



Customer engagement on social networking sites: an experimental analysis in the tourism and hospitality sector

Mohit Malhan & Prem Prakash Dewani

To cite this article: Mohit Malhan & Prem Prakash Dewani (2023) Customer engagement on social networking sites: an experimental analysis in the tourism and hospitality sector, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26:12, 1915-1940, DOI: [10.1080/13683500.2022.2071685](https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2071685)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2071685>



Published online: 20 Jun 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 835



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 9 View citing articles [↗](#)



Customer engagement on social networking sites: an experimental analysis in the tourism and hospitality sector

Mohit Malhan^a and Prem Prakash Dewani^b

^aMarketing, Masters' Union School of Business, Gurgaon, India; ^bMarketing, Indian Institute of Management Lucknow, Lucknow, India

ABSTRACT

Brands leverage social networking sites (SNSs) to promote themselves to their customers. This study aims to understand the various parameters that make customers filter, process, and disseminate tourism and hospitality-related messages on these sites. We study various antecedents to passive and active engagement. Past studies have relied on secondary data to study SNSs engagement. We adopted an experimental approach to impose the real-time conditions of information overload and manipulate various post parameters to study customer engagement behaviour on SNSs. We conducted two factorial design experiments garnering over 6000 data points. Our results pointed towards a staggered information processing model, with the first step driven by peripheral route cues leading to attention, with the second step being active engagement. Our study has direct implications for marketing managers in the hospitality and tourism industry as it highlights the levers essential to succeed on SNSs.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 17 August 2021

Accepted 24 April 2022

KEYWORDS

SNS; customer engagement; Facebook; experiment; tourism; ELM

Introduction

Social networking sites (SNSs) allow customers to share their travel stories with their network and the world. The interactivity features of these websites provide the perfect platform for users to experience various locations and their offerings, in turn spurring demand. The number of customers utilizing various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and dedicated travel websites such as Tripadvisor has been growing steadily (Bhati et al., 2021). SNSs have also become essential platforms from the marketers' point of view to gain access to customers and be a part of their consideration set. Brands utilize these platforms to engage with customers organically and through sponsored content (Hu & Olivieri, 2021). These platforms help brands drive electronic word of mouth (eWOM), understand user sentiment, collect market data, and receive customer feedback (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015). Effectively leveraging social media enhances a firm's performance, improves brand awareness, and drives sales growth (Kim & Chae, 2018).

Customer engagement on social networking sites has generated considerable interest in the academic domain as well. Harmeling (Harmeling et al., 2017) defines customer engagement as 'a customer's voluntary resource contribution to a firm's marketing function, going beyond financial patronage.' Some social scientists have highlighted that customer engagement improves firm competitiveness in a rapidly changing global environment. Thus it is necessary to study it from the perspectives of processes and antecedents.

Major brands across sectors have been investing heavily in marketing their offerings on social media platforms. Digital media spend in the last decade has grown multi-fold, and in 2018, companies spent over 200 billion dollars on digital ads, amounting to about 45% of the total ad spend. The digital ad spend increased to over 500 billion dollars in five years (Global Digital Ad Spending 2019 n.d.). A large proportion of this growth has been fuelled by social networking sites (SNSs) (Shi et al., 2018). SNSs are ever more critical for the tourism industry as it is an 'information intensive' industry. However, the opportunities offered by social media have not been fully utilized by all companies in the tourism sector alike (Wagner et al., 2017). Many hotels and tourism firms across geographies have not been able to ramp up their social media activities, which has kept their customer engagement levels low (O Connor, 2011). This can be partly attributed to the limited domain-specific scientific research in the hospitality sector, which could have helped digital marketing managers better utilize the tools at their disposal. A recent literature review of social media studies in the tourism industry showed that almost 50% of them focused on online reviews and only 11% on marketing to customers (Lu et al., 2018). Another systematic literature review emphasized the need for further research on the firms' effective use of social media (Alves et al., 2016).

Extant literature shows that social media interventions in the tourism industry occur at the critical stage of product evaluation (Kozak et al., 2018). Social networking sites are strategically crucial for the competitiveness of firms in the tourism and hospitality industries (Haobin Ye et al., 2021). Additionally, SNSs offer a higher return on investment than traditional media channels and improve brand loyalty (Park et al., 2019).

With social media having 'facilitated new ways of interacting with information' (Lerman, 2007), it is essential to understand which factors cause users to engage with such information. Thus, this research aims to understand how users of social networking sites filter, process and share messages or why a few messages have better probabilities of being processed than others. We study this, specifically in the context of the tourism and hospitality industry. Extant literature has focused on post facto data from these platforms to arrive at conclusions regarding the above parameters. However, not many studies have focused on examining customer behaviour directly. Thus, this study tries to evaluate the factors that lead to the processing and dissemination of messages from tourism and hospitality brands on SNSs.

Literature review

Customer engagement on SNS

Customer engagement has primarily been defined as psychological phenomena or behavioural outcomes. Many researchers take the view that customer engagement is a customer's psychological state of being involved and interested in a primary focal object, a brand for instance, and manifests in the form of brand loyalty (Naumann et al., 2020). Other researchers view CE as a customer's behavioural manifestations towards a brand, which go beyond the mere transactional relationship (Gainous et al., 2020; Rietveld et al., 2020). These behavioural manifestations could take the form of a customer's resource contributions to a firm's various marketing functions (Hollebeek et al., 2017). Many social scientists view CE as a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving psychological and behavioural activation states, with studies focusing on what leads to an engaged customer and what are customer engagement behaviours in various contexts (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020).

The voluntary contribution of resources (tangible or intangible) by the customer help firms strategise for competitive advantage (Harmeling et al., 2017). These resources help firms achieve their goals (Kozlenkova et al., 2017) and thus, make CE relevant (Harmeling et al., 2017). In the context of Social Media, customer's resource contribution could take the following forms: a) Cognitive effort in processing the message (Passive Engagement), when the rate of rejection of content is high (Hollebeek et al., 2017); b) Active Engagement in the form of like, comment, and share and

c) Creativity Contribution (Collaborative Engagement) in the form of User Generated Content (UGC) (Harmeling et al., 2017).

Researchers have tried to study the antecedents and consequences of CE in the social media context (e.g. Kang et al., 2021; Naumann et al., 2020; Rietveld et al., 2020; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). However, the review of extant literature shows that although the drivers of CE have been explored in past studies, there is no concrete evidence towards a complete understanding of drivers of CE behaviour. In order to understand information processing and diffusion on these platforms, we discuss two theories that appropriately describe the critical characteristics of SNSs and the possible message (post) processing by users.

Information overload

When the supply of information exceeds the limited information processing capacity, information overload occurs. It was observed that decision-making quality suffers in the event of information overload (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Other effects of information overload are stress and confusion (Meyer, 1998).

Information overload on SNSs may also obstruct users from utilizing their total mental capacity in processing information in depth (Fogg, 2003). In such a scenario, users might consider the cost of information seeking and use cognitive heuristic strategies. In such strategies, users assess the contextual features of messages to determine which would be processed (Zhang & Watts, 2008). Due to information overload on SNSs, users rely on cues that improve their information credibility judgments (Sundar, 2008). Research suggests that information overload adds to the undesirable outcome of consumer regret in the tourism industry (Tan & Kuo, 2019). In a sustainable tourism context, information overload leads to social responsibility attributes being filtered out and, consequently, reduces the ability of such information to impact choice (Sharpley, 2001).

Elaboration likelihood model

Petty and Cacioppo created the ELM in the 1980s to further the persuasive communications theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). ELM views persuasion as a dual process, wherein the likelihood of information elaboration is governed by the changes in persuasive communication (O'Keefe, 2002). Based on the extent of elaboration, the model posits two different persuasion processes; the central and peripheral routes. The amount of elaboration could be influenced by several factors, broadly classified as elaboration motivation or elaboration ability (O'Keefe, 2002). Elaboration motivation could be influenced by the relevance of the topic for the receiver, the receiver's need for cognition, and even factors such as distractions, the receiver's mood, and relevant background knowledge. The elaboration ability could be influenced by factors such as the time available to process information, fatigue, and existing subject knowledge. The information processing theory suggests that the first step of information processing is attention. All the information processing is carried out after the filter has selected the message to which to pay attention. The peripheral route cues drive this selection. Through social media use, consumers become more involved with a brand, which should positively affect behavioural intentions (Bigne et al., 2020). Empirical evidence has shown that travellers' social media involvement positively impacts their website revisit intention.

Hypothesis development

Perceived relevance

Information processing theory suggests that the limited cognitive capacity of individuals restricts their information processing (Miller, 1956), and attention is affected by an individual's interests

and needs. In one research, Macskassy and Michelson (2010) examined four different retweeting models to understand individual retweeting decisions and discovered that the topic relevance model outperformed other models.

Other researchers have also pointed towards the influence of relevance on individual retweeting behaviour (Shi et al., 2020). Zhang et al. (2017) verify that rebroadcasting a message depends on message content and the message's fit with a user. In their research, Shi et al. also show that relevance positively impacts individual information dissemination behaviour (Shi et al., 2018). Since attention acts as a first step towards information processing and subsequent dissemination, the topical relevance of the post becomes critical in garnering a user's attention.

H1: High (low) Perceived Relevance of the content has a positive (negative) impact on User's Attention to Post (UAP).

Post popularity

Post popularity plays a vital role in information processing and dissemination by users (Chang et al., 2015). Other people's reactions to posts, influence other users to make value judgements about the post. For instance, the perceived value of a tweet on Twitter is determined by the number of times it is retweeted, influencing a user's motivation to retweet it further. In their experiment, Rudat and Buder (2015) found that graphic markers depicting the popularity of a tweet increase the possibility of it being retweeted by other users. Popular posts become more popular on SNSs and unpopular posts become less popular over time (Shi et al., 2017). Kim and Petrick (2020) further showed that post popularity indicators affect a user's engagement through the peripheral route. Since the information elaboration is low at this stage, popularity cues would influence the attention to the post. Further, social cues of engagement such as likes, shares, and comments affect users' attention and selection processes (Dvir-Gvirsman, 2017).

