

Impacts of Online Reviews on Destination Trust and Travel Intention: Empirical Evidence from Nakhon Phanom's Tourists

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of online reviews on destination trust and travel intention among tourists in Nakhon Phanom province. Data are collected from 400 tourists using a questionnaire and are analyzed with covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). The results indicate that review valence, review quality, review volume, and review credibility positively impact destination trust, with review quality being the most influential factor. Destination trust is identified as a key variable that directly impacts and mediates the relationship between online reviews and travel intention. The role of online reviews is confirmed as an essential strategy for building trust and stimulating travel decision-making. The findings contribute to the development of knowledge in the theory of planned behavior and provide practical guidelines for entrepreneurs and tourism agencies in formulating digital communication and marketing strategies to enhance the competitiveness of Nakhon Phanom province.

Keywords: Online review, Destination trust, Travel intention, Tourist behavior

Introduction

In the contemporary era, the tourism industry faces intense competition, compelling destinations to create distinctive images, attractiveness, and unique identities to attract tourists worldwide. Social media serves as a primary tool for tourism promotion by disseminating photographs, videos, articles, and tourists' firsthand experiences, all of which significantly influence travel decision-making (Shahzad et al., 2024; Wibisono & Lale, 2024). Current tourist behavior reflects a strong reliance on online reviews and recommendations from individuals with prior experiences, as such information reduces uncertainty in destination selection and guides travel planning, accommodation choices, restaurants, and leisure activities (Su et al., 2021; Wu, 2024). This phenomenon not only highlights not only the transformation in consumer behavior but also the pivotal role of online communication in the success of the tourism

industry. Consequently, tourism-related organizations—including provincial offices, tourism authorities, hotels, local businesses, and both public and private sectors—have prioritized creating online content, applying digital media strategies, and incorporating tourists' feedback to enhance service quality and strengthen competitiveness at both regional and global levels, thereby contributing to sustainable tourism development.

Nakhon Phanom province is an emerging tourism destination increasingly recognized for its unique cultural heritage, history, and natural resources. This has intensified competition among provinces in the Northeastern region of Thailand, particularly in developing tourism activities, festivals, and new attractions to capture both domestic and international markets. In recent years, tourism growth in Nakhon Phanom has been strongly associated with the influence of online media, particularly through electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and online reviews shared by tourism pages, restaurant and hotel review platforms, and local influencers who create widespread awareness. Content shared across these platforms not only functions not only as a promotional tool but also contributes to a positive image and enhances confidence in the province's tourism quality. Tourists who access reviews from those with prior experiences are more likely to develop trust and confidence, ultimately increasing their intention to visit Nakhon Phanom. This has become a critical strategy for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring sustainable tourism growth.

Online reviews are a crucial element reflecting consumer experiences with products and services, especially in the tourism industry, where many tourists rely on these reviews as an important source of decision-making information (Widjanarko et al., 2023; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). One widely studied dimension is review valence, which refers to whether the content of a review is positive or negative, reflecting the reviewer's attitude toward the destination or service (Yang et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2024). Another important dimension is review quality, which encompasses the level of detail, clarity, and usefulness of the information. High-quality reviews with comprehensive details provide tourists with complete information, enabling rational evaluation and informed decision-making (Wang & Yan, 2022). Additionally, review volume increases awareness and fosters credibility, thereby strengthening consumer confidence in purchasing or using tourism services. A large number of reviews also increases the likelihood that tourists will find relevant and useful information (Filieri, 2015). At the same time, review credibility is another critical factor, referring to tourists' perceptions of the truthfulness, accuracy, and objectivity of review content, which directly influences their acceptance of the information as reliable evidence for decision-making (Chakraborty, 2019).

Moreover, online reviews influence tourists' trust in destinations. Reviews with positive valence, high quality, and strong credibility enhance confidence in the service standards and atmosphere of the destination. Destination trust then serves as a fundamental mechanism influencing travel intention, including visiting the province, booking accommodations, and using tourism-related services. Understanding the characteristics of online reviews therefore not only explains tourists' decision-making behaviors but

also provides a strategic foundation for enhancing image and strengthening competitiveness in the tourism industry on a sustainable basis.

