

The Impact of Social Media Content on Domestic Tourism Among Chinese Tourists: A Case Study of Xiaohongshu and Douyin

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<b>KEYWORDS</b> <i>Social Media Content, Domestic Tourist, user-generated content, technology acceptance, destination marketing</i>	<b>ABSTRACT</b> Domestic tourism is essential to boost the local economies, cultural identity, and the tourism industry in China. Due to the fast development of social media, including Xiaohongshu and Douyin, which play the role of creating and consuming tourism content, the process of tourism perception is significantly altered and also affects the traveler decision-making process. This research attempts to determine the impact of these sites on domestic tourist experience and how they affect the behavioral intentions of Chinese tourists. The study used a quantitative research method, where a total of 416 domestic tourists were selected through stratified random sampling as the study sample. Questionnaires were posted in pertinent community groups on the internet to help capture the perceptions and behavioral patterns. The results show the existence of four perception factors, namely usefulness, interactivity, credibility, and pleasure, which have a significant influence on behavior, attitude, and intentions. Of these, interactivity turned out to be the most significant, and perceived usefulness and credibility followed "hard on its heels" as they are the immediate antecedents of behavioral intentions. Indirect influences on intentions, however, are felt through perceived pleasure; the attitudes affect intentions. The subjective norms also showed a direct substantial influence on the intentions, but did not have any effect on the connection between attitudes and intentions. The findings depict the importance of interaction, social media, credibility, and usefulness in encouraging tourism marketing. The study will also be valuable to the tourism literature because it will combine perception-based constructs with behavioural theories and provide an understanding of the psychological processes involved in domestic travel decision-making in China. Practical implications also reveal the need to ensure tourism marketers make ample use of interactive features, ingredients, credible content, and platform-specific strategies to improve engagement and propagate domestic tourism growth.
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1. INTRODUCTION

China's domestic tourism has seen a spectacular recovery following 2023, and 2024 is the year of a breakthrough. In 2024, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China (2025) reported that the number of domestic trips made in the country hit 5.615 billion, up 14.8 percent year-on-year, and domestic tourism revenue reached 5.75 trillion Yuan, an increase of 17.1 percent year-on-year. This development reflects the significance of the local market, both in terms of large-scale destinations and county-level and emerging destinations. Meanwhile, social media resources have heavily penetrated systematically into the travel motivation and decision-making process of the Chinese tourists, especially



Xiaohongshu (RED) and Douyin. These mediums and their user-generated content (UGC) and short-format videos have played a huge part in destination discovery, trip planning, and in-country experience (Wang et al., 2022).

Social media based on short-form videos like Douyin have shown that they can create booms in the number of people visiting particular destinations, sometimes following a piece of content going viral (Yuan et al., 2022). Studies indicate that the destination-related videos have the potential to influence the behavioral intent within mechanisms like telepresence (and flow) in which the viewer feels intensely involved, loses time, and perceives being in the place of the video (Wang, 2022). In an international platform, short-video apps like TikTok have a profound effect by shaping the behavioral intentions of tourists and can overnight transform destination development through increased interactivity and visibility (Liu et al., 2024; Wengel et al., 2022). Simultaneously, Xiaohongshu has grown into a reliable shopping and journey group. Its notes in the form of reviews provide recommendations based on experience. They may persuade the traveller to go to spots that are less popular, or plan out itineraries in a more customised way. The two platforms offer a highly elaborate pre-travel content ecosystem, which combines elements of inspiration, information, and social evidence and, as such, has been influencing domestic fam trips and where and what Chinese people do on vacation (Yuan et al., 2022).

The rebound in domestic tourism that will occur after 2023 presents a special occasion for examining these platforms in a domestic setting. Although the review-based nature of Xiaohongshu might appeal to travelers who want to find authenticity and real guidance, the short videos on Douyin could be more useful when they need to feel inspired and emotional when planning their spontaneous traveling (Du et al., 2022). This insight into such differences might allow tourism bureaus and local government agencies to dedicate their promotional resources to better use, particularly within an increasingly purse-conscious consumer-behavior environment (Kah et al., 2022).