H2: High (low) Post popularity has a positive (negative) impact on User's Attention to Post (UAP).

Content cues

In the SNS context, emotion (e.g. fear, anxiety, awe) driven content triggers arousal, possibly improving the virality of content (Berger & Milkman, 2012). Another research (Herhausen et al., 2019) posits that the virality potential of online firestorms is affected by hedonic content. Posts containing hashtags and URLs in tweets are some of the most critical factors affecting tweets' retweetability (Suh et al., 2010). Besides, Hashtags which are exciting or generate more positive sentiments in users were more likely to go viral (Pezzone et al., 2013). Song et al. (2020) demonstrate strong signals of the hashtag characterizing the interest-based relationships in users and content. We thus observe that content cues of the posts such as emotional appeals and hashtags affect passive and active engagement behaviours. These cues thus act through the peripheral route to capture the user's attention and lead to their engagement with the post.

H3: The presence (absence) of content cues (sentiment and hashtag) have a positive (negative) impact on User's Attention to Post (UAP)

Format preference

In the modern SNS world, users have several format options to consume content. Content today is available in the form of pictures, memes, GIFs, articles, and videos. Each of these formats provides different benefits to the marketer and offers different entertainment values to different users. A longitudinal study on SNSs in the tourism industry has highlighted the importance of using suitable formats for communicating with the customer (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Shahbaznezhad et al.

(2021) conducted a study based on Facebook and Instagram on a data set containing 1,038 social media posts with 1,336,741 fan likes and 95,996 comments. The study found strong evidence that the content format had a significant impact on engagement behaviour. A study of post engagement from the hospitality industry found that highly vivid content such as videos generated better engagement (Aydin, 2020). As users are bombarded with content on SNSs, they tend to filter out posts based on the format of the post. Thus format acts as a peripheral cue in gaining user attention.

H4: High (low) Format Preference has a positive (negative) impact on User's Attention to Post (UAP).

Source likability

Some social scientists posit that users face information overload as they follow more and more people on SNSs. In order to contain the information in-flow rate under their processing limits, users then tend to prioritize information from a select group of users (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Nekmat et al. (2019) conducted an experiment to study the impact of source likability on an individual's cognitive elaboration and active engagement behaviour. The study found that source likability positively affected engagement behaviour.

The ELM model posits that peripheral cues play an important part in information processing, especially in conditions of informational overload (Petty & Briñol, 2008). Peripheral cues such as source likability positively affect information processing through the peripheral route (O'Keefe, 2002).

H5: High (low) Source Likability has a positive (negative) impact on User's Attention to Post (UAP).

Original source credibility

Extant literature shows that the acceptance of message arguments and subsequent retweeting depends on the message source's trustworthiness (Liu et al., 2012). Extant literature also shows that Source credibility is more influential under low-involvement situations via the peripheral route than under high-involvement conditions (Petty et al., 1981).

The study conducted by Dedeoglu in the tourism industry found that original source credibility positively impacted a user's perception of the shared content (Dedeoglu, 2019). Kim and Petrick find that source credibility acts through the peripheral route to drive customer engagement behaviours (Kim & Petrick, 2020).

Our study of extant literature finds that Source Credibility affects users' behaviours through the peripheral route. However, in the context of SNS, it is essential to note that the source which shared the message is often judged on parameters of likability. In contrast, the source of the original content is judged on the parameters of credibility. Hence, we propose,

H6: Original Source Credibility moderates the relationship between Source Likability and User's Attention to Post (UAP).

User's attention to post as a mediator

Researchers have shown that attention is a necessary step to individuals' cognitive data processing (Schneider, 1987). It improves discriminability and accelerates the rate of information processing. Studying attention (defined as time spent on a media item) has become a long-standing tradition, offering a unique contribution by complementing existing research on media selection and exposure (Webster, 2016).

Attention can be viewed as a precursor for selection (Dvir-Gvirsman, 2017). This line of research has linked attention to selection, proposing that as individuals, we devote attention to what we like.

Another research using eye-tracking technology finds that attention was the first step towards content selection and further engagement (Keib et al., 2018).

Thus, we observe from extant literature that Attention is a crucial step in the entire user experience on SNSs. As users pay attention to a post, the process of passive engagement (consuming) begins. Once a user pays attention to a post, it leads to further elaboration of information through the central route (Petty & Briñol, 2008, p. 2). This could then further lead to Active Engagement. Since the various antecedents of active engagement lead to attention through the peripheral route, it acts as a mediating variable to active engagement (Keib et al., 2018).

H7A: The effect of Relevance on Active Engagement is mediated by User's Attention to post.

H7B: The effect of Popularity on Active Engagement is mediated by User's Attention to post.

H7C: The effect of Format Preference on Active Engagement is mediated by User's Attention to post.

H7D: The effect of Content Cues on Active Engagement is mediated by User's Attention to post.

H7E: The effect of Source Likability on Active Engagement is mediated by User's Attention to post.

The research model is as follows [Figure 1](#):

Methodology

We used an experiment based research setup to test our hypotheses. We preferred to use experimental design as it allows us to control for external factors influencing the behaviour of users in a controlled setting. We conducted two factorial design experiments, manipulating various independent variables.

Experiment 1

The study employed a 2 (Relevance: high, low) x 2 (Popularity: high, low) factorial experiment design.

In this experiment, we manipulate two independent variables. The first variable is 'relevance', which captures the topical relevance of the post for the user. We coded it as 'high' or 'low' based on the topic's relevance to the user. The second variable is 'popularity' which captures the post's

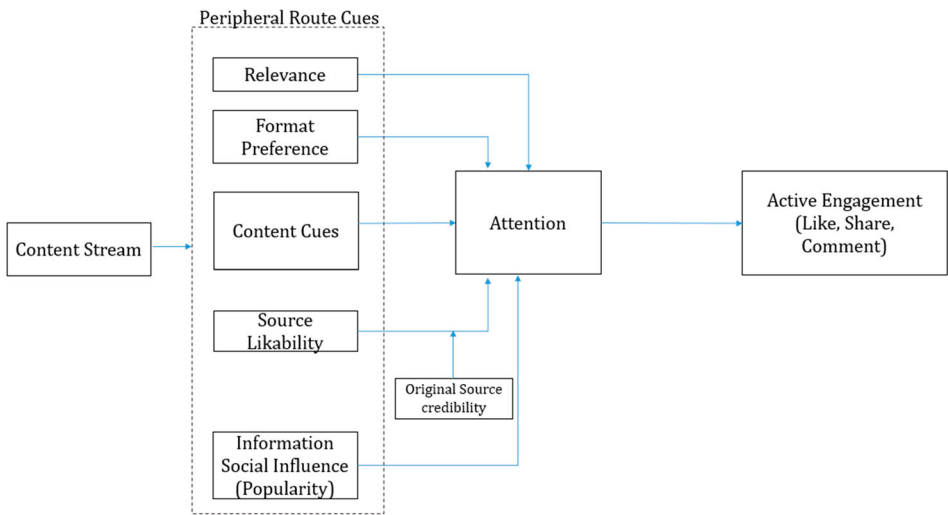


Figure 1. Proposed model.

popularity on the social networking site. We again coded this as ‘high’ or ‘low’ based on the number of ‘likes’, ‘comments’ and ‘shares’ for that particular post. The dependent variables for our experiment were ‘attention to post’ and ‘active engagement score’. We controlled the other variables in our model, namely ‘format preference’, ‘source likability’ and ‘content cues’.

Sample

The experiment scenario was sent to 150 students across various national-level management schools. The students were a suitable sample as there is precedence in tourism literature of using student samples (Lepp et al., 2011). Additionally, management students in India are active travellers both during and immediately after the course, making them suitable participants for the experiment. After spending time in the industry, they come to the management institutes and carry disposable income for travel. Reminders were sent to participants every week for four weeks via emails and every two weeks for four weeks via phone. At the end of the four weeks, we received 142 responses from the students. After removing incomplete or missing data, 138 were found to be complete and usable. We extracted 2315 data points from the submitted files.

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 1.

Operationalization

We conducted this experiment using a Facebook news feed simulation designed using Microsoft PowerPoint software. The news feed consisted of 32 posts, on 10 different topics, with at least 3 posts from each topic. We manipulated the post’s popularity by prominently displaying the number of likes, shares, and comments for each post and varying them considerably between ‘high’ popularity posts and ‘low’ popularity posts. We used 10 topic categories for our posts, such as hotels, restaurants, sightseeing, and places to visit. The post-experiment survey captured the relative relevance of 10 topic categories for each participant. The bottom five categories were coded as ‘low’ for each post for each user during data entry. Participants were given 5 min and asked to browse as they would browse their own Facebook feed. They had the option to click and read any of the posts, and if they wished, they could ‘Like’, ‘Comment’, and ‘Share’ any of the posts.

Additionally, participants were also asked to record their screens for the duration of the experiment. Detailed instructions for the experiment were given at the beginning of the presentation. We also shared a 3-minute video with the participants describing each step of the experiment in detail.

Participants were asked to save their presentations with the screen recordings and upload them on the google form along with their demographic details, SNS usage details, and topical relevance.