Although a considerable body of international research has investigated the influence of online reviews on travel intention, much of it has concentrated on global destinations, major tourism cities, or internationally renowned attractions. In contrast, limited studies have been conducted in the context of cultural and locally oriented tourism destinations, such as Nakhon Phanom province. Given the intensifying tourism competition in Northeastern of Thailand, understanding the mechanisms of online reviews has become essential for building destination trust and stimulating travel intention. Furthermore, there has been limited research that comprehensively explores how these review dimensions jointly influence outcomes. Accordingly, this study addresses a significant research gap by contributing valuable knowledge to the development of communication strategies, marketing approaches, and place-based tourism management that foster sustainable growth. In addition, the study provides theoretical significance by extending the theory of planned behavior to the digital tourism context, demonstrating how online review dimensions influence tourists' trust and behavioral intentions through cognitive and affective mechanisms.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the impact of online reviews on destination trust.
2. To investigate the impact of online reviews on travel intention.
3. To investigate the impact of destination trust on travel intention.
4. To investigate the mediating role of destination trust between online reviews and travel intention.

Literature Reviews

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), introduced by Ajzen (1991), is a well-known framework in social psychology that helps explain and predict human actions. The theory suggests that a person's behavior depends on their intention to act. This intention is influenced by three main elements. The first is attitude toward the behavior, which refers to how positively or negatively one views performing the act. The second is subjective norms, which describe the social pressure or expectations from people around them. The third is perceived behavioral control, which reflects the individual's belief in their ability to carry out the behavior under given circumstances and resources.

When applied to the tourism context, TPB suggests that tourists' travel decisions are not accidental but result from rational evaluations of perceived benefits and value, social pressures, and their ability to manage travel arrangements effectively (Azhar et al., 2023; Erul et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). In

this regard, online reviews have become a critical source of information that directly influences these three antecedents of behavioral intention. Specifically, review valence, review quality, and review credibility function as mechanisms that enhance destination trust, which in turn bridges the relationship between the characteristics of online reviews and travel intention. In other words, when tourists perceive reviews as accurate and trustworthy, they are more likely to build confidence in the destination and ultimately decide to visit.

Online Reviews

In the digital era, where consumer decision-making is largely driven by online information, online reviews have become a critical factor that tourists rely on to evaluate the quality and experiences of tourism-related products and services, such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, and travel services. Online reviews are a form of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), in which past, current, or even potential consumers can publicly post positive, negative, or neutral comments on various online platforms. These reviews thus serve as both a valuable source of information and a powerful marketing tool that directly influences consumer behavior (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Zhang et al., 2022).

Online reviews are particularly significant in the tourism context, as they reduce uncertainty for tourists who are unable to verify service quality in advance. They exert both informational and social influence, providing assurance in service selection. Furthermore, review content is highly beneficial for businesses and tourism stakeholders in improving service quality, managing image, and developing strategies for sustainable tourism development (Filieri, 2015). Based on a review of the literature, this study conceptualizes online reviews into four dimensions: review valence, review quality, review volume, and review credibility.

Review valence refers to whether review content is expressed positively or negatively toward tourism products and services. Positive reviews often highlight the benefits or satisfaction experienced by consumers, whereas negative reviews reflect deficiencies or unmet expectations (Cheong et al., 2020; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). This concept captures the influence of consumers' emotions and attitudes conveyed through eWOM in the fields of marketing and tourism. Review valence is particularly important, as positive reviews can build confidence, stimulate purchase intention, and increase the likelihood of booking accommodations or tourism services, whereas negative reviews may diminish attractiveness and drive consumers toward competitors (Yang et al., 2016; Su et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2024).