Although there is an increasing body of evidence that has been presented on the impact of social media on tourism behavior, there are still a few gaps in the underlying literature on domestic tourism in China. To begin with, the bulk of the existing studies is dedicated to the recovery of outbound tourism and cross-border travel and does not dwell on the domestic tourism pathways, which have become the locomotive of post-pandemic growth (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, 2025). Second, research considers social media to be one homogeneous channel, or even compares Chinese and Western media, yet Xiaohongshu and Douyin have rarely been compared in relation to domestic tourism cases. This is exceptionally important as they vary in their content format, their engagement patterns, and trust features (Yuan et al., 2022). Finally, the pressure of contemporary macroeconomic conditions, which drives prices to be increasingly considered sensitive to, the popularity of taking shorter trips, and cumulating in the increase of county-level destinations, probably modulates the impact of social media on tourism decision-making as well. Still, it remains unexplored (Kah et al., 2022).

Through these gaps, the study may offer crisper answers to how various platform dynamics affect domestic tourism decisions in the current market of China. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the impact of social media content on domestic tourism among Chinese tourists.

## 2. METHOD

In this study, a quantitative analysis method is used. The sample of this study is 416 domestic tourists in China who use social media (mainly Xiaohongshu and DouYin) to obtain travel information, with a particular focus on those who intend to travel domestically. This study used a stratified random sampling method for data collection. Data collection is conducted mainly through online questionnaires, and the links to the questionnaires are distributed to the relevant community groups or forums of Xiaohongshu and DouYin to attract an audience that meets the conditions of the study. The data are analyzed by using SPSS AND AMOS software. The reliability and validity are determined by using Cronbach's Alpha, confirmatory factor analysis, factor loading, average variance extracted, and composite reliability. Correlation analysis explores the relationship between social media content perception and travel intention. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) helps to analyze the causal relationship between different variables.

## 3. RESULT

The sample of this study is 416 domestic tourists in China who use social media (mainly Xiaohongshu and DouYin) to obtain travel information, with a particular focus on those who intend to travel domestically.

### a. Descriptive analysis

The age profile also indicates that domestic tourism is steered by younger generations, with 25-34 years (34.9%) and 18-24 years (32.6%) contributing the major segment. Respondents of the middle age group were also fewer, with 19 and 13.5 percent representing the age groups 35-44 and 45-54 years, respectively, whereas none of the respondents were aged 55 and above. This shows that participation in tourism activities is biased towards young adults. The gender balance is quite balanced as males comprise 52.9% of the total and females 47.1%. This implies that there is almost a balanced representation of both genders in domestic tourism. The majority of the respondents possess an undergraduate degree (56.3%), followed by postgraduate or higher qualifications (19.7%). In smaller groups, there was vocational training (13.7%) or high school and below (10.3%). This brings to the fore the notion that the domestic tourists are generally educated.



The highest percentage of respondents is full-time employees (34.4%), students (22.4%), and part-time employees (16.8%). Smaller percentages are unemployed (9.4%), retired (9.9%), or self-employed (7.1%). This is an indication that working individuals and younger learners are actively involved in tourism. Income distribution indicates that 27.2 percent earn 5,001 - 8,000 RMB, 26 percent earn 3,001-5,000 RMB, and 26 percent earn more than 8,000 RMB. Only 20.8 percent earn less than 3,000 RMB, which is an indicator that the majority of the respondents are financially stable and capable of travelling. Travel frequencies indicate that 39.4 percent travel frequently (4+ times a year), whereas 37.5 percent have an occasional travel pattern (2 to 3 times a year). A smaller percentage (23.1%) travel rarely, indicating that most of the respondents are active local tourists.

Daily time use is also pretty balanced, with 26.2 percent tracking 1-2 hours, 19 percent 3-4 hours, and 18.8 percent over 4 hours. Smaller groups spend less than 1 hour (17.7%) or 2-3 hours (18.3%). It implies a great interest in social media in general. The respondents demonstrate varying interests, but the most popular ones were food and local culture (19.7 percent), travel vlogs (19.5 percent), and itinerary suggestions (19.2 percent). The hotel/restaurant reviews (18.5%) and cost-saving travel tips (15.4%) are also popular, and 7.7% value other content variants. This is an indicator of differentiated but balanced content tastes.