Table 1. Demographic profile for experiment-1

Exp 1 Item	N= Frequency	138 Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	82	59%
Female	56	41%
Age		
Under 25	48	35%
26–30	56	41%
31–35	20	14%
36–40	14	10%
Education		
Graduate	46	33%
Post Graduate	82	59%
Doctorate	10	7%
Occupation		
Student	120	87%
Working Professional	18	13%

Once submitted, a thank-you message was displayed, and their name was put in a lucky draw for Amazon vouchers. We provided participants with 30 Amazon vouchers worth INR 100 in a lucky draw.

Measurement

In this study, we controlled mood, familiarity with the platform, content cues, format, and source likability. The familiarity with the platform was a single question asking the participants if they used any social media platform or not. We further ensured that no content cues were present and no source was mentioned. We also used a single format type (articles) for all the posts. The participant's mood was captured using a general mood scale (Howard et al., 1995). The cronbach alpha for the scale is 0.85. The mean score for the participants was 4.12, with a standard deviation of 0.94. We did not find any adverse effects on our results due to the mood.

The constructs included in the experiment are as follows:

Attention: The user's attention to the post was measured as the amount of time spent on each post recorded in seconds (Hurtado, 2016).

Active Engagement: Active engagement score was measured on a scale of 0–4 depending on if the user clicked, liked, commented, or shared the post. Since the context of our study is limited to social networking sites, we thus use the measurement advised by Lourn et al. (2015).

Results

We performed ANOVA to test all the hypotheses. Figure 2 shows the ANOVA results. The analysis using ANOVA ($N = 138$) [Adjusted R-square = 0.528] showed significant main effects for relevance and popularity. As the results show, relevance (high vs low) [$F(1, 2311) = 1128.32, p < 0.01$] and popularity [$F(1, 2311) = 1280.31, p < 0.01$] have significant main effects on user's attention to post. Further, the interaction between relevance and popularity was also significant [$F(1, 2311) = 145.24, p < 0.01$]. The simple effects test (Figure 3) showed that the interaction was significant at different levels of relevance [$F(\text{high relevance}) (1, 2311) = 1158.08, p < 0.01$ and $F(\text{low relevance}) (1, 2311) = 278.167, p < 0.01$]. The two-way interaction effect graph (Figure 4) shows that high levels of popularity and relevance lead to far higher levels of attention by the user. Hence, H1 and H2 were supported. We tested the multicollinearity of each independent variable using the variance inflation factor (VIF). Since we discovered all outer VIF values of the independent variables to be in the range of 1.42–3.61, multicollinearity was not an issue (Daoud, 2017). We conducted Harman's one-factor

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Att

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	492689.073 ^a	3	164229.691	863.921	.000	.529
Intercept	959789.053	1	959789.053	5048.915	.000	.686
Relevance	214491.778	1	214491.778	1128.322	.000	.328
Popularity	243384.278	1	243384.278	1280.309	.000	.357
Relevance * Popularity	27610.574	1	27610.574	145.244	.000	.059
Error	439316.652	2311	190.098			
Total	1893581.000	2315				
Corrected Total	932005.725	2314				

a. R Squared = .529 (Adjusted R Squared = .528)

Figure 2. Experiment-1 ANOVA Results: Effects of Relevance and Popularity on User's Attention to Post.

Univariate Tests

Dependent Variable: Att

Relevance		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
High	Contrast	220149.487	1	220149.487	1158.084	.000	.334
	Error	439316.652	2311	190.098			
Low	Contrast	52879.040	1	52879.040	278.167	.000	.107
	Error	439316.652	2311	190.098			

Each F tests the simple effects of Popularity within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Figure 3. Interaction Effect between Relevance and Popularity on User's Attention to Post.

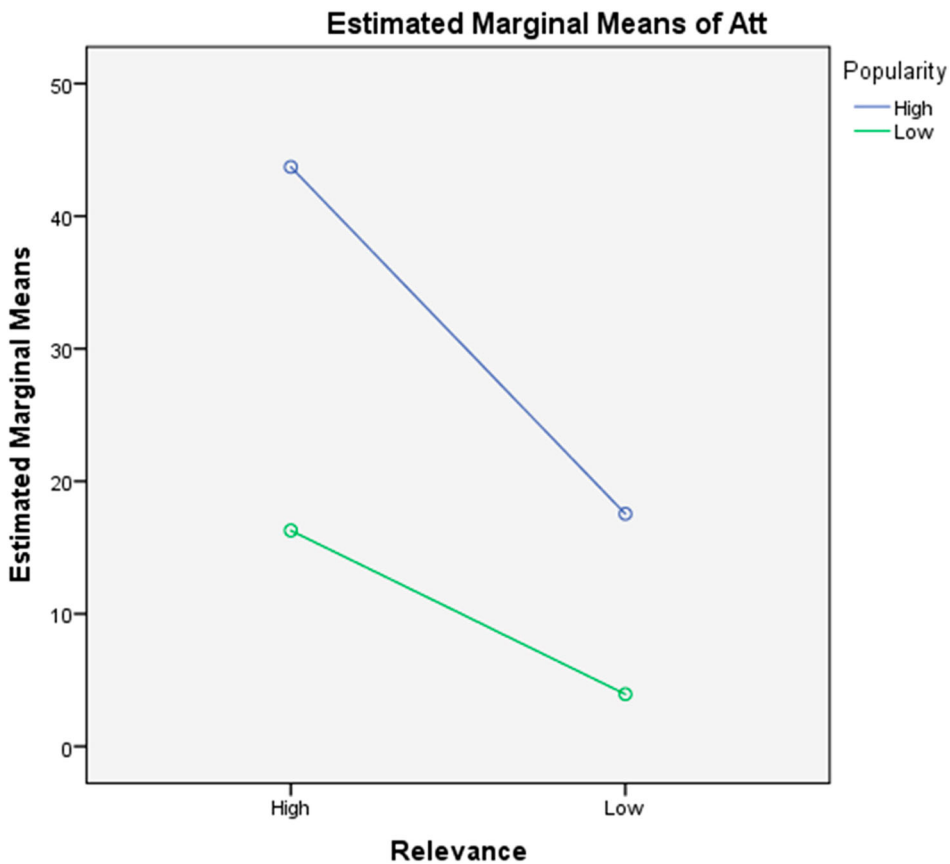


Figure 4. Two-way Interaction Effect between Relevance and Popularity on User's Attention to Post.

test to check for CMB (Harman, 1976). Our analysis in experiment-1 exhibited that the first factor accounted for less than 34% of the total variance. Hence, none of the explaining factors indicates common method bias to be a serious concern.

To check if Attention mediated the effect of relevance and popularity on active engagement, we used Hayes Process macro V 3.5 (Hayes, 2012, 2017). For a bootstrapping sample size of 5000 (Preacher & Hayes, 2004), the analysis (Figures 5 and 6) showed significant Indirect effect for

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps
.9368	.0372	25.1716	.0000	.8638	1.0098	.9273

Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps
-.0230	.0111	-2.0763	.0380	-.0447	-.0013	-.0227

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Att .9598	.0364	.8874	1.0296

Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Att .9500	.0270	.8955	1.0022

Figure 5. Mediation Effect of User's Attention to Post between Relevance and Active Engagement.

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps
1.0024	.0365	27.4818	.0000	.9308	1.0739	.9922

Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps
-.0299	.0113	-2.6363	.0084	-.0521	-.0076	-.0296

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Att 1.0322	.0363	.9616	1.1029

Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Att 1.0217	.0266	.9695	1.0736

Figure 6. Mediation Effect of User's Attention to Post between Popularity and Active Engagement.

relevance (BootLLCI = 0.8874, BootULCI = 1.0022, $p < 0.05$) and popularity (BootLLCI = 0.9616 and BootULCI = 1.1029, $p < 0.05$). The results thus support H7a and H7b.

Experiment 2

In the second experiment, we control the independent variables from the first experiment, 'relevance' and 'popularity', and manipulate the three independent variables. The first independent variable is 'format preference', which we coded as 'high' or 'low' based on the user's preference for a particular post's format. The second variable is 'source likability', coded as 'high' or 'low'. The third variable is 'content cues' coded as either 'absent' or 'present'.

The study employed a 2 (content cues: present, absent) x 2 (format Preference: high, low) x 2 (source likability: high, low) factorial experiment design.

The remainder of the procedures for the experiment remained the same as that of experiment 1. The experiment scenario was sent to 300 students across various national-level management schools. We received 282 responses from the students. After removing incomplete or missing data, 264 were found to be complete and usable. Data were collected, and analysis was performed as per the experiment. The demographic profile of the participants is presented below. We extracted 3935 data points from the submitted files [Table 2](#).

Measurement

Source Likability: The source likability was manipulated using two priming profiles as suggested by Reinhard and Messner (2009). In a pre-test conducted on 49 participants, the likability score for the 'high' likeability profile was 5.23 with a standard deviation of 0.68, while for the 'low' likeability profile, it was 1.34 with a standard deviation of 0.72. The Cronbach alpha for the scale used was 0.82.

Original Source Credibility: We used the credibility scale provided by Shen et al. (2016) to check the credibility of our sample sources (Appendix D). The Cronbach alpha for the scale was 0.91. In a pre-test conducted on 49 participants, the credibility score for 'high' credibility source was 4.11 with a standard deviation of 0.38 and for 'low' credibility was 0.86 with a standard deviation of 0.23.

Results

We performed ANOVA to test all the hypotheses. [Figure 7](#) shows the ANOVA results. The analysis using ANOVA ($N = 264$) [Adjusted R-square = 0.306] showed significant main effects for format preference, content cues, and source likability. As the results show, format preference [$F(1,3927) = 524.38, p < 0.01$], content cues [$F(1,3927) = 619.57, p < 0.01$] and source likability [$F(1,3927) = 534.89, p < 0.01$] have significant main effects on user's attention to post. Further, the interaction effect was significant for format preference X content cues ([Figure 8](#)) [$F(1,3927) = 7.30, p < 0.01$], format preference X source likability ([Figure 9](#)) [$F(1,3927) = 6.55, p < 0.01$] and content cues X source likability ([Figure 10](#)) [$F(1,3927) = 22.133, p < 0.01$]. Three-way interaction effect was not significant [$F(1,3927) = 2.30, p = 0.13$].