Review quality refers to the characteristics of an online review that reflect its accuracy, completeness, relevance, and reliability, which are essential for determining its value and persuasiveness (Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Reviews that are clear, comprehensive, and logical enhance confidence and reduce uncertainty in decision-making. In the tourism industry, where tourists cannot physically assess service quality beforehand, access to high-quality reviews enables accurate perceptions of service performance. Review quality has been shown to significantly influence purchase intention, satisfaction, and brand attachment (Kim & Johnson, 2016).

Review volume refers to the number of online reviews posted about a product or service across websites and digital platforms. Review volume indicates the popularity and acceptance of products or services. A larger number of reviews—whether positive or negative—provides more diverse information, allowing consumers to gain a clearer overview (Filieri, 2015; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). In the tourism context, review volume is especially crucial, as tourists are unable to verify the quality of hotels, restaurants, or attractions in advance. A higher number of reviews serves as social proof that increases confidence, making tourists more likely to trust and select those services (Zhao et al., 2015).

Review credibility refers to consumers' perceptions of the accuracy, authenticity, and trustworthiness of review content. Credible reviews not only build consumer confidence but also serve as critical sources of information that enable more assured evaluations of product and service quality (Qiu & Zhang, 2024). In the tourism and hospitality industry, review credibility plays a vital role in reducing perceived risks in decision-making, as tourists cannot verify the service quality of hotels, restaurants, or attractions in advance. Trustworthy reviews approximate real experiences, validate the reliability of services, and ultimately strengthen tourists' confidence in making appropriate choices (Chakraborty, 2019; Su et al., 2021).

Destination Trust and Travel Intention

Destination trust refers to the confidence that tourists place in a destination as being reliable, transparent, and capable of delivering services as promised or advertised. This concept is reflected in perceptions of honesty, benevolence, and competence of service providers. Destination trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, while assuring tourists that traveling to the destination will be safe and worthwhile in line with their expectations (Su et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2022).

Destination trust is shaped by multiple factors, including tourists' direct experiences, interactions, and ongoing social exchanges; perceptions of competence, transparency, and credibility of local communities and related organizations; as well as information derived from online reviews. When tourists develop trust in a destination, they are more likely to form an intention to travel to that destination (Su et al., 2021).

Travel intention is defined as an individual's determination or willingness to visit a particular destination. It emerges from the evaluation of information, past experiences, and both rational and emotional motivations associated with travel. Travel intention is influenced by various factors, such as the perceived quality and credibility of online review information (Filieri & McLeay, 2014), destination trust, and destination image (Su et al., 2019).

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Review valence positively impacts destination trust.

Hypothesis 2: Review quality positively impacts destination trust.

Hypothesis 3: Review volume positively impacts destination trust.

Hypothesis 4: Review credibility positively impacts destination trust.

Hypothesis 5: Review valence positively impacts travel intention.

Hypothesis 6: Review quality positively impacts travel intention.

Hypothesis 7: Review volume positively impacts travel intention.

Hypothesis 8: Review credibility positively impacts travel intention.

Hypothesis 9: Destination trust positively impacts travel intention.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises tourists who visited Nakhon Phanom province during the specified period. Since the exact population size could not be clearly determined, the sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula, with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, resulting in an appropriate sample size of 400 respondents. Moreover, this sample size meets the recommended requirements for covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), which generally suggests a minimum of 200 cases for reliable estimation (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Collection

A non-probability sampling technique was employed, specifically convenience sampling, whereby tourists were selected at major attractions in Nakhon Phanom province. The study aimed to examine the relationships among variables rather than to obtain precise population estimates. Hence, non-probability sampling was considered appropriate, provided that the sample size and diversity adequately represented key segments of the target population. A total of 400 respondents participated in the survey, and data were collected between August 1, 2025, and September 30, 2025. This method was deemed appropriate given the unknown population size, as well as time and budget constraints. To minimize sampling bias, the researchers established clear inclusion and exclusion criteria and diversified the data collection across different days, times, and locations to ensure a more representative sample.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of four sections. Section 1 contained seven multiple-choice questions related to respondents' demographic information. Section 2 included 16 items measuring opinions on online reviews, Section 3 consisted of four items assessing destination trust, and Section 4 comprised four items evaluating travel intention. Sections 2 to 4 employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The use of this scale aimed to systematically capture respondents' perceptions and provide an accurate reflection of their attitudes toward the research constructs.

Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed for data analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine convergent validity, discriminant validity, internal consistency, and the adequacy of the measurement model. Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices, including the chi-

square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), all of which are established criteria in structural modeling research.

Subsequently, covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) was applied to investigate the causal relationships among the latent constructs specified in the research model. This approach facilitated a rigorous examination of the proposed hypotheses by estimating direct, indirect, and total effects, thereby offering a comprehensive explanation of the structural pathways that connect online reviews, destination trust, and travel intention.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics, construct validity, and internal consistency reliability

Construct	Mean	s.d.	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
VAL	3.638	0.831	0.767 – 0.878	0.680	0.895	0.873
QUA	3.652	0.770	0.770 – 0.884	0.671	0.891	0.872
VOL	3.683	0.813	0.706 – 0.858	0.621	0.867	0.846
CRE	3.446	0.823	0.866 – 0.931	0.800	0.941	0.925
TRU	3.471	0.816	0.794 – 0.871	0.707	0.906	0.885
INT	3.438	0.836	0.778 – 0.852	0.687	0.898	0.879

Results

Measurement Model Assessment

Convergent validity was evaluated based on the factor loadings of each latent construct. The results revealed that all factor loadings ranged from 0.706 to 0.931, exceeding the minimum recommended threshold. According to Hair et al. (2019), loadings above 0.50 are considered acceptable, while values exceeding 0.70 indicate a high level of indicator reliability. This suggests that all observed variables were strongly associated with their respective latent constructs. Specifically, review valence (VAL) exhibited loadings between 0.767 and 0.878, review quality (QUA) ranged from 0.770 to 0.884, review volume (VOL) from 0.706 to 0.858, review credibility (CRE) from 0.866 to 0.931, destination trust (TRU) from 0.794 to 0.871, and travel intention (INT) from 0.778 to 0.852. These results demonstrate that the indicators effectively represented the underlying constructs.

In addition, the values of average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.621 to 0.800, which were all greater than the minimum threshold of 0.500 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). This confirms that the variance captured by the indicators was adequately explained by their respective constructs, indicating a strong degree of convergent validity (see Table 1).

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The results showed that the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs. This

demonstrates that each construct was empirically distinct, with no evidence of overlap or multicollinearity among the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The analysis confirmed that the items reflected their constructs while remaining distinct from one another (see Table 2).

Table 2 Results of discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell–Larcker criterion

Construct	VAL	QUA	VOL	CRE	TRU	INT
VAL	0.825					
QUA	0.706	0.819				
VOL	0.635	0.747	0.788			
CRE	0.575	0.611	0.514	0.894		
TRU	0.755	0.869	0.74	0.645	0.84	
INT	0.587	0.715	0.657	0.554	0.758	0.829

Internal consistency was evaluated using composite reliability (CR). All constructs showed CR values between 0.867 and 0.941, exceeding the 0.700 threshold (Hair et al., 2019; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.846 to 0.925, also above the 0.700 cutoff (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These results confirm that the questionnaire demonstrated high reliability (see Table 1).

Model Fit Analysis

Table 3 presents the results of the model fit assessment, comparing the structural model with the empirical data. The chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 216.361$, $df = 188$, $p > 0.05$) indicated that the model was not significantly different from the observed data, suggesting an acceptable level of model fit. However, since the chi-square test is highly sensitive to sample size (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993), additional fit indices were considered to provide a more comprehensive evaluation.

