gives me a good feeling.	0.805	
Total variance explained		(62.795%)

4.3.4 VISIT INTENTION

To determine the dimensions underlying visit intention, three items were factor analyzed utilizing PCA with varimax rotation. The correlation matrix's overall significance was less than 0.001, with a Bartlett's test of sphericity value of 642.551 and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin valued 0.748. Hence, the data was suitable for factor analysis's proposed statistical procedure (Hair et al., 2010). The result suggested that a unidimensional solution be identified, representing 81.570% of the total variance in normative belief (see Table 4.6). These three visit intention items had an eigenvalue greater than 1, all factor loadings were above 0.9 and the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's α) was 0.887.

Table 4.6 Visit Intention about Instagram Posting

Scale	Factor loading	Eigenvalue (Explained variance)
Visit intention (Cronbach's α= 0.887)		2.442
I would plan to visit Destination X for my holidays.	0.905	(81.570%)
I would like to make a plan for traveling to Destination X for my holidays.	0.902	
I will make an effort to visit Destination X for my holidays.	0.904	
Total variance explained		(81.570%)

4.4 HYPOTHESES TESTING

4.4.1 HYPOTHESIS ONE

A series of one-way ANOVA analyses were applied to test whether there would be a significant effect between social media account types and each sub-factor of credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) to test Hypothesis 1a, 1b, and 1c. Table 4.7 demonstrates the statistics of the effects of each variable. From the significant values of each sub-factor of credibility by different social media account types, there was a

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differently perceived trustworthiness among the three social media account types (F = 5.532, p = 0.004) and a differently perceived expertise among the three social media account types (F = 6.622, $p < 0.001$).

In trustworthiness, a friend's account had the highest mean (M = 3.7578), followed by the DMO's account (M = 3.5617) and another individual's account (M = 3.3995). However, Scheffe's method was used as a post hoc analysis and it showed that there was a significant difference only between a friend's account and another individual's account in trustworthiness (F = 5.532, p = 0.004); a friend's account was higher and another individual's account was lower. Therefore, a friend's account was more trustworthy than another individual's account. There was no difference between the DMO's account and a friend's account on trustworthiness, partially supporting Hypothesis 1a.

Similarly, the DMO's account had the highest mean value (M = 3.7953), followed by a friend's account (M = 3.7769) and another individual's account (M = 3.3715) in expertise. Scheffe's method indicated that there was a significant difference between the DMO's account and another individual's account in expertise (F = 6.622, $p < 0.001$); the DMO's account was higher and another individual's account was lower. Therefore, the DMO's account has more expertise than another individual's account. However, there was no significance between the DMO's account and a friend's account on expertise, partially supporting Hypothesis 1b.

Meanwhile, social media accounts' impact on attractiveness (F = 0.427, p = 0.653) was not significant, failing to support Hypothesis 1c. Specifically, the DMO's account had the highest mean (M = 3.7769), followed by a friend's account (M = 3.7734) and another individual's account (M = 3.6898) in attractiveness, but the differences are not

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statistically significant. Therefore, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were partially supported, while

Hypothesis 1c was rejected.

Table 4.7 Effects of Sub-factors of Credibility by Each Social Media Account Type

Sub-factors of credibility	Social Media account type	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value/Sig.	Scheffe
Trustworthiness	DMOs (a)	3.5617	0.8521	5.532/0.004	(b)>(c)
	Friends (b)	3.7578	0.8300		
	Individuals (c)	3.3995	0.9175		
Expertise	DMOs (a)	3.7953	0.8251	6.622/<0.001	(a)>(c)
	Friends (b)	3.5391	0.9979		
	Individuals (c)	3.3715	0.9877		
Attractiveness	DMOs (a)	3.7769	0.8567	0.427/0.653	-
	Friends (b)	3.7734	0.7980		
	Individuals (c)	3.6898	0.9265		

Note. (a) = DMOs; (b) = Friends; (c) = Individuals

4.4.2 HYPOTHESIS TWO

Linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of credibility on

each traveler destination perception (destination trust and destination attractiveness). The

results showed that credibility had a significant impact on destination trust and

destination attractiveness, supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b. The entire regression was

significant (F = 271.470, p < 0.001) and it showed that about 41.3% of the total variance

in destination trust was explained by the regression ($R^2 = 0.413$) (see Table 4.8). The

results indicated that credibility had a significant impact on destination trust ($\beta = 0.644$, p

< 0.001).

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Table 4.8 Effect of Credibility on Destination Trust

IV	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.	Model Summary
	B	SE	β			
Constant	1.389	0.144	-	9.635	<0.001	R = 0.644, R^2 = 0.414, Adj. R^2 = 0.413,
Credibility (H2a)	0.641	0.039	0.644	16.476	<0.001	F = 271.470, Durbin-Watson = 1.858

The entire regression was significant (F = 151.945, p < 0.001) and it showed that about 28.2% of the total variation in destination attractiveness was explained by the regression (R^2 = 0.282). The results indicated that credibility had a significant impact on destination attractiveness (β = 0.532, p < 0.001), supporting Hypothesis 2b (see table 4.9). Therefore, both Hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported.

Table 4.9 Effect of Credibility on Destination Attractiveness

IV	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.	Model Summary
	B	SE	β			
Constant	2.292	0.148	-	15.444	<0.001	R = 0.532, R^2 = 0.284, Adj. R^2 = 0.282,
Credibility (H2b)	0.494	0.040	0.532	12.327	<0.001	F = 151.945, Durbin-Watson = 1.811

4.4.3 HYPOTHESIS THREE

One-way ANOVA analyses were conducted to test Hypothesis 3: whether social media account types would influence each destination perception (destination trust and destination attractiveness). Table 4.10 provides the statistics of the effects of each variable. Respondents' destination perceptions were not significantly different based on

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different types of social media account, failing to support H3a and H3b: destination trust (F = 0.141, p = 0.869) and destination attractiveness (F = 0.520, p = 0.595). In destination trust, another individual's account had the highest mean value (M = 3.7347), followed by a friend's account (M = 3.7227) and the DMO's account (M = 3.6870) but the differences were not statistically significant. Similarly, another individual's account had the highest mean value (M = 4.1126), followed by a friend's account (M = 4.1035) and the DMO's account (M = 4.0315) on destination attractiveness but the differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypotheses 3a and 3b were all rejected.

Table 4.10 Effects of Social Media Account Types on Travelers' Destination Perceptions

Travelers' Destination Perceptions	Social Media account type	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value/Sig.	Scheffe
Destination Trust	DMOs (a)	3.6870	0.0685	0.141/0.869	-
	Friends (b)	3.7227	0.0675		
	Individuals (c)	3.7347	0.0624		
Destination Attractiveness	DMOs (a)	4.0315	0.0649	0.520/0.595	-
	Friends (b)	4.1035	0.0599		
	Individuals (c)	4.1126	0.0596		

4.4.4 HYPOTHESIS FOUR

Model 7 in Hayes' (2017) Process procedure was applied to test Hypothesis 4a and Hypothesis 4b, using credibility the as the independent variable, the number of likes as a moderator, travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) as mediators, and visit intention as the dependent variable. Based on 10,000 bootstrap samples, the conditional indirect effect was tested by the bootstrapping technique. For the moderation effect of likes on the relationship between credibility and destination trust, the result indicated that the moderated mediation was not significant, as evidenced by the confidence interval including zero (b = - 0.018, 95% boot CI [- 0.144,