#### b. Data screening

In this study, there are no missing data. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a diagnostic statistic that is used in determining whether or not a regression model contains multicollinearity. It quantifies the degree to which the correlation of predictor variables inflates the variance of a regression coefficient. The acceptance level of VIF should be lower than 5, which is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Variance Inflation Factor of Variables**

Variables	VIF	Tolerance
Perceived Pleasure	2.099	0.476
Perceived Usefulness	2.704	0.370
Perceived Interactivity	3.975	0.252
Perceived Credibility	2.490	0.402

Dependent Variable: Behavioral Attitude

Source: Data and information from the research

Table 1 shows multiple collinearity test results, indicating that all predictors have acceptable values of VIF, which vary between 2.099 and 3.975, much less than 10. The values of tolerance between the range of 0.252 and 0.476 are also far above 0.1, indicating that there are no serious problems of collinearity. It implies that each of the perceived pleasure, usefulness, interactivity, and credibility contributes to the model. Perceived interactivity has the highest VIF (3.975), but since the figures are under 5, it is acceptable, and only reflects some tendency of overlap among the factors. Generally, the findings affirm that the multicollinearity does not pose any challenge to the reliability of the findings.

**Table 2 Variance Inflation Factor of Variables with moderating and mediating**

Variables	VIF	Tolerance
Perceived Pleasure	2.243	0.446
Perceived Usefulness	2.747	0.364
Perceived Interactivity	4.603	0.217
Perceived Credibility	3.065	0.326
Subjective Norms	3.865	0.259
Behavioral Attitude	3.936	0.254



Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intentions

Source: Data and information from the research

Table 2 shows multicollinearity results. All the variables have acceptable standards, with the range of values 2.243 to 4.603 compared to the limit of 10. The range of tolerance values is also well within the boundaries of non-serious issues with collinearity, between 0.217 and 0.446. Perceived interactivity has the most VIF (4.603) and the least tolerance (0.217), suggesting that assessments were natural about other predictors, including usefulness and credibility. There are also moderately high VIFs in behavioral attitude and subjective norms that are within an acceptable range. All in all, the analysis proves the uniqueness of every variable as well as the absence of the threat of multicollinearity that weakens the model.

### c. Reliability and Validity

A statistic often referred to as Cronbach's Alpha is used to define internal consistency or reliability of a set of questions used to comprise a survey or test that are considered to measure the same underlying construct. The minimum level of Cronbach's Alpha should be 0.70 and above, indicating that the scale can be used in this study. In this study, the Cronbach alpha scores are more than 0.7, indicating acceptable reliability, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Cronbach Alpha**

Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Perceived Pleasure	10	0.955
Perceived Usefulness	10	0.946
Perceived Interactivity	10	0.949
Perceived Credibility	10	0.954
Subjective Norms	10	0.932
Behavioral Attitude.	10	0.951
Behavioral Intentions	10	0.941

Source: Data and information from the research

In Table 3, the reliability of all the constructs in the research was excellent, with the value of Cronbach's Alpha being between 0.932 and 0.955. Perceived Pleasure and Perceived Credibility had the highest values, indicating that in terms of domestic travels, Chinese tourists remained consistent in continuing to enjoy and trust the information in social media content. In sum, these findings confirm the observation that the measurement scales were highly reliable and establish a reliable basis for understanding how the content posted on social media affects the behavior of domestic tourism.

### d. Measurement Model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a statistical method to analyze whether a collection of observed variables can be indexed by several underlying latent constructs (factors) in a theoretical model. The confirmatory factor analysis is shown in Figure 1.