The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was 1.15, which is below the recommended threshold of 3.00 proposed by Carmines and McIver (1981), thereby indicating a good model fit. In terms of absolute fit indices, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.019, with a 90% confidence interval ranging from 0.000 to 0.030. This value is lower than the cutoff of 0.050 suggested by Browne and Cudeck (1993) and Steiger (1990), demonstrating an excellent model fit.

Furthermore, the comparative fit index (CFI = 0.996) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI = 0.995) both exceeded the threshold value of 0.950, reflecting a strong comparative model fit. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was 0.024, which is well below the recommended cutoff of 0.080, indicating a low level of residual error (Hu & Bentler, 1999). These results provide strong evidence that the structural model achieved an excellent level of fit and can be reliably used for subsequent causal relationship testing.

Table 3 Results of model fit analysis

$\chi^2(df,p)$	χ^2/df (<3)	RMSEA (<0.050)	CFI (≥ 0.950)	TLI (≥ 0.950)	SRMR (≤ 0.080)
216.361 (188, p=0.0765)	1.15	0.019	0.996	0.995	0.024

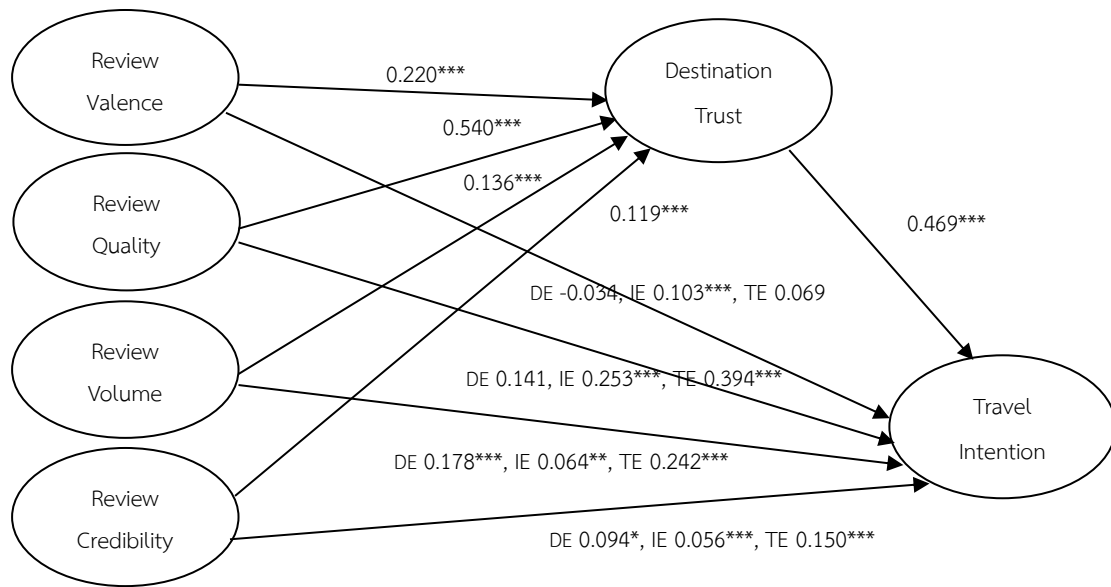


Figure 1 Results of the structural equation model analysis

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 presents the results of the causal structural equation model analysis using the CB-SEM approach. The findings revealed that review valence exerted a positive and significant effect on destination trust ($\beta = 0.220$, $p < .01$). Review quality was found to be the strongest predictor of destination trust, exerting the highest positive effect ($\beta = 0.540$, $p < .01$). Although the standardized weight of review volume was not as high as that of review quality, it still had a positive and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.136$, $p < .01$). Similarly, review credibility also exerted a positive and significant influence on destination trust ($\beta = 0.119$, $p < .01$). Therefore, hypotheses H1–H4 were supported.