0.089]). Therefore, Hypothesis 4a was rejected. The moderated mediation effect of the number of likes between credibility was significant with a high number of likes, as the confidence interval excluding zero (b = 0.320, 95% boot CI [0.188, 0.472]); the effect of credibility on visit intention with low number of likes was significant (b = 0.302, 95% boot CI [0.214, 0.401]). The direct effect of credibility on visit intention was significant (b = 0.272, p = 0.000) and that of destination trust on visit intention was also significant (b = 0.483, p = 0.000).
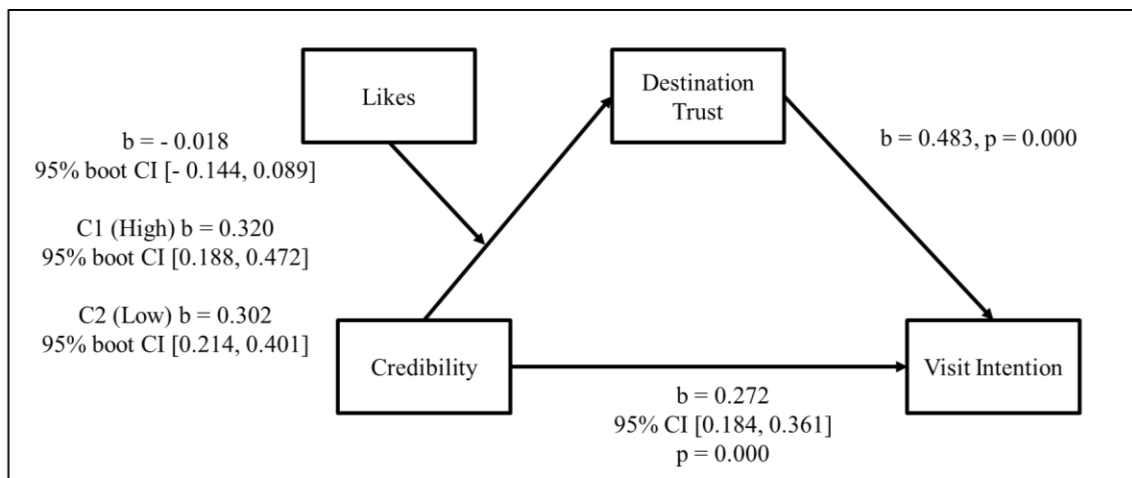
Figure 4.1 Results of Moderated Mediation Effect for Destination Trust

For the moderation effect of likes on the relationship between credibility and destination attractiveness, the results revealed the moderated mediation effect was not significant as the confidence interval includes zero (b = - 0.113, 95% boot CI [- 0.287, 0.033]), rejecting Hypothesis 4b. There was a significant moderated mediation effect of the number of likes between credibility and destination attractiveness with a high number of likes, as the confidence interval does not include zero (b = 0.391, 95% boot CI [0.255, 0.556]); the effect of a low number of likes was significant between credibility and destination attractiveness (b = 0.278, 95% boot CI [0.183, 0.376]) (see Figure 4.3).

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Therefore, Hypotheses 4a and 4b were rejected. The direct effect of destination trust on visit intention was also significant (b = 0.433, p = 0.000). Figure 4.3 shows that when credibility was higher, destination attractiveness of a high number of likes condition was higher than that of a low number likes condition; when credibility was lower, destination attractiveness of a high number of likes was lower than that of a low number of like conditions.
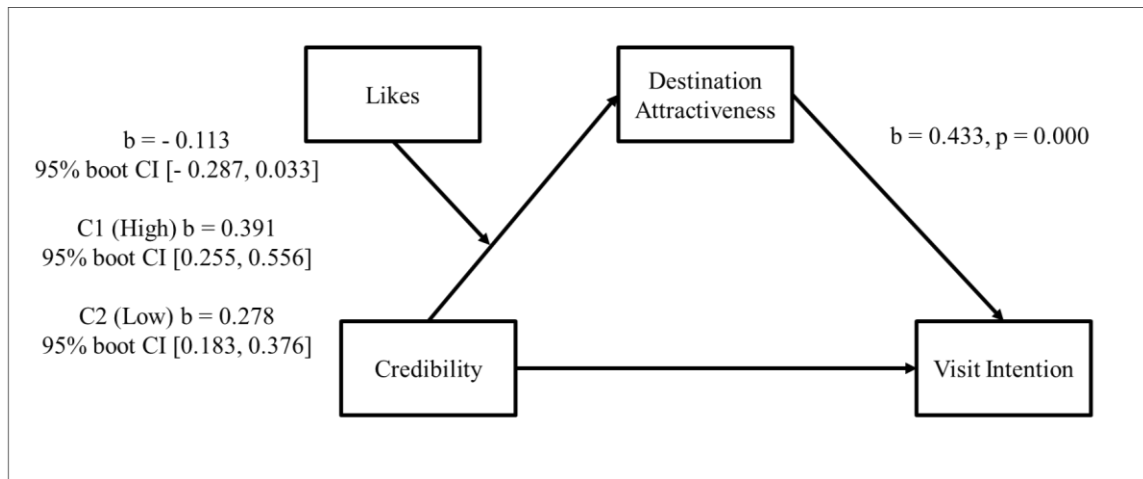

Figure 4.2 Results of Moderated Mediation Effect for Destination Attractiveness
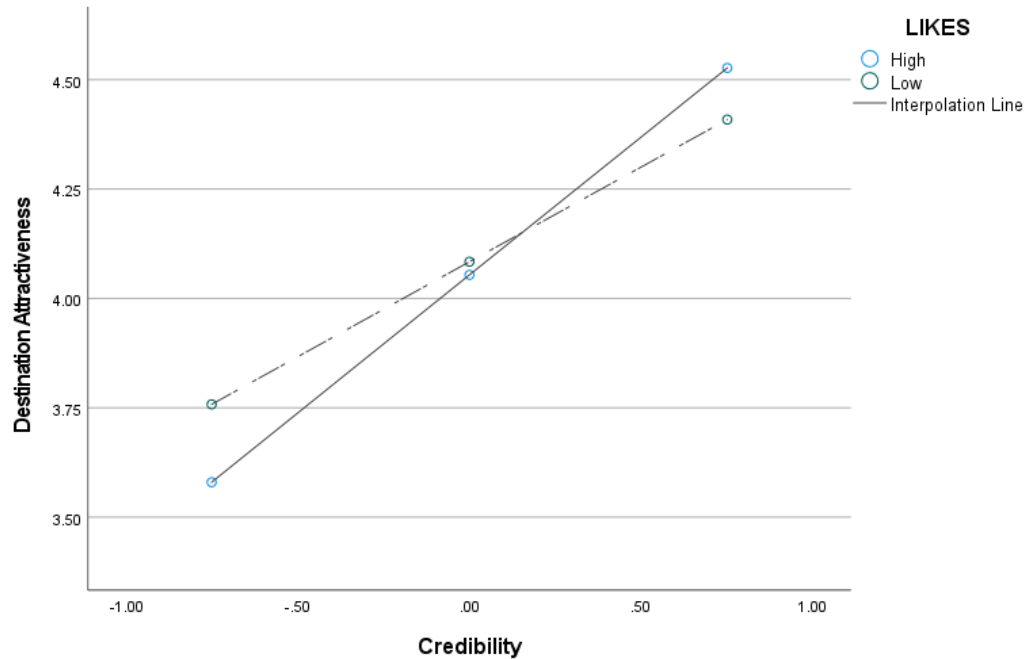
Figure 4.3 Effects of Credibility on Destination Attractiveness through Likes

4.4.5 HYPOTHESIS FIVE

SPSS Process Model 7 in Hayes' (2017) was conducted for a moderated mediation analysis to test Hypothesis 5 with social media account types as the independent variable, the number of likes as the moderator, destination trust and destination attractiveness as each mediator, and visit intention as the dependent variable. X1 refers to comparing the DMO's account and a friend's account, X2 refers to the comparison of the DMO's account and another individual's account, and X3 refers to the comparison of a friend's account and another individual's account.