We can see from the results that the interaction effects have low F values. However, the main effects are significant and have higher F values showing higher levels of format preference, content cues, and source likability lead to greater attention by the user. This is in support of hypotheses 3, 4, and 5. We tested the multicollinearity of each independent variable using the variance inflation factor (VIF). Since we discovered all outer VIF values of the independent variables to be in the range of 1.67–4.49, multicollinearity was found not to be an issue (Daoud, 2017). We conducted Harman's one-factor test to check for CMB (Harman, 1976). Our analysis exhibited that the

Table 2. Demographic profile for experiment-2.

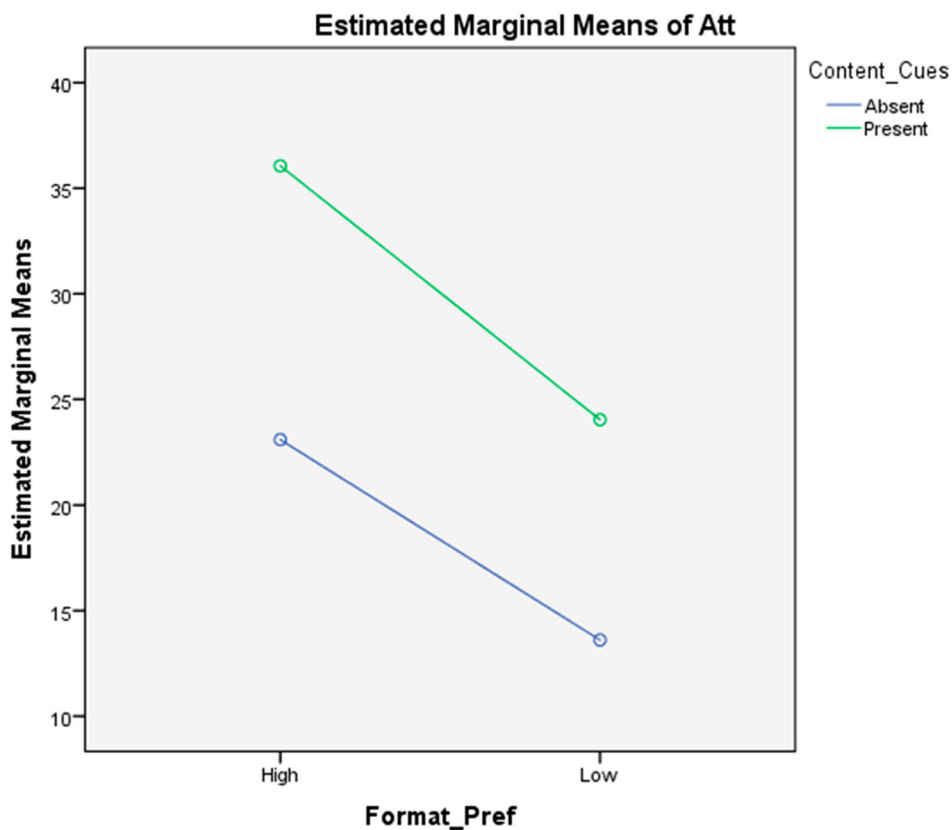
Exp 2 Item	N= Frequency	264 Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	167	63%
Female	97	37%
Age		
Under 25	58	22%
26–30	178	67%
31–35	20	8%
36–40	8	3%
Education		
Graduate	13	5%
Post Graduate	242	92%
Doctorate	9	3%
Occupation		
Student	252	95%

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Att

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	374727.166 ^a	7	53532.452	247.207	.000	.306
Intercept	2298815.004	1	2298815.004	10615.669	.000	.730
Format_Pref	113554.173	1	113554.173	524.380	.000	.118
Content_Cues	134167.104	1	134167.104	619.569	.000	.136
Source_Lik	115831.159	1	115831.159	534.895	.000	.120
Format_Pref * Content_Cues	1581.380	1	1581.380	7.303	.007	.002
Format_Pref * Source_Lik	1417.703	1	1417.703	6.547	.011	.002
Content_Cues * Source_Lik	4792.812	1	4792.812	22.133	.000	.006
Format_Pref * Content_Cues * Source_Lik	497.916	1	497.916	2.299	.130	.001
Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			
Total	3488653.000	3935				
Corrected Total	1225115.991	3934				

a. R Squared = .306 (Adjusted R Squared = .305)

Figure 7. Experiment-2 ANOVA Results: Effects of Content Cues, Source Likability, and Format Preference on User's Attention to Post.**Figure 8.** Two-way Interaction Effect between Format Preference and Content Cues on User's Attention to Post.

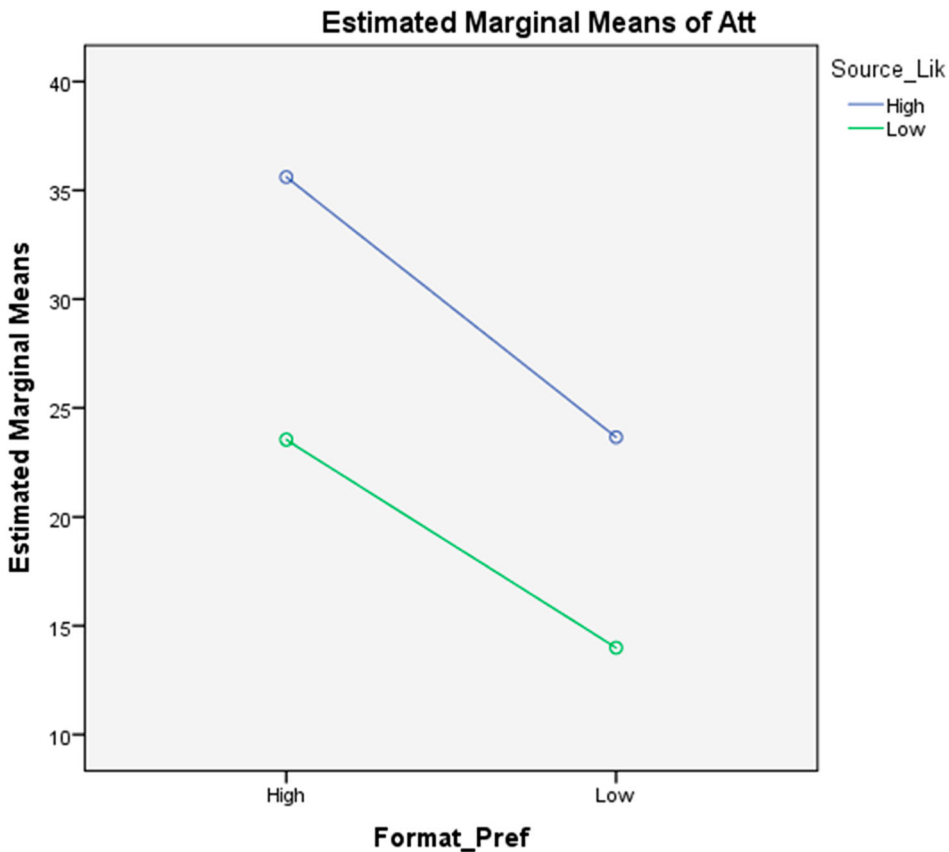


Figure 9. Two-way Interaction between Format Preference and Source Likability on User's Attention to Post.

first factor accounted for less than 14% of the total variance. Hence, none of the explaining factors indicates common method bias to be a serious concern.

The simple effects test (Figure 11) for content cues and source likability showed that the interaction was significant at different levels of content cues [F (absent) (1,3927) = 171.52, $p < 0.01$ and F (present) (1,3927) = 383.27, $p < 0.01$]. The simple effects test (Figure 12) for content cues and format preference showed that the interaction was significant at different levels of format preference [F (high) (1,3927) = 368.74, $p < 0.01$ and F (low) (1,3927) = 254.42, $p < 0.01$]. The simple effects test (Figure 13) for format preference and source likability showed that the interaction was significant at different levels of format preference [F (high) (1,3927) = 319.53, $p < 0.01$ and F (low) (1,3927) = 218.64, $p < 0.01$].

We also checked if the original source credibility moderated the effect of source likability on the user's attention to a post. We ran an ANOVA analysis on the data where we fixed the format preference as 'low' and content cues as 'absent'. The analysis showed (Figures 14 and 15) a significant interaction effect between source likability and original source credibility [F (1,1035) = 14.98, $p < 0.01$]. The simple effects test for original source credibility and source likability (Figure 16) showed that the interaction was significant at different levels of source likability [F (high) (1,1035) = 91.40, $p < 0.01$ and F (low) (1,1035) = 14.798, $p < 0.01$]. Additionally, we also performed a moderated mediation test using Hayes Process macro V 3.5 (Hayes, 2012, 2017) to check if the effect of source likability on active engagement was mediated by attention and whether original source credibility moderated the relationship between source likability and attention.