Table 4 Results of the structural equation model analysis

Path	DE	IE via TRU	TE
VAL → TRU	0.220 (0.045)***	–	–
QUA → TRU	0.540 (0.058)***	–	–
VOL → TRU	0.136 (0.051)***	–	–
CRE → TRU	0.119 (0.038)***	–	–
VAL → TRU → INT	-0.034 (0.064)	0.103 (0.032)***	0.069 (0.061)
QUA → TRU → INT	0.141 (0.104)	0.253 (0.065)***	0.394 (0.078)***
VOL → TRU → INT	0.178 (0.063)***	0.064 (0.027)**	0.242 (0.066)***
CRE → TRU → INT	0.094 (0.050)*	0.056 (0.022)***	0.150 (0.050)***
TRU → INT	0.469 (0.108)***	–	–

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, ^a standardized coefficients and standard errors (S.E.) in parentheses.

In addition, the results of the structural equation model analysis revealed that review valence did not have a significant direct effect on travel intention ($\beta = -0.034$, $p > .10$). However, review valence exerted a significant indirect effect on travel intention through destination trust, with a total indirect effect of ($\beta = 0.103$, $p < .01$). Similarly, review quality did not exert a significant direct positive effect on travel intention ($\beta = 0.141$, $p > .10$), but it had a strong and significant indirect effect through destination trust ($\beta = 0.253$, $p < .01$). Consequently, the total effect of review quality on travel intention was ($\beta = 0.394$, $p < .01$), which represented the strongest influence among all predictors. Therefore, hypotheses H5–H6 were rejected.

The results indicated that review volume had both a significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < .01$) and an indirect effect through destination trust ($\beta = 0.064$, $p < .05$) on travel intention, yielding a total effect of ($\beta = 0.242$, $p < .01$). In addition, review credibility demonstrated a marginally significant direct effect on travel intention ($\beta = 0.094$, $p < .10$) while also exerting a significant indirect effect through destination trust ($\beta = 0.056$, $p < .01$). The total effect of review credibility on travel intention was therefore ($\beta = 0.150$, $p < .01$). Accordingly, hypotheses H7–H8 were supported.

Moreover, the findings revealed that destination trust had a strong, positive, and significant direct effect on travel intention ($\beta = 0.469$, $p < .001$). This effect was greater than that of any other independent variable directly influencing travel intention, highlighting destination trust as a crucial determinant of tourists' behavioral decision-making. Therefore, hypothesis H9 was supported.

Discussion and Implications

The findings confirmed that the dimensions of online reviews—review valence, review quality, review volume, and review credibility—significantly influenced destination trust. This result is consistent with the arguments of Cheong et al. (2020) and Qiu and Zhang (2024), who emphasized that online reviews can shape both positive and negative attitudes depending on their content and characteristics. Among these, review quality, reflecting the completeness and credibility of information, emerged as the most influential predictor of destination trust. This aligns with the findings of Filieri (2015) and Kim and Johnson (2016), who demonstrated that high-quality online review information reduces uncertainty and enhances positive perceptions of service quality.

With respect to travel intention, the results indicated that review valence and review quality did not exert significant direct effects, but rather influenced travel intention indirectly through destination trust. This underscores the mediating role of trust as a critical mechanism that transforms the effects of online reviews into tourists' behavioral decisions. Such findings are consistent with Su et al. (2021) and Zhao et al. (2024), who noted that trust generated from online reviews plays a vital role in shaping decisions to use tourism services. At the same time, review volume was shown to have both direct and indirect effects on travel intention, corroborating the findings of Filieri (2015) and Yang et al. (2016), who argued that a large number of reviews enhances perceived popularity and provides motivation to select services.

In addition, review credibility was found to positively affect travel intention both directly and indirectly through destination trust. This finding supports Chakraborty (2019), who highlighted that credible online information reduces risks in tourism decision-making and instills confidence among tourists. Collectively, the study highlights the pivotal role of destination trust as the key mechanism that links online review characteristics to travel intention, thereby explaining how information processing translates into actual behavioral decisions in the tourism context.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to academic knowledge in several important ways. First, it confirms and extends the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), demonstrating that online review dimensions—including valence, quality, volume, and credibility—play a crucial role in building destination trust, which in turn significantly affects travel intention. Thus, the findings not only support TPB theoretically but also explain the underlying psychological mechanisms of tourist behavior in the digital era. Second, the study integrates all four dimensions of online reviews into a structural model, an approach rarely explored in the context of cultural tourism destinations such as Nakhon Phanom. The results therefore fill an academic

gap and provide empirical evidence that can be compared with findings in other tourism settings. Third, the research underscores the importance of destination trust as a mediating variable linking online review characteristics with travel intention, highlighting its strong influence on consumer behavior in the tourism industry.