For the moderating effect of likes on the relationship between social media account types and destination trust (H5a), the results of X1 (the DMO's account vs. a friend's account) showed a significant moderated mediation effect on destination trust: between the DMO's account and a friend's account excluding zero (b = 0.226, 95% boot CI [0.002, 0.463]); there was no significant moderated mediation effect with a high number

of likes, as the confidence interval includes zero (b = - 0.093, 95% boot CI [-0.242, 0.040]); there were no significant moderated mediation effect with low number of likes (b = 0.133, 95% boot CI [-0.048, 0.315]). The results of X2 (the DMO's account vs. another individual's account) showed that there was a significant moderated mediation effect on destination trust between the DMO's account and another individual's account excluding zero (b = 0.387, 95% boot CI [0.160, 0.641]); there was a significant moderated mediation effect with a high number of likes, as the confidence interval excluding zero (b = - 0.165, 95% boot CI [- 0.311, - 0.033]) and with a low number of likes, excluding zero (b = 0.222, 95% boot CI [0.048, 0.417]). The results of X3 (a friend's account vs. another individual's account) showed that there was a significant moderated mediation effect on destination trust between a friend's account and another individual's account excluding zero (b = - 0.387, 95% boot CI [- 0.646, - 0.156]); there was no significant moderated mediation effect with a high number of likes, as the confidence interval including zero (b = 0.072, 95% boot CI [- 0.068, 0.216]) and with a low number of likes including zero (b = - 0.089, 95% boot CI [- 0.281, 0.838]). Therefore, Hypothesis 5a was partially supported.
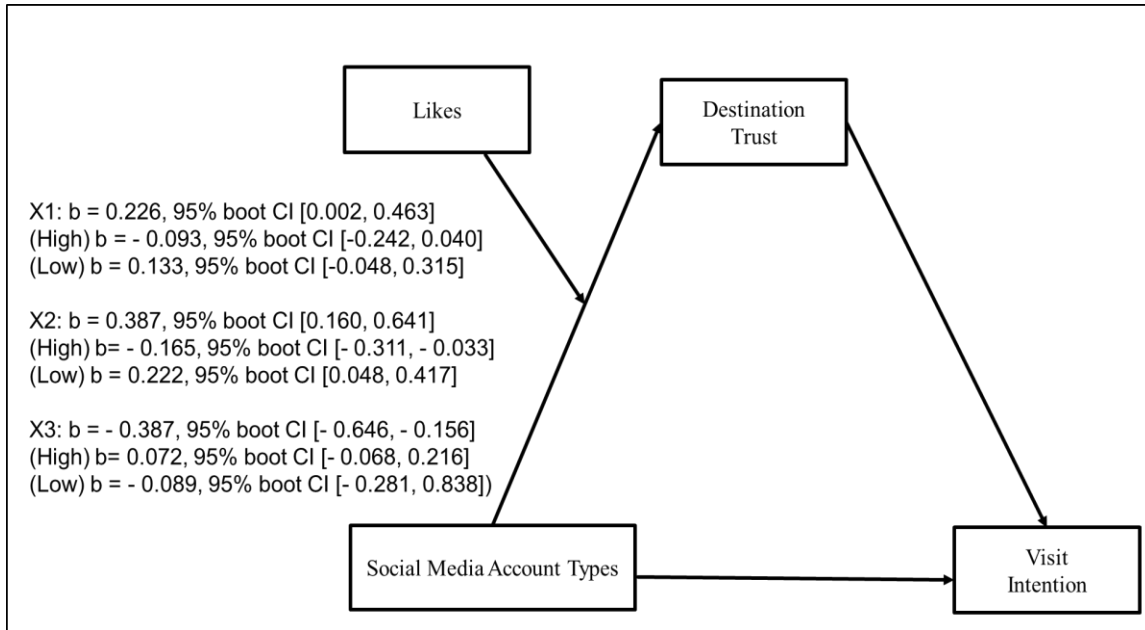
Figure 4.4 Results of Moderated Mediation Effect for Destination Trust

In terms of destination trust, the DMO's account with a high number of likes had the highest perceptions (M = 3.960), followed by a friend's account with a high number of likes (M = 3.812). On the other hand, the DMO's account with a low number of likes condition was the lowest (M = 3.218), while a friend's account with a low number of likes had the fifth-highest destination trust (M = 3.631). The mean value of destination trust of another individual's account with a high number of likes was 3.670 and that with a low number of likes was 3.773, respectively. These results indicated that the number of likes moderated the relationship between social media account types (especially the DMO's account and a friend's account) and destination trust.
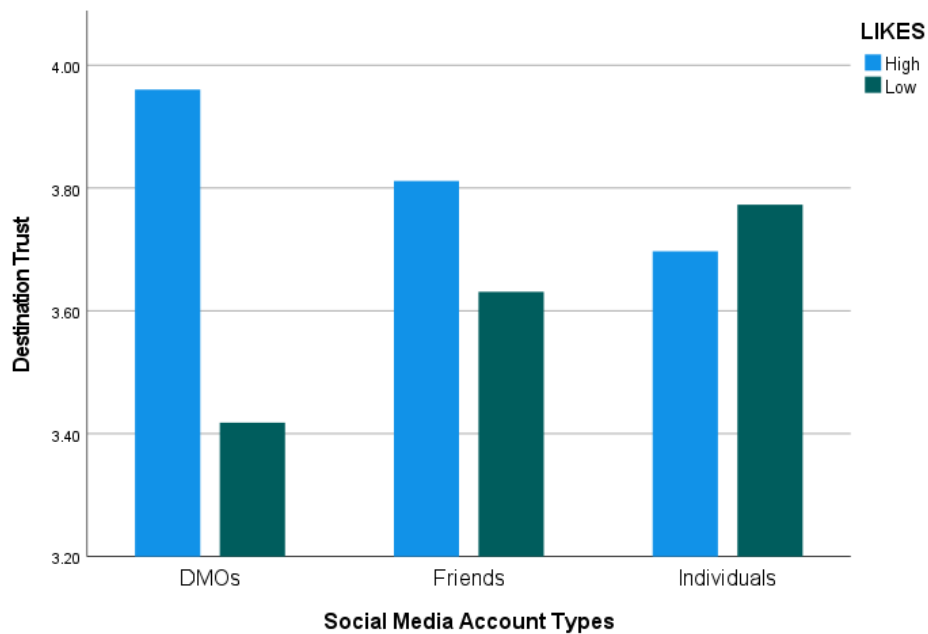
Figure 4.5 Moderation Effect of Social Media Account Types on Destination Trust by Likes

For the moderating effect of likes on the relationship between social media types and destination attractiveness (H5b), the results of X1 (the DMO's account vs. a friend's account) revealed no significant effect of the moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness: between the DMO's account and a friend's account including zero (b = 0.139, 95% boot CI [- 0.014, 0.292]). Meanwhile, the results of X2 (the DMO's account vs. another individual's account) showed that there was no significant moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness excluding zero (b = 0.235, 95% CI [0.082, 0.408]); there was no significant moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness with a high number of likes, as the confidence interval including zero (b = - 0.802, 95% boot CI [- 0.014, 0.292]) and destination attractiveness with a low number of likes had a significant moderated mediation effect, excluding zero (b = 0.154, 95% boot CI [0.034, 0.292]). Similarly, X3's results (a friend's account vs. another individual's account)