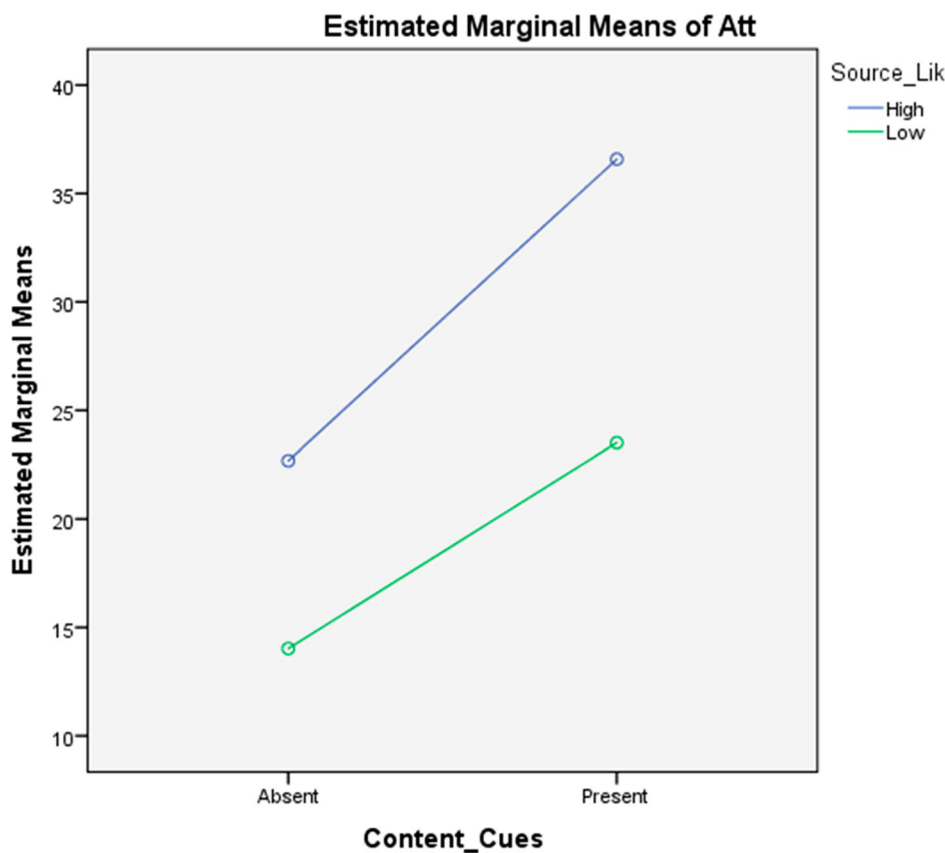


Figure 10. Two-way Interaction Effect between Source Likability and Content Cues on User’s Attention to Post.

Univariate Tests							
Dependent Variable: Att							
Content_Cues		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Absent	Contrast	37142.888	1	37142.888	171.522	.000	.042
	Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			
Present	Contrast	82996.324	1	82996.324	383.268	.000	.089
	Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			

Each F tests the simple effects of Source_Lik within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Figure 11. Interaction Effect between Source Likability and Content Cues on User’s Attention to Post.

For a bootstrapping sample size of 5000 (Preacher & Hayes, 2004), the analysis (Figure 17) showed significant index of moderated mediation (BootLLCI = 0.065, BootULCI = 0.258, $p < 0.05$). This is in support of hypotheses 6 and 7E.

Similarly, our analysis showed (Figures 18 and 19) significant indirect effect for format preference (BootLLCI = 0.4934, BootULCI = 0.5679, $p < 0.05$) and content cues (BootLLCI = 0.5233, BootULCI = 0.6273, $p < 0.05$). The results thus showed that attention mediated the effect of format preference and content cues on active engagement, providing support for H7 c, d & e.

Univariate Tests

Dependent Variable: Att

Format_Pref		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
High	Contrast	79850.461	1	79850.461	368.740	.000	.086
	Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			
Low	Contrast	55095.128	1	55095.128	254.423	.000	.061
	Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			

Each F tests the simple effects of Content_Cues within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Figure 12. Interaction Effect between Format Preference and Content Cues on User's Attention to Post.

Univariate Tests

Dependent Variable: Att

Format_Pref		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
High	Contrast	69194.826	1	69194.826	319.534	.000	.075
	Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			
Low	Contrast	47345.387	1	47345.387	218.636	.000	.053
	Error	850388.826	3927	216.549			

Each F tests the simple effects of Source_Lik within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Figure 13. Interaction Effect between Format Preference and Source Likability on User's Attention to Post.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Att

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	28203.874 ^a	3	9401.291	60.806	.000	.150
Intercept	196441.959	1	196441.959	1270.550	.000	.551
Source_Lik	12221.143	1	12221.143	79.044	.000	.071
Org_Source_Cred	13680.647	1	13680.647	88.484	.000	.079
Source_Lik * Org_Source_Cred	2315.818	1	2315.818	14.978	.000	.014
Error	160023.129	1035	154.612			
Total	384079.000	1039				
Corrected Total	188227.003	1038				

a. R Squared = .150 (Adjusted R Squared = .147)

Figure 14. Moderator Effect (Interaction Effect) between Source Likability and Original Source Credibility (for Format Preference: 'Low', and Content Cues: 'Absent') on User's Attention to Post.

Discussion and conclusions

The success of posts by tourism and hospitality firms on social media depends on parameters related to posts and individual characteristics. The results from our study point towards the existence of a two-step model of information processing by users on social networking sites. Attention is the first step driven by peripheral cues, and active engagement is the second step. In the SNS

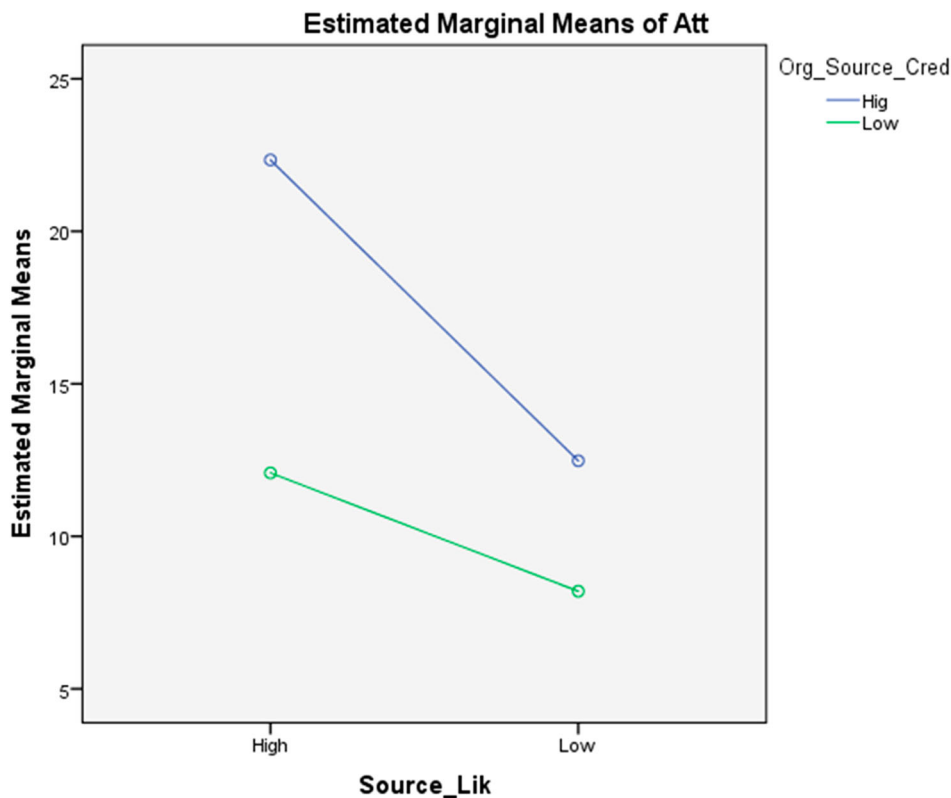


Figure 15. Two-way Interaction Effect between Source Likability and Original Source Credibility on User's Attention to Post.

Univariate Tests							
Dependent Variable: Att							
Source_Lik		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
High	Contrast	14130.949	1	14130.949	91.396	.000	.081
	Error	160023.129	1035	154.612			
Low	Contrast	2287.955	1	2287.955	14.798	.000	.014
	Error	160023.129	1035	154.612			

Each F tests the simple effects of Org_Source_Cred within each level combination of the other effects shown. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Figure 16. Moderation Effect (Simple Effects Test) of Source Likability at different levels of Original Source Credibility on User's Attention to Post.

context, the effects of information overload can be seen, as customers rejected a large number of posts and paid attention to only a few posts. Past research in the tourism context has also found that tourists pay less attention to information on SNSs in cases of information overload and, in turn, do not make rational and deliberate decisions (Babakhani et al., 2020). These effects of information overload make the two-step model function in SNSs.

Results from experiment 1 show that relevance and popularity were key antecedents to the attention paid by the user to any post from a tourism or hospitality brand. This is in line with social theories of suggestion (Lee et al., 2011) and following the herd (Rodriguez et al., 2014; Shi et al., 2018).

```

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Direct effect of X on Y
      Effect      se(HC4)      t      p      LLCI      ULCI
      -0.002      .009      -0.194      .846      -0.019      .016

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
SourceL    ->    Att      ->    AES

      OSC      Effect      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
      1.000      .449      .033      .383      .513
      2.000      .609      .037      .535      .682

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
      Index      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
OSC      .160      .049      .065      .258
---
```

Figure 17. Moderated-Mediation Effect between Source Credibility and Active Engagement mediated by User's Attention to Post and moderated by Original Source Credibility.

```

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y
      Effect      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI      c_ps
      .5448      .0276      19.7288      .0000      .4906      .5989      .6004

Direct effect of X on Y
      Effect      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI      c'_ps
      -0.0011      .0088      -0.1297      .8968      -0.0184      .0161      -0.0013

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
      Effect      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
Att      .5459      .0265      .4934      .5979

Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
      Effect      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
Att      .6017      .0280      .5469      .6561
```

Figure 18. Mediation Effect of User's Attention to Post between Format Preference and Active Engagement.

We also discovered that attention acted as a mediator between relevance and popularity, and active engagement. This gives further credence to the two-step model we proposed.