Practical Implications

The findings hold practical implications for both public and private stakeholders involved in tourism development in Nakhon Phanom. Policymakers and tourism authorities can leverage the results to formulate communication and marketing strategies that emphasize generating high-quality positive reviews and ensuring the credibility of online information. Tourism businesses can also use these insights for image management, by encouraging tourists to share authentic and constructive reviews while appropriately responding to customer feedback, thereby strengthening tourists' confidence and trust in the long term.

Furthermore, the study offers valuable guidance for public agencies and local organizations to design digital tourism policies that promote online reviews as strategic tools for destination branding and sustainable image-building. Such policies would enhance the province's competitive advantage, enabling Nakhon Phanom to elevate its position both regionally and internationally.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Limitations

1. This study collected data exclusively from tourists visiting Nakhon Phanom province. Therefore, the findings primarily reflect the cultural characteristics and behaviors of tourists within this specific context and cannot be fully generalized to other provinces or tourism settings with different characteristics.

2. The use of convenience sampling, while efficient in terms of time and resources, presents limitations regarding representativeness. As a result, the findings may be subject to bias and may not comprehensively capture the perspectives of the entire tourist population.

3. The research model focused solely on four dimensions of online reviews—valence, quality, volume, and credibility—with destination trust serving as the mediating variable. Other potentially influential factors, such as destination attachment, influence from significant others, or cultural dimensions, were not incorporated, which may limit the comprehensiveness of explaining tourist behavior.

4. The study employed only a quantitative approach, relying on survey questionnaires. Although this facilitated statistical analysis, it constrained the exploration of deeper motivations, personal emotions,

and lived experiences of tourists. Consequently, the interpretation of the findings lacks qualitative insights that could provide a more holistic understanding.

Directions for Future Research

1. Future research should broaden the scope of study to include other tourism provinces with either similar or distinct characteristics, in order to compare results and draw more comprehensive conclusions.
2. Future studies should employ more representative sampling techniques, such as stratified sampling, to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the findings.
3. Future research should incorporate additional variables into the research model, such as the role of influencers, destination attachment, or cultural factors, to provide a more holistic understanding of tourist behavioral mechanisms.
4. Future studies should adopt a mixed methods approach by incorporating in-depth interviews or qualitative analysis, in order to capture tourists' motivations and emotions that cannot be fully addressed through quantitative survey data alone.

Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that online reviews play a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors. Specifically, review valence, review quality, review volume, and review credibility were all found to significantly influence destination trust, with review quality exerting the strongest impact. Destination trust, in turn, was identified as a central mechanism that directly and indirectly affects travel intention, underscoring its role as a psychological bridge between online review characteristics and actual behavioral decisions.

The findings make several contributions. Theoretically, the study extends the application of the Theory of planned behavior (TPB) by demonstrating how online reviews influence trust formation and subsequently guide travel intention. This integration not only reinforces the predictive power of TPB but also provides a nuanced understanding of how digital information shapes decision-making in the tourism context. Empirically, the study enriches the literature by examining all four dimensions of online reviews within a cultural tourism destination, addressing a research gap in the context of Nakhon Phanom province.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance for tourism stakeholders—both public and private—to prioritize the generation of high-quality, credible reviews as part of their digital marketing and communication strategies. Encouraging authentic user-generated content, managing online reputation, and engaging with tourists' feedback can strengthen destination trust, thereby enhance competitiveness and ensure sustainable tourism growth.

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