showed that there was a significant moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness (b = - 0.234, 95% boot CI [- 0.413, - 0.078]); there was no significant moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness with a high number of likes, as the confidence interval including zero (b= 0.044, 95% boot CI [- 0.049, 0.143]) and with a low number of likes had a significant moderated mediation effect, excluding zero (b = - 0.053, 95% boot CI [- 0.179, 0.065]). Therefore, Hypothesis 5b was partially supported; there was the only difference between the DMO's account and another individual's account in destination attractiveness.
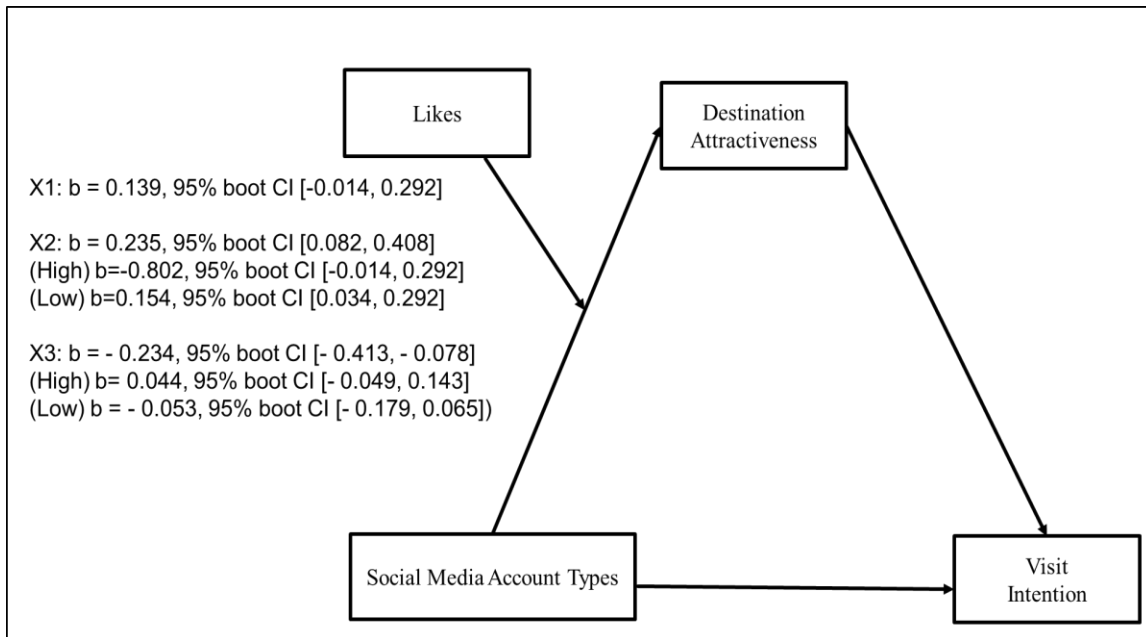

Figure 4.6 Results of Moderated Mediation Effect for Destination Attractiveness

The DMO's account with a high number of likes was the highest on destination attractiveness (M = 4.234), while the DMO's account with a low number of likes was the lowest on destination trust (M = 3.832). A friend's account with a high number of likes had the third-highest destination attractiveness (M = 4.150), while a friend's account with a low number of likes had the fourth-highest destination attractiveness (M = 4.056). The

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mean value of destination attractiveness of another individual's account with a high

number of likes was 4.053 and that with a low number of likes was 4.173, respectively.

These results indicated that the number of likes moderated the relationship between social

media account types (especially the DMO's account and a friend's account) and
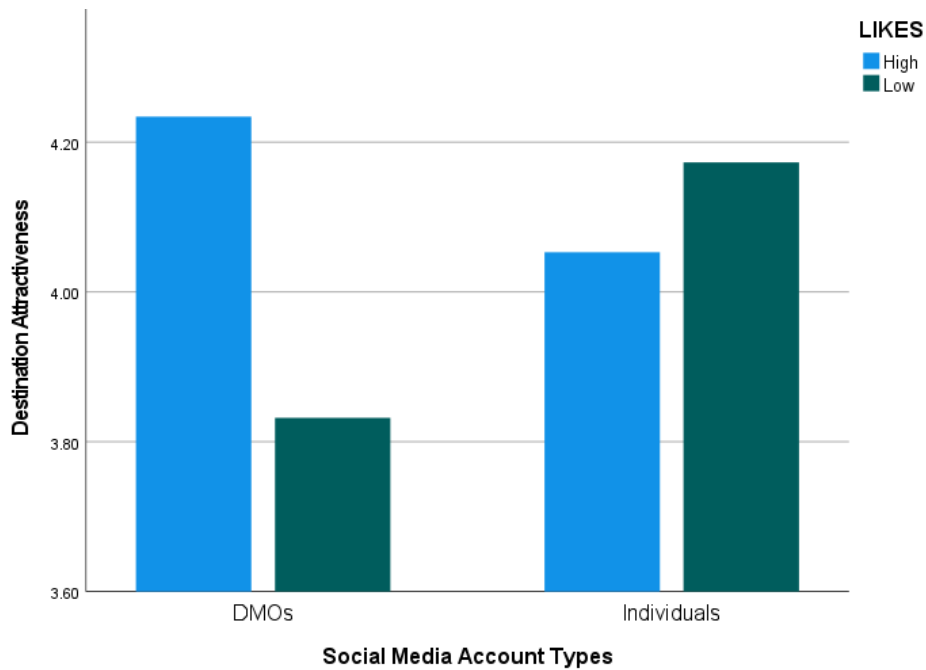
destination attractiveness.

Figure 4.7 Moderation Effect of Social Media Account Types on Destination
Attractiveness by Likes

4.4.6 HYPOTHESIS SIX

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of travelers'

destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) on visit intention.

The entire regression was significant ($F = 365.500$, $p<0.05$) and it showed that about

65.4% of the total variation in visit intention was explained by the regression (Adjusted

$R^2 = 0.654$). The results showed that both destination trust and destination attractiveness

had a significant impact on visit intention. The results indicated that destination trust

significantly impacted visit intention ($\beta = 0.527$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, when

destination trust increased by 1, visit intention increased by 0.626 (B = 0.626). In

addition, destination attractiveness also had a significant impact on visit intention (β =

0.352, $p < 0.001$). When destination attractiveness increased by 1, visit intention

increased by 0.0449 (B = 0.449). Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was supported; travelers'

destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) positively

impacted visit intention. Table 4.11 below shows the effect of destination trust and

destination attractiveness on visit intention.

Table 4.11 Effect of Travelers' Destination Perceptions on Visit Intention

IV	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t (p)	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	SE	B		TOL	VIF
Constant	-0.358	0.162	-	-2.211[*]	-	-
Destination Trust	0.626	0.049	0.527	12.805[***]	0.529	1.809
Destination Attractiveness	0.449	0.053	0.352	8.537[***]	0.529	1.809
R = 0.810, R^2 = 0.656, Adj. R^2 = 0.654, F = 365.500, Durbin-Watson = 2.126						

[*]$p<0.05$, [**]$p<0.01$, [***]$p<0.001$

4.5 OVERALL MODEL TESTING

To examine the overall model fit for Hypotheses 2 to 5, SPSS Process Model 15 in

Hayes' (2017) was conducted with social media account types as the independent

variable, the number of likes as the moderator, credibility as the mediator, and travelers'

destination perceptions (average of destination trust and destination attractiveness) as the

dependent variable. X1 refers to comparing the DMO's account and a friend's account,

and X2 refers to the comparison of the DMO's account and another individual's account.