In experiment 2, we discovered that format preference, content cues, and source likability played a role in capturing the user's attention to a post. Extant literature found that content cues such as emotional hashtags trigger engagement with tourist destinations brands on SNSs and positively impact the number of likes and shares (Pino et al., 2019). We also found that original source credibility moderated the relationship between source likability and attention. Past research has suggested that perceived similarity and value congruence between customers and the social media spokesperson for tourism companies induced more parasocial interaction, which in turn

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****						
Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps
.5579	.0275	20.2657	.0000	.5040	.6119	.6149
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps
-.0166	.0088	-1.8761	.0607	-.0339	.0007	-.0183
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
Att .5745	.0264	.5233	.6273			
Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
Att .6332	.0274	.5805	.6885			

Figure 19. Mediation Effect of User's Attention to Post between Content Cues and Active Engagement.

increased brand identification and customer citizenship behaviour (Haobin Ye et al., 2021). We further discovered that attention mediated the relationship between content cues, format preference and source likability, and active engagement. This aligns with our predicted model, where attention is the first step of information processing driven by peripheral cues. This is in line with previous studies that suggested that followers of tourism pages on Facebook do not necessarily seek specific information but instead engage with content that catches their attention (Scholtz & Kruger, 2020).

Theoretical implications

In this study, we attempt to extend the theories of customer engagement, information processing, information dissemination, ELM, and information overload in social networking sites in the tourism and hospitality industry. We further extend the literature on information overload by analysing its effects on users' information processing behaviour. We discover the importance of peripheral cues in this aspect and the strategies adopted by users to deal with information overload. This study extended the Elaboration Likelihood Model by using it in the context of SNSs and modifying it into a two-step model.

We further add to customer engagement literature on SNSs by providing the antecedents to passive engagement. Our research studied various post characteristics to establish their influence on passive engagement. Past researchers on post characteristics have provided a fragmented picture and have provided many antecedents of engagement: relevance (Scholtz & Kruger, 2020; Shi et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2017), popularity (Rudat & Buder, 2015), content cues (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021), format (Aydin, 2020; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2020), source likability (Nekmat et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2014) and source credibility (Dedeoglu, 2019; Kim & Petrick, 2020). Our results show that relevance, source likability, original source credibility, post popularity, content cues, and format preference significantly affected passive engagement. We thus expand on various previous studies where some of these variables have been studied for their influence on customer engagement.

Our results also highlight the importance of attention to the post and describe it as part of passive engagement where the user is consuming the data. Past researchers have also studied attention as a precursor for selection (Dvir-Gvirsman, 2017) and further engagement (Keib et al., 2018). As attention leads to more involvement with the brand (Song et al., 2020), greater attention would drive the psychological aspect of CE as well.

Managerial implications

This study has implications for marketing managers in the tourism and hospitality industry in designing their strategies for social media marketing. Most of the metrics that marketers follow on social networking sites focus on the behavioural outcome of the customers in the form of likes, shares, and comments. However, following our study, managers need to devise ways to capture each of their posts' attention. Extant literature also points towards users engaging with tourism content on SNSs, which captures their attention (Scholtz & Kruger, 2020).

Tourism marketing managers should invest prudently to promote their posts for important campaigns by bumping up their 'Likes' and 'Comments'. Investment in increasing the reach of their post is critical for marketers. In addition to the customer side, algorithms on these platforms tend to regulate what a user sees. Given this, relevance becomes even more critical. Extant literature highlights that the presence of 'relevant topics' for an audience in a tourist destination page predicts higher levels of positive engagement (Villamediana-Pedrosa et al., 2019). Customers' Relevance varies by platform as well, and social media managers must target the audience with relevant content on each platform. For instance, Facebook as a platform focuses on news and entertainment, emphasizing video content. On the other hand, Instagram offers static images and short videos suitable for highly visual brands. Twitter is a news platform and social network suitable for sharing blogs or website content.

Our study also highlights the need for managers to understand the format preference of their target customers and deliver the content to them in their desired formats. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of visual formats in garnering more user engagement on tourism posts (Surucu-Balci & Balci, 2022). Managers could bundle formats together as well to offer something for different customers. This could also be in the form of an addition to the same formats as well. Thus, creating content in multiple formats ensures that the reach of a brand's post increases multifold.

Managers need to include Content Cues in their brand communication to drive up their 'Socials'. Our research provides evidence that emotions drive engagement, which can be included with emotional cues in the content itself. For instance, simple words such as 'wow' or 'unbelievable' or 'shocking' could capture a user's attention. Extant literature found that emotional content cues trigger engagement in tourist destinations brands on SNSs and positively impact the number of likes and shares (Pino et al., 2019). Additionally, with the growing popularity of emoticons in peer-to-peer communication on these platforms, brands could increase their engagement by introducing emoticons in their posts. Other content cues like hashtags can help users connect more easily and quickly.

Moreover, hashtags have also jumped from the digital world to the physical world. Tourism brands can use hashtags to tie campaigns together and use them on physical products and multi-channel promotions. Understanding the importance of source likability could help brands better use 'Influencers' on social media.

Limitations and future research

Although our research provides important insights into users' information processing and dissemination behaviour on SNSs, it has some limitations that open up avenues for future research. We have conducted this research only on one platform by simulating a news feed as seen on Facebook. Further studies could explore other platforms with varying platform-dependent features.

Additionally, we have conducted this research on a single type of digital device, personal computers. With the rise in mobile devices such as phones and tablets worldwide, it would be prudent to conduct similar research on these devices. The portability of these devices provides an entirely different environment to the user and could potentially alter the amount of cognitive effort spent on them.

The research methodology also poses certain limitations and offers further avenues of research. The experimental design used an approximate simulation of Facebook and provided the user with a news feed. Although we tried to mimic a Facebook feed as closely as possible, the differences, even if minor, could affect user behaviour. Moreover, each individual's news feed is highly tailored to their preferences by AI algorithms studying years' worth of their usage behaviour. This level of personalization is difficult to achieve in an experimental setup. Researchers in the future could devise better ways of experiment delivery to get data rooted closer to the user's unobserved behaviour.

Additionally, our sampling strategy could pose certain limitations as well. Although using a student population is an established norm in tourism research, and postgraduate students from premier institutes in India have a well-established propensity to travel, it could still have introduced certain biases in our results. Future studies could utilize a more random sample to understand the effects of post characteristics on engagement behaviour.

Lastly, it is difficult to gauge from our experiments if the user paid direct attention to the various manipulations of our experiments. A user might have scrolled through the simulated news feed, taking engagement behavioural decisions on a few post characteristics while ignoring the others. Researchers in the future could rectify this by using technologies such as eye-tracking to capture granular data of users' attention. Additionally, eye-tracking could be used in tandem with a more seamless user experience on the simulation to mimic real-life conditions better. Our research also opens up avenues in testing our model in different industries and contexts.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by Indian Institute of Management Lucknow: [Grant Number SM-266].

References

- Alves, H., Fernandes, C., & Raposo, M. (2016). Social media marketing: A literature review and implications. *Psychology & Marketing*, 33(12), 1029–1038. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20936>
- Aydin, G. (2020). Social media engagement and organic post effectiveness: A roadmap for increasing the effectiveness of social media use in hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 29(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2019.1588824>
- Babakhani, N., Randle, M., & Dolnicar, S. (2020). Do tourists notice social responsibility information? *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(5), 559–571. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1561653>
- Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What makes online content viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 192–205. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.10.0353>
- Bhati, A. S., Mohammadi, Z., Agarwal, M., Kamble, Z., & Donough-Tan, G. (2021). Motivating or manipulating: The influence of health-protective behaviour and media engagement on post-COVID-19 travel. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(15), 2088–2092. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1819970>
- Bigne, E., Andreu, L., Perez, C., & Ruiz, C. (2020). Brand love is all around: Loyalty behaviour, active and passive social media users. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(13), 1613–1630. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1631760>
- Chang, Y.-T., Yu, H., & Lu, H.-P. (2015). Persuasive messages, popularity cohesion, and message diffusion in social media marketing. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(4), 777–782. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.027>
- Daoud, J. I. (2017). Multicollinearity and regression analysis. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 949, 012009. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/949/1/012009>
- Dedeoglu, B. B. (2019). Are information quality and source credibility really important for shared content on social media? The moderating role of gender. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(1), 513–534. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2017-0691>
- de Oliveira Santini, F., Ladeira, W. J., Pinto, D. C., Herter, M. M., Sampaio, C. H., & Babin, B. J. (2020). Customer engagement in social media: A framework and meta-analysis. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(6), 1211–1228. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00731-5>

