ABSTRACT

Very fast improvement in web-based technologies and growth of social networking systems make it essential for tourism industry to create and organize new tourism products and services. Social media trend allows tourism businesses, especially hotels which want to maintain close relationships with potential customers. This study is conducted to examine the effects of factors such as e-word-of-mouth, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust and attitude on tourists' behavioral intention in using social networks as tools to support their recent travel decisions.

This study is based on non-probability convenience sampling where data were gathered from 400 respondents who were staying in hotels in Bangkok and had planned their journey using social networks. To gather the primary data, a self-administrated five-point Likert Scale questionnaire was used. To analyze the data in details, the researcher used both descriptive and inferential analyses.

The results showed that there is a moderate positive significant relationship between e-word of mouth communication and perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust, perceived usefulness and attitude, perceived ease of use and attitude, trust and attitude, trust and behavioral intention and, attitude and behavioral intention. Moreover, there is a strong positive significant relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, trust and perceived usefulness, and e-word of mouth communication and attitude.

The findings of this study will help managers and practitioners of tourism industry to better understand changing tourists acceptance to use sophisticated web-based technologies for the choice of destination prioritising social networks instead of conventional use of travel intermediaries such as travel agents, so they can improve their marketing and communication strategies focused on the online contexts as factors able to influence the behavioral intention of tourists in a more efficient way.