The results indicated that there were insignificant differences of the moderated mediation effect on destination trust: DMO's and friend's including zero (b = 0.000, 95% boot CI [- 0.020, 0.029]) and DMO's and individual's including zero (b = 0.005, 95% boot CI [- 0.052, 0.066]), rejecting Hypotheses 4a. The results showed that there were insignificant differences of the moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness: DMO's and friend's including zero (b = 0.004, 95% boot CI [- 0.037, 0.049]) and DMO's and individual's including zero (b = 0.044, 95% boot CI [- 0.002, 0.113]), rejecting Hypotheses 4b.
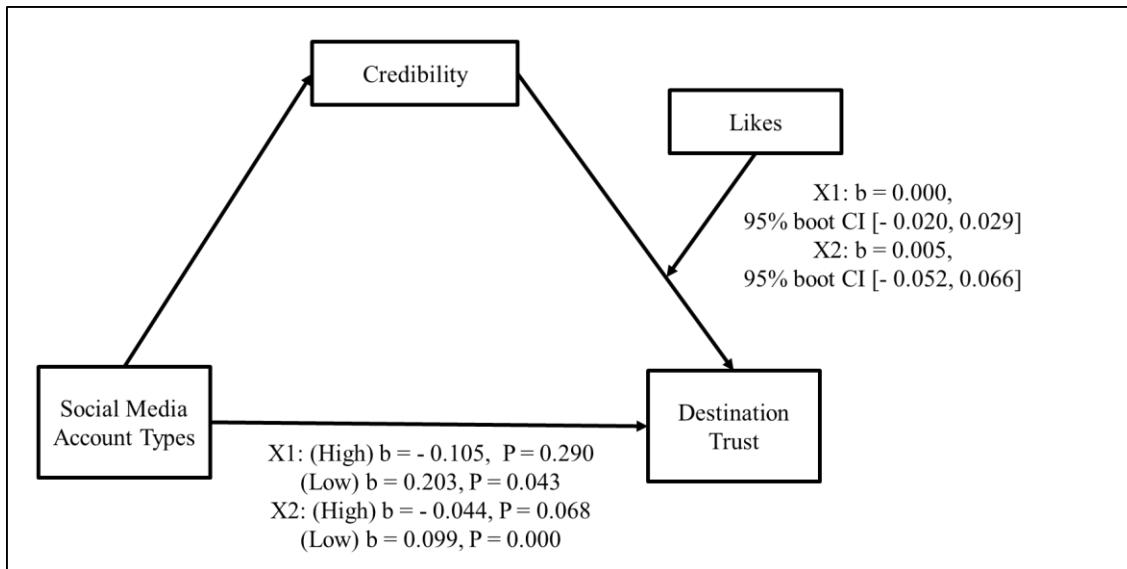

Figure 4.8 Effect of Number of Likes on Destination Trust

The number of likes had a significant moderated mediation effect on both destination trust and destination attractiveness only when the number of likes was low. The results revealed no significant effect of the moderated mediation effect on destination trust with a high number of likes between the DMO's account and a friend's account (b = - 0.105, p = 0.290) and between the DMO's account and another individual's account (b = - 0.044, p = 0.068). The results revealed there are significant effects of the moderated

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mediation effect on destination trust with a low number of likes between the DMO's account and a friend's account (b = 0.203, p = 0.043) and between the DMOs account and another individual's account (b =0.099, p = 0.000), partially supporting Hypothesis 5a. Similarly, there was a significant difference in destination attractiveness only with a low number of likes between the DMO's account and a friend's account (b =0.217, p = 0.036) and between the DMOs account and another individual's account (b = 0.039, p = 0.000). Meanwhile, the results on destination attractiveness showed no significant difference between the DMOs account and a friend's account (b =-0.042, p = 0.680) and between the DMO's account and another individual's account (b = -0.032, p = 0.036).

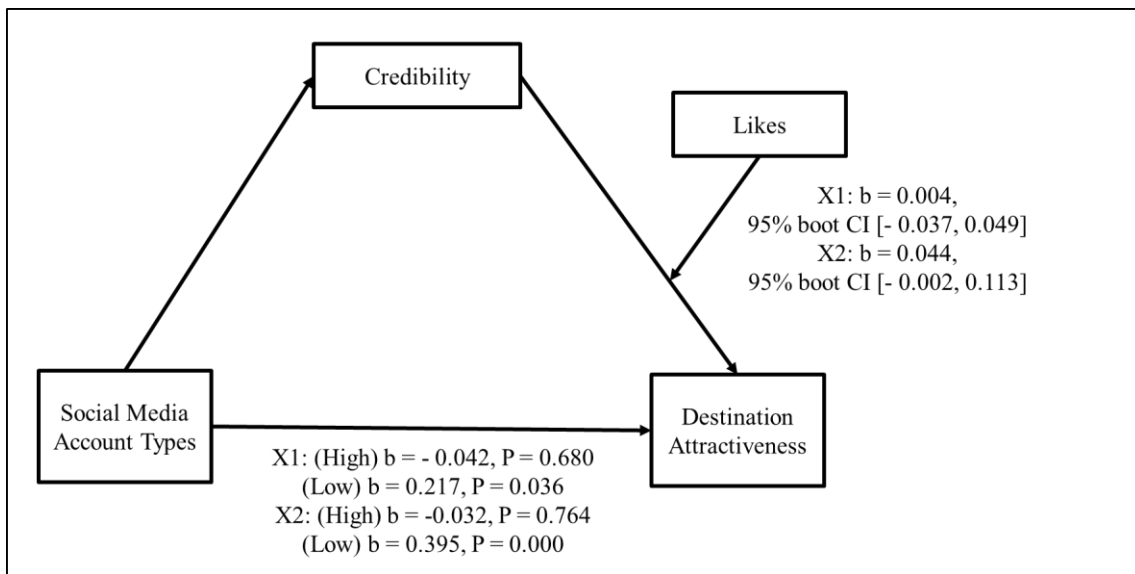**Figure 4.9** Effect of Number of Likes on Destination Attractiveness

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

5.1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: H1

Research Question 1. What is the impact of social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) on the sub-factors of credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness)?

H1a) A friend's account has the highest trustworthiness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least trustworthiness.

H1b) The DMO's account has the highest expertise, followed by a friend's account, and another individual's account has the least expertise.

H1c) A friend's account has the highest attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least attractiveness.

To answer research question one, one-way ANOVA was carried out to test trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of three social media account types for Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. The result found no significant difference perceptions on the attractiveness in terms of social media account types. On the other hand, the respondents had significant different perceptions on the trustworthiness in terms of social media account types ($F = 5.532$, $p = 0.004$) and on the expertise in terms of social media account types ($F = 6.622$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, these findings partially support both H1a

and H1b. The results showed that the three social media account types impacted trustworthiness and expertise. Specifically, a friend's account was more trustworthy than another individual's account and the DMO's account was perceived as having more expertise than another individual's account.

5.1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: H2 AND H3

Research Question 2. What is the influence of credibility and social media account types on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness)?

H2a) The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination trust.

H2b) The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination attractiveness.

H3a) Different social media account types have different impacts on destination trust. More specifically, the DMO's account has the highest impact on destination trust, followed by a friend's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.

H3b) Different social media account types have different impacts on destination attractiveness. More specifically, a friend's account has the highest impact on destination attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.

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To answer research question two, linear regression analysis was conducted for Hypotheses 2a and 2b and one-way ANOVA was used for Hypotheses 3a and 3b. Results from testing Hypotheses 2a and 2b indicated that the credibility of social media account types had a positive impact on destination trust ($F = 271.470$, $p < 0.001$) and destination attractiveness ($F = 151.945$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, both H2a and H2b were supported. The results indicated that the influence of credibility on social media account types on destination trust and destination attractiveness was found. The credibility of social media account types had a positive impact on travelers' destination perceptions; destination trust increased when credibility increased; destination attractiveness increased when credibility increased. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference among social media account types on destination trust and destination attractiveness, rejecting H3a and H3b. The results revealed that the three social media account types did not affect travelers' destination perceptions of destination trust and destination attractiveness.

5.1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: H4 AND H5

Research Question 3. What is the interaction effect of social media account types and the number of likes on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention?

H4a) The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

H4b) The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

H5a) The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

H5b) The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.

To answer research question three, SPSS Process model 7 in Hayes (2017) was conducted for Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 5a, and 5b. There was no significant difference in the interaction effect of credibility on destination trust (b = - 0.018, 95% boot CI [- 0.144, 0.089]), failing to support H4a. Similarly, an insignificant interaction effect of credibility on destination attractiveness was found (b = - 0.113, 95% boot CI [- 0.287, 0.033]), rejecting H4b. These results indicated that the number of likes did not have the moderated mediation effect between credibility and travelers' destination perceptions.

There was a significant interaction effect between the DMO's account and a friend's account on destination trust (b = 0.226, 95% boot CI [0.002, 0.463]). When comparing the DMO's account and another individual's account, there was a significant effect of moderated mediation effect on destination trust (b = 0.387, 95% boot CI [0.160, 0.641]) and between a friend's account and another individual's account (b = - 0.387, 95% boot CI [- 0.646, - 0.156]), partially supporting H5a. There were significant differences between the DMO's account and another individual's account with a high number of likes (b = - 0.165, 95% boot CI [- 0.311, - 0.033]) and with a low number of likes (b = 0.222, 95% boot CI [0.048, 0.417]). The results indicated that the destination

trust of the DMO's account and another individual's account was higher with a high number of likes and their destination trust was lower with a low number of likes; meanwhile, the moderated mediation effect size of likes on the DMO's account was larger than that of another individual's account.