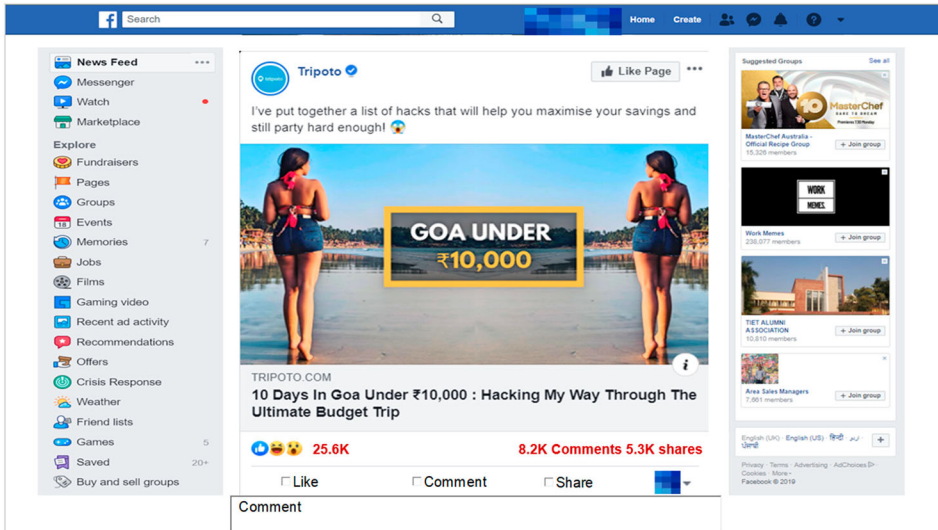
- Dvir-Gvirsman, S. (2017). I like what i see: Studying the influence of popularity cues on attention allocation and news selection. *Information, Communication & Society*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1379550>.
- Fogg, B. J. (2003). *Persuasive technology: Using computers to change what We think and do*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers Inc.
- Gainous, J., Abbott, J. P., & Wagner, K. M. (2020). Active vs. Passive social media engagement with critical information: Protest behavior in two Asian countries. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 26, 464–483. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220963606>
- Gálvez-Rodríguez, M. d. M., Alonso-Cañadas, J., Haro-de-Rosario, A., & Caba-Pérez, C. (2020). Exploring best practices for online engagement via Facebook with local destination management organisations (DMOs) in Europe: A longitudinal analysis. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 34, 100636. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100636>
- Global Digital Ad Spending 2019. (n.d.). Insider Intelligence. Retrieved 5 August 2021, from <https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-digital-ad-spending-2019>.
- Haobin Ye, B., Fong, L. H. N., & Luo, J. M. (2021). Parasocial interaction on tourism companies' social media sites: Antecedents and consequences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(8), 1093–1108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1764915>
- Harman, H. H. (1976). *Modern factor analysis*. University of Chicago Press.
- Harmeling, C. M., Moffett, J. W., Arnold, M. J., & Carlson, B. D. (2017). Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(3), 312–335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0509-2>
- Hayes, A. F. (2012). PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process modeling. University of Kansas, KS.
- Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford publications.
- Herhausen, D., Ludwig, S., Grewal, D., Wulf, J., & Schoegel, M. (2019). Detecting, preventing, and mitigating online firestorms in brand communities. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(3), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242918822300>
- Hollebeek, L. D., Juric, B., & Tang, W. (2017). Virtual brand community engagement practices: A refined typology and model. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 31(3), 204–217. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-01-2016-0006>
- Howard, D. J., Gengler, C., & Jain, A. (1995). What's in a name? A complimentary means of persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(2), 200–211. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209445>
- Hu, L., & Olivieri, M. (2021). Social media management in the traveller's customer journey: An analysis of the hospitality sector. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(12), 1768–1779. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1819969>
- Hurtado, J. F. (2016). Attention Span For Personalisation. *ArXiv Preprint ArXiv:1608.00147*.
- Kang, K., Lu, J., Guo, L., & Li, W. (2021). The dynamic effect of interactivity on customer engagement behavior through tie strength: Evidence from live streaming commerce platforms. *International Journal of Information Management*, 56, 102251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102251>
- Keib, K., Espina, C., Lee, Y.-I., Wojdyski, B. W., Choi, D., & Bang, H. (2018). Picture this: The influence of emotionally valenced images, on attention, selection, and sharing of social media news. *Media Psychology*, 21(2), 202–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2017.1378108>
- Kim, M. J., & Petrick, J. F. (2020). The effect of herding behaviors on dual-route processing of communications aimed at tourism crowdfunding ventures. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(5), 947–964. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520919515>.
- Kim, W.-H., & Chae, B. (Kevin). (2018). Understanding the relationship among resources, social media use and hotel performance: The case of Twitter use by hotels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(9), 2888–2907. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2017-0085>
- Kozak, M., Rita, P., & Bigné, E. (2018). New frontiers in tourism: Destinations, resources, and managerial perspectives. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*.
- Kozlenkova, I. V., Palmatier, R. W., Fang, E., Xiao, B., & Huang, M. (2017). Online relationship formation. *Journal of Marketing*, 81(3), 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0430>
- Lee, M. K., Shi, N., Cheung, C. M., Lim, K. H., & Sia, C. L. (2011). Consumer's decision to shop online: The moderating role of positive informational social influence. *Information & Management*, 48(6), 185–191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2010.08.005>
- Lepp, A., Gibson, H., & Lane, C. (2011). Image and perceived risk: A study of Uganda and its official tourism website. *Tourism Management*, 32(3), 675–684. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.05.024>
- Lerman, K. (2007). Social Information Processing in Social News Aggregation. *IEEE Internet Computing*, 11(6), 16–28. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MIC.2007.136>
- Liu, Z., Liu, L., & Li, H. (2012). Determinants of information retweeting in microblogging. *Internet Research*, 22(4), 443–466. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662241211250980>
- Lu, W., & Stepchenkova, S. (2015). User-generated content as a research mode in tourism and hospitality applications: Topics, methods, and software. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 24(2), 119–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2014.907758>

- Lu, Y., Chen, Z., & Law, R. (2018). Mapping the progress of social media research in hospitality and tourism management from 2004 to 2014. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(2), 102–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2017.1350249>
- Luarn, P., Lin, Y.-F., & Chiu, Y.-P. (2015). Influence of Facebook brand-page posts on online engagement. *Online Information Review*, 39(4). <https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-01-2015-0029>
- Meyer, J. (1998). Information overload in marketing management. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 16(3), 200–209. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634509810217318>
- Michelson, M., & Macskassy, S. A. (2010, October). Discovering users' topics of interest on twitter: A first look. In *Proceedings of the fourth workshop on analytics for noisy unstructured text data* (pp. 73–80).
- Miller, G. A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *Psychological Review*, 63(2), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0043158>
- Naumann, K., Bowden, J., & Gabbott, M. (2020). Expanding customer engagement: The role of negative engagement, dual valences and contexts. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(7), 1469–1499. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-07-2017-0464>
- Nekmat, E., Gower, K. K., Zhou, S., & Metzger, M. (2019). Connective-Collective action on social media: Moderated mediation of cognitive elaboration and perceived source credibility on personalness of source. *Communication Research*, 46(1), 62–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215609676>
- O Connor, P. (2011). An analysis of the use of Facebook by international hotel chains.
- O'Keefe, D. J. (2002). *Okeefe08iec-elm.pdf*. <http://www.dokeefe.net/pub/okeefe08iec-elm.pdf>.
- Park, D., Kim, W. G., & Choi, S. (2019). Application of social media analytics in tourism crisis communication. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(15), 1810–1824. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1504900>
- Petty, R. E., & Briñol, P. (2008). Persuasion: From single to multiple to metacognitive processes. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(2), 137–147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00071.x>
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In R. E. Petty, & J. T. Cacioppo (Eds.), *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change* (pp. 1–24). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-4964-1_1
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Goldman, R. (1981). Personal involvement as a determinant of argument-based persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41(5), 847–855. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.41.5.847>
- Pezzoni, F., An, J., Passarella, A., Crowcroft, J., & Conti, M. (2013). Why do i retweet it? An information propagation model for microblogs. In A. Jatowt, E.-P. Lim, Y. Ding, A. Miura, T. Tezuka, G. Dias, K. Tanaka, A. Flanagan, & B. T. Dai (Eds.), *Social informatics* (pp. 360–369). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-03260-3_31
- Pino, G., Peluso, A. M., Del Vecchio, P., Ndou, V., Passiante, G., & Guido, G. (2019). A methodological framework to assess social media strategies of event and destination management organizations. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 28(2), 189–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2018.1516590>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). Spss and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*, 36(4), 717–731. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206553>
- Reinhard, M.-A., & Messner, M. (2009). The effects of source likeability and need for cognition on advertising effectiveness under explicit persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 8(4), 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.282>
- Rietveld, R., van Dolen, W., Mazloom, M., & Worrying, M. (2020). What you feel, is what You like influence of message appeals on customer engagement on Instagram. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 49(1), 20–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2019.06.003>
- Rodriguez, M. G., Gummadi, K., & Schoelkopf, B. (2014). Quantifying information overload in social media and its impact on social contagions. *ArXiv:1403.6838 [Physics]*. <http://arxiv.org/abs/1403.6838>.
- Rudat, A., & Buder, J. (2015). Making retweeting social: The influence of content and context information on sharing news in twitter. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 46, 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.005>
- Schneider, S. C. (1987). Information overload: Causes and consequences. *Human Systems Management*, 7(2), 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.3233/HSM-1987-7207>
- Scholtz, M., & Kruger, M. (2020). From drifters to followers: A CIA-typology for engaging followers of scuba dive operators' Facebook pages. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(18), 2283–2301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1615039>
- Shahbaznezhad, H., Dolan, R., & Rashidirad, M. (2021). The role of social media content format and platform in users' engagement behavior. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 53, 47–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2020.05.001>
- Sharpely, R. (2001). Tourism in cyprus: Challenges and opportunities. *Tourism Geographies*, 3(1), 64–86.
- Shen, G. C.-C., Chiou, J.-S., Hsiao, C.-H., Wang, C.-H., & Li, H.-N. (2016). Effective marketing communication via social networking site: The moderating role of the social tie. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(6), 2265–2270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.12.040>
- Shi, J., Hu, P., Lai, K. K., & Chen, G. (2018). Determinants of users' information dissemination behavior on social networking sites: An elaboration likelihood model perspective. *Internet Research*, 28(2), 393–418. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-01-2017-0038>
- Shi, J., Lai, K. K., & Chen, G. (2020). Moderating effect of individual retweeting behavior on SNS. In J. Shi, K. K. Lai, & G. Chen (Eds.), *Individual retweeting Behavior on social networking sites: A study on individual information disseminating Behavior on social networking sites* (pp. 109–124). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7376-7_6.