No significant difference in the moderated mediation effect on destination attractiveness between the DMO's account and a friend's account was found (b = 0.139, 95% boot CI [- 0.014, 0.292]). Meanwhile, there was a significant difference between the DMO's account and another individual's account (b = 0.235, 95% CI [0.082, 0.408]) and a friend's account and another individual's account (b = - 0.234, 95% boot CI [- 0.413, - 0.078]) on destination attractiveness, partially supporting H5b. The moderated mediation effect of social media account types (between the DMO's account and another individual's account) on visit intention with a low number of likes was also significant (b = 0.154, 95% boot CI [0.034, 0.292]). The results indicated that the DMO's account destination attractiveness was higher when the number of likes was high rather than when the number of likes was low. Additionally, each moderated mediation strongly affected travelers' destination perceptions when the number of likes was low, which indicated that social media account types played an important role in travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention, especially with a low number of likes. The number of likes moderated the relationship between the social media account types and travelers' destinaiton perceptions only with a low numer of likes. Since a low number of likes did not have any information to decide the credibility of a social media account, users judged destination perceptions only by the type of social media. On the other hand, the number of likes did not moderate the social media account types and travelers' destination perceptions with a

high number of likes because a high number of likes provides the evidence that a social media account has high credibility, regardless of the type, which indicated that the number of likes did not have any role of moderator to influence travelers' destination perceptions.

5.1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR: H6

Research Question 4. What is the influence of travelers' destination perceptions on visit intention?

H6) Travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) have a positive impact on visit intention.

To answer research question four, multiple regression analysis was carried out for Hypothesis 6. Both travelers' destination perceptions, destination trust and destination attractiveness, had a significantly positive impact on visit intention. This supported Hypothesis 6 ($F = 365.500$, $p < 0.05$) since travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) positively affected visit intention. When destination trust and destination attractiveness increased, visit intention increased. Specifically, the influence of destination trust on visit intention ($B = 0.626$) was stronger than that of destination attractiveness on visit intention. ($B = 0.449$).

5.1.5 Summary of Hypotheses-testing results

This study tested hypotheses by the proposed hypotheses and model. Table 5.1 exhibits the results of hypotheses-testing.

Table 5.1 Summary of Hypotheses-testing Results

Hypothesis	Support of Hypotheses
H1a: A friend's account has the highest trustworthiness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least trustworthiness.	Partially Supported
H1b: The DMO's account has the highest expertise, followed by a friend's account, and another individual's account has the least expertise.	Partially Supported
H1c: A friend's account has the highest attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least attractiveness.	Not Supported
H2a: The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination trust.	Supported
H2b: The credibility of social media account types has a positive impact on destination attractiveness.	Supported
H3a: Different social media account types have different impacts on destination trust. More specifically, the DMO's account has the highest impact on destination trust, followed by a friend's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.	Not Supported
H3b: Different social media account types have different impacts on destination attractiveness. More specifically, a friend's account has the highest impact on destination attractiveness, followed by the DMO's account, and another individual's account has the least impact.	Not Supported
H4a: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.	Not Supported
H4b: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of credibility on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.	Not Supported
H5a: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination trust; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.	Partially Supported
H5b: The number of likes moderates the direct influence of social media account types on destination attractiveness; the influence is stronger when the number of likes is high and weaker when the number of likes is low.	Partially Supported
H6: Travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) have a positive impact on visit intention.	Supported

5.2 CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to investigate the influence of social media account types (DMOs, friends, and other individuals) on travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) and visit intention based on Source Credibility Theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1952). This study identified the impact of the number of likes on credibility, social media account types, and travelers' destination perceptions. Specifically, the study examined the impact of three social media account types, namely, DMOs, friends, and other individuals, and their credibility on visit intention. Travelers' destination perceptions were incorporated as mediators, and the number of likes was incorporated as a moderator representing the social reinforcement and social comparison mechanism. The proposed research model was tested among Instagram users using an experimental design approach.

First, the current study found that there was no significant difference among three social media account types in travelers' destination perceptions. However, the study also showed that social media accounts' credibility significantly affected travelers' destination perceptions, although DMOs, friends, and other individuals had no different impacts when travelers evaluated perceptions about a destination. This study's results regarding credibility and travelers' destination perceptions were consistent with Source Credibility Theory (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Abubakar et al., 2017; Um et al., 2006). Credibility, social media account types, and travelers' destination perceptions indicated that the influence of credibility on social media accounts is comparatively more significant than that of social media account types. Specifically, travelers' destination perceptions were influenced by social media accounts' credibility; two sub-factors (trustworthiness and

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expertise) of credibility on social media accounts led to destination perceptions. Particularly, trustworthiness and expertise were found to be the main sub-factors to evaluate social media accounts' credibility. Hence, the credibility of social media accounts plays a more essential role than the type of social media account and trustworthiness and expertise are key to determining a social media account's credibility.

Second, these findings have provided scholars with a significant understanding of the influence of likes on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention. Likes had a significant impact on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention that differs between the DMO's account and another individual's account. Specifically, the results showed that *likes* was a strong moderator among social media account types on both travelers' destination perceptions only with a low number of likes. This provides further empirical support for the notion that *likes* strongly influences travelers' destination perceptions, especially when the number of likes is low. Therefore, this study's findings confirm that a low number of likes reinforces travel behaviors positively overall.

Third, findings from this study indicated that travelers' destination perceptions, including destination trust and destination attractiveness, had a positive effect on visit intention. This indicates that travelers' destination perceptions influence visit intention: the results regarding destination trust (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010) and those regarding destination attractiveness (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998; Lee et al., 2009; Sparks, 2007; Um et al., 2006). Specifically, the results of destination trust on visit intention in this study provide evidence of a positive relationship on visit intention (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). Similarly, the study's findings

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suggest that destination attractiveness has a significant positive impact on visit intention as destination attractiveness positively affects revisit intention (Lee et al., 2009).

5.3 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

Theoretically, the current study makes several important contributions to hospitality and tourism literature. First, this study sheds light on how social media account types, especially DMOs, friends, and other individuals, have the power to, with their credibility, influence travelers' attitudes and intentions. Although previous studies have investigated the impact of social media account types on travel behaviors and intentions (Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), the present study introduces a new perspective on examining the influence of social media account types' credibility on travel intention through Source Credibility Theory. Specifically, this study is one of the first to understand and clarify the importance of social media account types' credibility on travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention. Therefore, the current study has raised a significant amount of academic attention towards this future research direction in the context of hospitality and tourism.

Second, this study suggests that the number of likes is an especially important factor for study in hospitality and tourism contexts. The role of likes has drawn comparatively less attention in online hospitality and tourism. However, the focus of this study was on the role of the number of likes which triggered travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention (Tiggemann et al., 2018). Furthermore, a significant moderated mediation effect of the number of likes was found between social media account types and travelers' destination perceptions (Mochon et al., 2017; Naylor et al., 2012; Oh et al., 2017). The significant moderated mediation effect of *likes* supports the

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existence of Social Reinforcement Theory (Lieberman et al., 2001; Tiggemann et al., 2018). Similarly, the high number of likes is reinforced by social comparison since an upward social comparison is a necessary condition for increasing travelers' destination perceptions (Festinger, 1954; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Van de Ven et al., 2009). This research extends the first stage of the research on *like*s in hospitality and tourism by demonstrating that the moderated mediation effect of likes is created by influencing the two levels of likes in the relationship between credibility and travelers' destination perceptions as well as between social media accounts' credibility and travelers' destination perceptions. Hence, this study's moderated mediation analysis provides a more detailed explanation of travelers' destination-decision process.