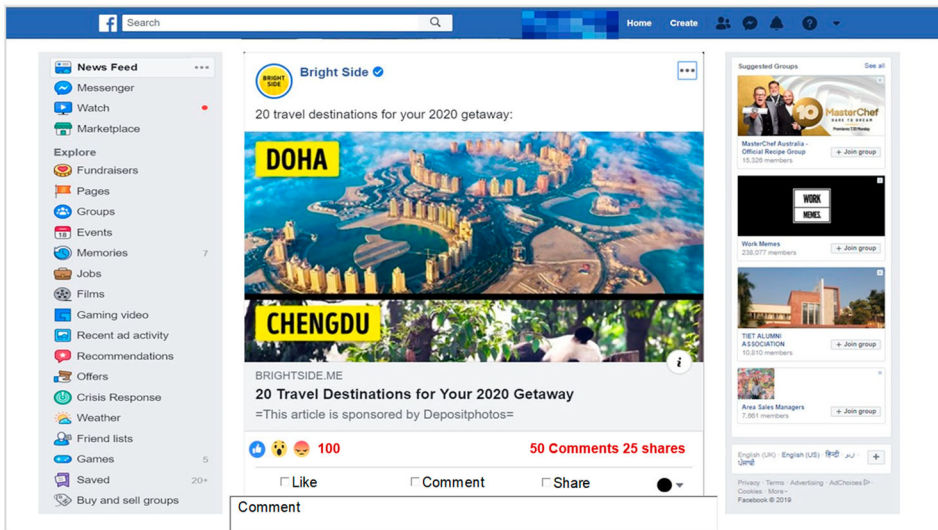
- Shi, J., Lai, K. K., Hu, P., & Chen, G. (2017). Understanding and predicting individual retweeting behavior: Receiver perspectives. *Applied Soft Computing*, 60, 844–857. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asoc.2017.08.044>
- Song, J., Park, H., Han, K., & Kim, S.-W. (2020). Do you really like her post?: Network-based analysis for understanding like activities in SNS. *Proceedings of the 29th ACM International Conference on Information & Knowledge Management*, 2221–2224. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3340531.3412166>.
- Suh, B., Hong, L., Pirolli, P., & Chi, H. (2010). Want to be retweeted? Large scale analytics on factors impacting retweet in Twitter network. In *Proceedings of the IEEE Second International Conference on Social Computing (SocialCom)*, 177–184.
- Sundar, S. S. (2008). "The MAIN model: A heuristic approach to understanding technology effects on credibility." Digital media, youth, and credibility. In M. J. Metzger & A. J. Flanagin (Eds.), *The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur foundation series on digital media and learning* (Vol. 28, pp. 73–100). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.1162/dmal.9780262562324.073>
- Surucu-Balci, E., & Balci, G. (2022). Building social capital in cruise travel via social network sites. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 0(0), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2047904>
- Tan, W.-K., & Kuo, P.-C. (2019, June 15). *The consequences of online information overload confusion in tourism* [Text]. University of Boras. <http://informationr.net/ir/24-2/paper826.html>.
- Villamediana-Pedrosa, J. D., Vila-Lopez, N., & Küster-Boluda, I. (2019). Secrets to design an effective message on Facebook: An application to a touristic destination based on big data analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(15), 1841–1861. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1554625>
- Wagner, T. F., Baccarella, C. V., & Voigt, K.-I. (2017). Framing social media communication: Investigating the effects of brand post appeals on user interaction. *European Management Journal*, 35(5), 606–616. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2017.05.002>
- Webster, J. G. (2016). Why study measures of exposure? From exposure to attention. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 10(2–3), 179–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2016.1150974>
- Zhang, W., & Watts, S. (2008). Capitalising on content: Information adoption in two online communities. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 22(2), <https://doi.org/10.17705/1jais.00734>
- Zhang, Y., Trusov, M., Stephen, A. T., & Jamal, Z. (2017). Online shopping and social media: Friends or foes? *Journal of Marketing*, 81(6), 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.14.0344>

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample posts used for Facebook feed simulation: Experiment 1

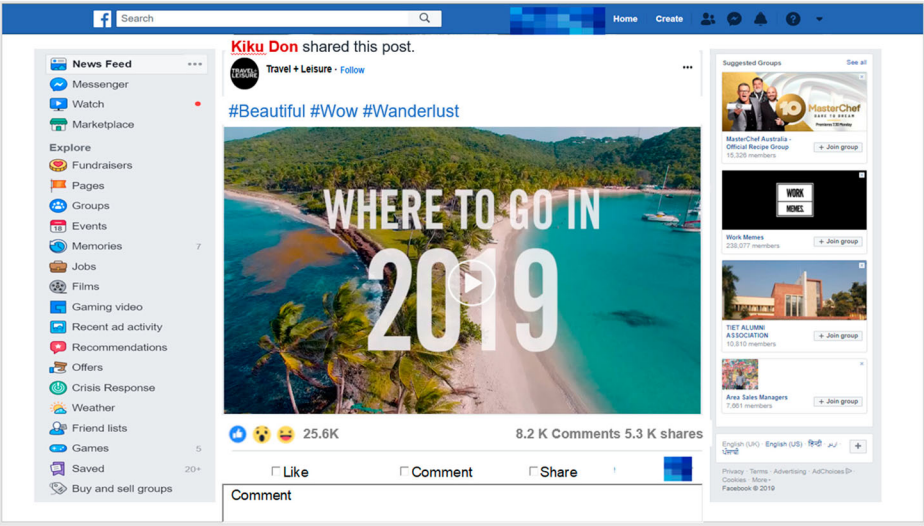
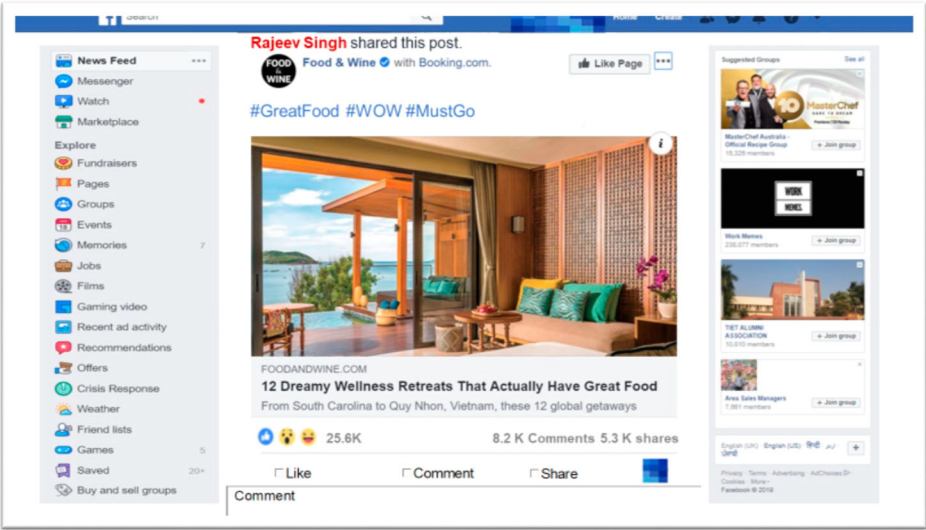


The screenshot shows a Facebook News Feed simulation. On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: News Feed, Messenger, Watch, Marketplace, Explore, Fundraisers, Pages, Groups, Events, Memories, Jobs, Films, Gaming video, Recent ad activity, Recommendations, Offers, Crisis Response, Weather, Friend lists, Games, Saved, and Buy and sell groups. The main feed displays a post from Tripoto, a verified page. The post features a video thumbnail of two women standing on a beach looking at the ocean, with a yellow box overlaying the text "GOA UNDER ₹10,000". The post text reads: "I've put together a list of hacks that will help you maximise your savings and still party hard enough! 🌊". Below the video, it says "TRIPOTO.COM" and "10 Days In Goa Under ₹10,000 : Hacking My Way Through The Ultimate Budget Trip". The post has 25.6K likes, 8.2K comments, and 5.3K shares. At the bottom of the post are buttons for Like, Comment, and Share. On the right side of the feed, there is a "Suggested Groups" section with four groups: MasterChef Australia - Official Recipe Group, Work Memes, TET ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, and Area Sales Managers.



The screenshot shows another Facebook News Feed simulation. The sidebar is identical to the first one. The main feed displays a post from Bright Side, a verified page. The post features a video thumbnail showing an aerial view of a city with a yellow box overlaying the text "DOHA" and "CHENGDU". The post text reads: "20 travel destinations for your 2020 getaway:". Below the video, it says "BRIGHTSIDE.ME" and "20 Travel Destinations for Your 2020 Getaway". A note below the text says "≡This article is sponsored by Depositphotos≡". The post has 100 likes, 50 comments, and 25 shares. At the bottom of the post are buttons for Like, Comment, and Share. On the right side of the feed, there is a "Suggested Groups" section with four groups: MasterChef Australia - Official Recipe Group, Work Memes, TET ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, and Area Sales Managers.

Appendix B: Sample posts used for Facebook feed simulation: Experiment 2



Appendix C: Priming Profile used for Source Likability Manipulation



Rajeev Singh is a **good friend** of yours. He **serves in the army** and is of the same age group as you.

Below are a few of his posts:

 **Rajeev Singh** ...
Kobe Bryant, RIP. You made people believe that with hard work anything is possible
👍 627 1 Comment
Like Comment Share

 **Rajeev Singh** ...
Started cycling to work. Making an effort for health and the environment.
👍 581 1 Comment
Like Comment Share



Kiku Don is **not your friend**. He is **obnoxious** and **you do not like him**.

Below are a few of his posts:

 **Kiku Don** ...
Easiest way to eliminate poverty....kill all the poor people....lol
👍 2 1 Comment
Like Comment Share

 **Kiku Don** ...
Bought a new BMW!! You suckers can eat my dust now!!
👍 5 1 Comment
Like Comment Share