Third, this study contributes to visit intention literature by exploring the impact of travelers' destination perceptions in hospitality and tourism (Liu et al., 2001; Suh & Gartner, 2004; Turner et al., 2002). Although it has been widely acknowledged that travel perceptions affect travel intention in travelers' decision-making process, few relevant studies have focused on the role of destination trust and destination attractiveness at the same time. The present study examines the relationship of destination perceptions, including destination trust and destination attractiveness, on visit intention to study the impact in hospitality and tourism's online context.

5.4 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study yields an in-depth understanding of one of the most promising online marketing strategies for the hospitality and tourism industry. Hence, the findings of this study provide important practical implications related to social media marketing for the industry. First, findings from this study highlight the influence of social media accounts'

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credibility on travelers' destination perceptions. These findings are applicable to developing a particular guideline for destination marketers and promoters, especially in social media tourism marketing. To further encourage visitors through social media marketing, destination marketers and promoters can establish an effective way to increase the credibility of a social media account for travelers by posting according to the type of social media accounts. Destination marketing organizations should establish an effective way to enhance social media accounts' credibility, which triggers actual visit intention. More specifically, destination tourism marketing should be focused on trustworthiness and expertise of a social media account to increase its credibility. However, destination marketers should not ignore another individual's account as the impact of another individual's account could be significant if the credibility of another individual's account is high. Suggested examples include the following: (a) identify the types of destinations and utilize destination marketing posting by a friend's account if destination should emphasize trustworthiness: posting by the DMO's account if the destination focus should be expertise, (b) regularly monitor which account types have the higher credibility and have a promotional event to share their destination marketing posting with those who have higher credibility.

Second, this study's findings are more applicable to a particular case: the moderating effect was significant when the number of likes was low. Destination marketers and promoters should consider social media account types at the first stage when they post a destination promotion since there was a different impact of travelers' destination perceptions (destination trust and destination attractiveness) with a low number of likes. Especially, a post by the DMO's account can be the most effective way

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to attract visitors' interests because the effect size of the DMO's account on destination trust and destination attractiveness was greater than another individual's account when the posting had a low number of likes. Therefore, destination marketers and promoters in social media marketing should upload a destination posting by the DMO's account by initially paying attention to social media account types of the post. Destination trust and destination attractiveness increased by uploading a posting of a destination to the DMO's account. Thus, social media marketers and promoters should utilize the DMO's account at the first stage for destination promotion and encourage travelers to click the posting until the number of likes becomes high. After gaining a high number of likes, the posting can be shared by other social media users to many other accounts. Similarly, social media marketers and promoters should be careful to select the right social media account type when posting to promote their destination.

5.5 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has some limitations, which can be addressed in future studies. First, this study used Instagram as a representation of all social media platforms since it is one of the most widely used social media platforms (Hwang & Cho, 2018; Kim et al., 2016). Future studies should include more diverse and representative social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to better understand travel behaviors and intentions. Therefore, a wider variety of social media platforms should make researchers' understanding of travel behaviors and intentions more comprehensive.

Second, the present study used an example of a destination picture posting with a specific number of likes and text-based scenarios to manipulate social media account types and the number of likes. However, only using one photo makes it difficult to make

a decision on whether or not to visit a destination. Therefore, future studies should utilize a video with some details about a destination to provide more fluent sources for decision in the experimental study. In addition, other social endorsement cues, such as comments, the presence of a following, and the number of followers can be examined in future studies.

Third, the current study used 'Destination X' to avoid bias from a specific destination type. However, destination marketers and promoters could further explain travelers' behaviors and intentions by comparing destination types. Therefore, future studies may consider whether there are significant differences in travel behaviors and intentions according to different destinations. In addition, other factors such as tourist types or the purpose of the trip could be investigated to extend the understanding of travelers' destination decision-making process.

Fourth, the Asian participants' sample collected was approximately 43%, limiting the generalizability of the findings, even though this study utilized MTurk for qualified data from a nationwide pool. Therefore, future studies should collect more varied data to reduce the bias of the sampling base. This will help gain a more practical understanding of the findings.

Finally, the present study utilized a friend's account as representing a close friend with a strong-tie relationship in experiments. However, friendships on SNS are categorized as online, mixed-mode, and offline friendships (Antheunis et al., 2012). Specifically, significant different impacts on behaviors and intentions exist between online friends and offline friends (Mesch & Talmud, 2006). Additionally, future studies should make a clear distinction between online friendships and offline friendships.

Besides, future studies could consider examining if significant differences exist between online friendships and mixed-mode friendships.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Dear participants,

My name is Nuri Seo. I am a graduate student in the International Hospitality and Tourism Management Department at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Master's, and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying aims to better understand traveler destination perceptions and visit intention through Instagram account types and number of likes. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete some surveys about visit intention on the Instagram posting.

In particular, you will be asked questions about social media account's trustworthiness, social media account's expertise, social media account's attractiveness, destination trust, destination attractiveness, and visit intention.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed. So, please do not write your name or other identifying information on any of the study materials.

You will receive amazon rewards for participating in the study.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (+82 10-7794-0527 or nseo@email.sc.edu) or my faculty advisor, Dr. Fang Meng (fmeng@hrsm.sc.edu or (803) 777-0631).

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please click the next button and begin completing the study materials. When you are done, please insert instructions on the last screen.

<div align="right">
With kind regards,
Nuri Seo
College of HRSM, 1705 College Street, Columbia, SC 29208
+82 10-7794-0527
nseo@email.sc.edu
</div>

Screening questions

Are you 18 years old or above?
○ Yes
○ No → Terminate
Do you have an Instagram account?
○ Yes
○ No → Terminate
Have you traveled for at least one night within the last three years?
○ Yes
○ No → Terminate

Manipulation check questions

What is the social media account type on the posting?
○ DMO (Destination Marketing Organization)
○ Friend
○ Another individual
What do you think of the number of likes on the posting?
○ High number of likes
○ Low number of likes
Do you think this scenario is realistic?
○ Yes
○ No

Section A

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement about the trustworthiness of social media account types.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Information claims from this type of account are believable.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel this type of account is honest.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is an attention check question, please choose "strongly agree" as your answer for this question.	○	○	○	○	○
I consider this type of account is trustworthy.	○	○	○	○	○

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement about the expertise of social media account types.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider this type of account to show a lot about its area.					
I consider this type of account to reveal sufficient experience to make assertions about its area.					
This is an attention check question, please choose "strongly agree" as your answer for this question.					
I feel this type of account to show expertise on its area.					

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Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement about the attractiveness of social media account types.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I consider this type of account very trendy.					
I consider this type of account very attractive.					
This is an attention check question, please choose "strongly agree" as your answer for this question.					
I consider this type of account very stylish.					
Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement about your destination trust of Destination X.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Destination X will meet my expectations as a travel destination.					
I would be satisfied with Destination X as a travel destination.					
This is an attention check question, please					

choose "strongly agree" as your answer for this question.					
I will not be disappointed with Destination X.					
I have confidence in Destination X.					
Please indicate to what degree you agree with in the following statement about your destination attractiveness of Destination X.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Destination X gives me a good feeling.					
Destination X catches my attention.					
This is an attention check question, please choose "strongly agree" as your answer for this question.					
Destination X is attractive.					
Destination X makes me happy.					
Please indicate to what you agree with the following statement about your visit intention on Destination X.					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would plan to visit Destination X for my holidays.					
This is an attention check question, please choose "strongly agree" as your answer for this question.					
I will make an effort to visit Destination X for my holidays.					
I would like to make a plan for traveling to Destination X for my holidays.					

Section B: Demographics

What is your gender? ○ Male ○ Female ○ Other
Which of the following categories best describes your age? ○ 18 to 25 ○ 26 to 35 ○ 36 to 45 ○ 46 to 55 ○ 56 to 65 ○ 66 or above
What is your marital status? ○ Single ○ Married/Partner ○ Separated/Divorced/Widowed ○ Other
What is your ethnic group? ○ Caucasian ○ African-American ○ Hispanic ○ Asian ○ Native American ○ Multi-ethnic ○ Other (Please specify) _____
What is the highest level of education you have completed? ○ High school degree or lower ○ Some college or Associate degree ○ Bachelor's degree ○ Master's/Doctoral degree ○ Or something else (Please specify) _____
How many times have you traveled domestically or internationally (at least for one night) within the past three years? ○ 1 to 2 times ○ 3 to 5 times ○ 6 to 8 times ○ More than 8 times
How often do you check your Instagram a day? ○ Less than once ○ 1 or 2 times

| |
|---|
| ○ 3 to 5 times |
| ○ 6 times or more |
| How long do you use Instagram a day? |
| ○ Less than 30 minutes |
| ○ 30 to 59 minutes |
| ○ 1 to 2 hours |
| ○ More than 2 hours |
| How many accounts do you follow? |
| ○ 0 |
| ○ 1 to 5 accounts |
| ○ 6 to 10 accounts |
| ○ 11 to 15 accounts |
| ○ More than 15 |
| On average, how many likes do you receive when you post on your wall? |
| ○ 0 to 5 likes |
| ○ 6 to 10 likes |
| ○ 11 to 20 likes |
| ○ 21 to 50 likes |
| ○ More than 50 likes |
| If you have any additional comments about travelers' destination perceptions and visit intention, please add a comment below (Optional). Thank you! |

Scenarios

Please read the scenario below carefully and see the posting below.

The DMO's account with high likes
Imagine that you have sufficient money and time to have a 7-day vacation. While you are browsing some travel destinations for your holidays on Instagram, you see photos of a destination (namely, Destination X) in the recent postings (see below). Now, you realize that this Instagram account is a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) account (i.e., an official account from the destination government or tourism authorities). Also, you find that DMO 's posting has more than 5,000 likes, which is considered high on Instagram.

The DMO's account with low likes
Imagine that you have sufficient money and time to have a 7-day vacation. While you are browsing some travel destinations for your holidays on Instagram, you see photos of a destination (namely, Destination X) in the recent postings (see below). Now, you realize that this Instagram account is a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) account (i.e., an official account from the destination government or tourism authorities). Also, you find that DMO 's posting has less than 5 likes, which is considered low on Instagram.

A friend's account with high likes
Imagine that you have sufficient money and time to have a 7-day vacation. While you are browsing some travel destinations for your holidays on Instagram, you see photos of a destination (namely, Destination X) in the recent postings (see below). Now, you realize that this Instagram account belongs to your friend with whom you frequently communicate on Instagram. Also, you find that your friend 's posting has more than 5,000 likes, which is considered high on Instagram.

A friend's account with low likes
Imagine that you have sufficient money and time to have a 7-day vacation. While you are browsing some travel destinations for your holidays on Instagram, you see photos of a destination (namely, Destination X) in the recent postings (see below). Now, you realize that this Instagram account belongs to your friend with whom you frequently communicate on Instagram. Also, you find that your friend 's posting has less than 5 likes, which is considered low on Instagram.

Another individual's account with high likes
Imagine that you have sufficient money and time to have a 7-day vacation. While you are browsing some travel destinations for your holidays on Instagram, you see photos of a destination (namely, Destination X) in the recent postings (see below). Now, you realize that this Instagram account belongs to another individual whom you have never known before. Also, you find that this other individual's posting has more than 5,000 likes, which is considered high on Instagram.

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Another individual's account with low likes
Imagine that you have sufficient money and time to have a 7-day vacation. While you are browsing some travel destinations for your holidays on Instagram, you see photos of a destination (namely, Destination X) in the recent postings (see below). Now, you realize that this Instagram account belongs to another individual whom you have never known before. Also, you find that this other individual's posting has less than 5 likes, which is considered low on Instagram.

Instagram Postings examples

The DMO's account with high likes	The DMO's account with low likes

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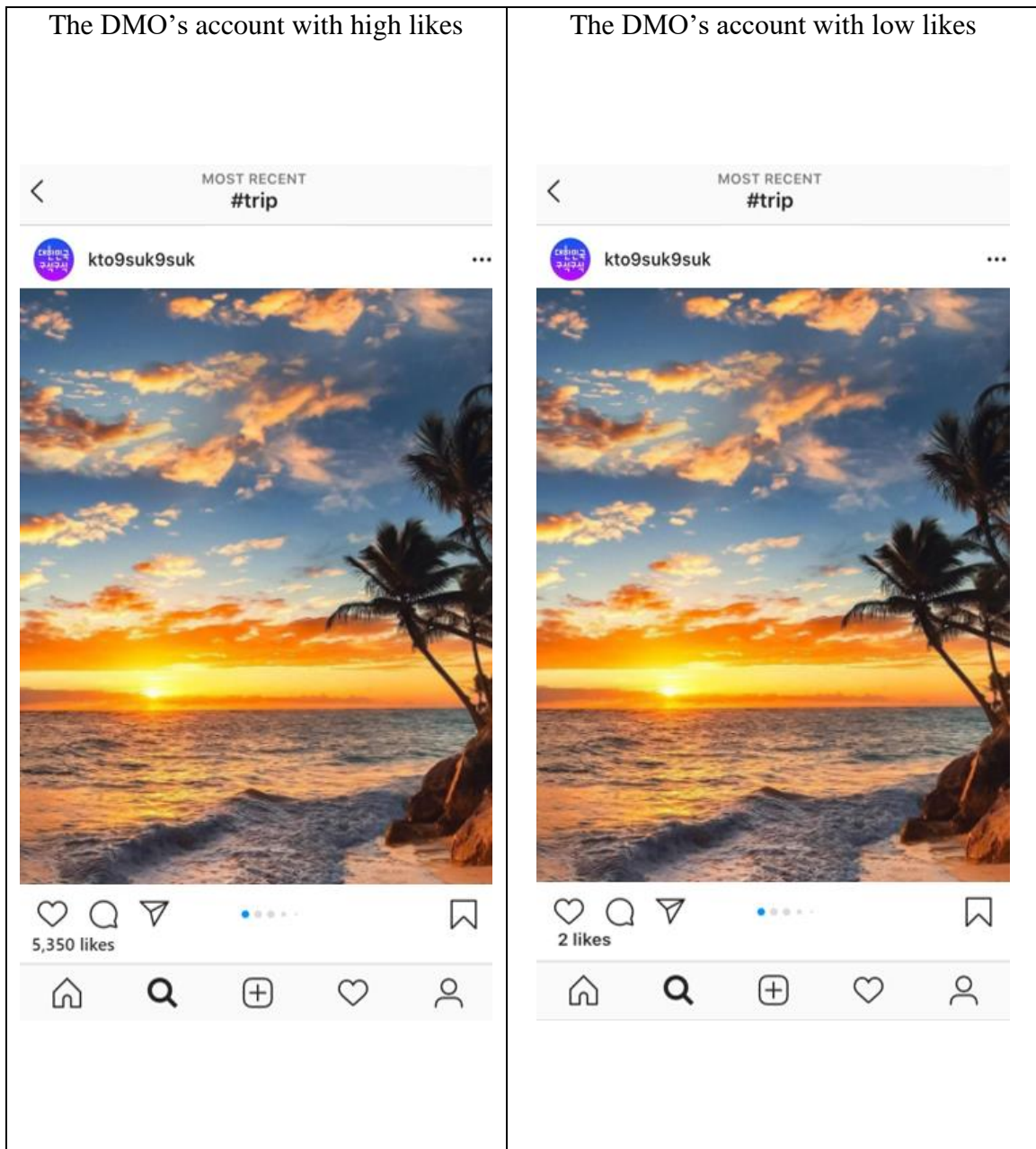
A friend's account & Another individual's account with high likes	A friend's account & Another individual's account with low likes