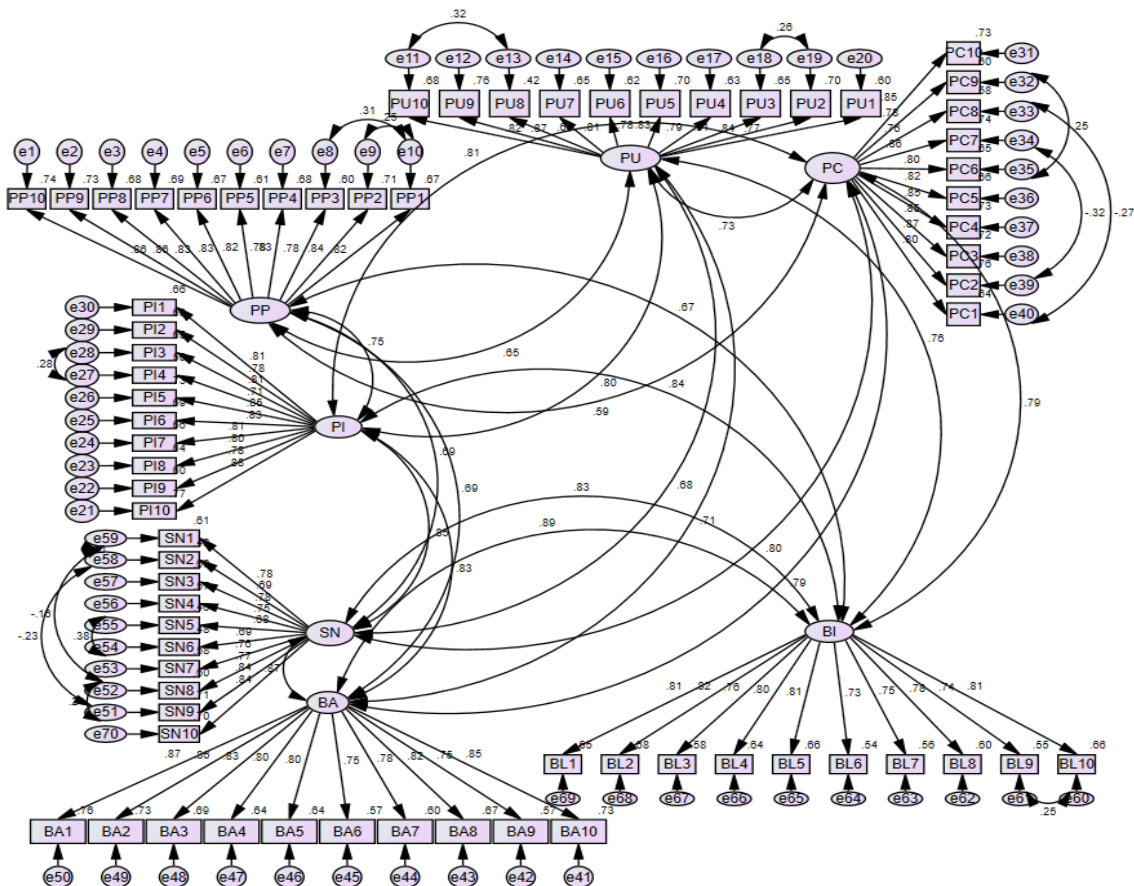


Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 4. Model fit of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

	Fit Indices	Value	Recommended Value
Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.062	RMSEA<0.08
Incremental Fit	CFI	0.871	CFI should be greater than 0.8
	TLI	0.865	TLI should be greater than 0.8
Parsimonious Fit	$\chi^2/df$	2.606	$\chi^2/df < 5.00$

Table 4 shows the model fit statistics, which show that the model fits reasonably well with the data. The value of RMSEA (0.062), CFI (0.871), and TLI (0.865) indicates good absolute and incremental fit, while satisfying the recommended level. Also, the ratio of 2.606 of chi-square/df is less than 5.00, which ensures that the model is adequate and parsimonious.

#### e. Structural Equation Model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a sophisticated statistical tool that is employed to concentrate on complex interplays between observed and latent variables. It brings together factor analysis with regression analysis in one structure, and thus, a researcher can test a full theoretical analysis that includes several equations simultaneously. The structural equation modeling is shown in Figure 2.



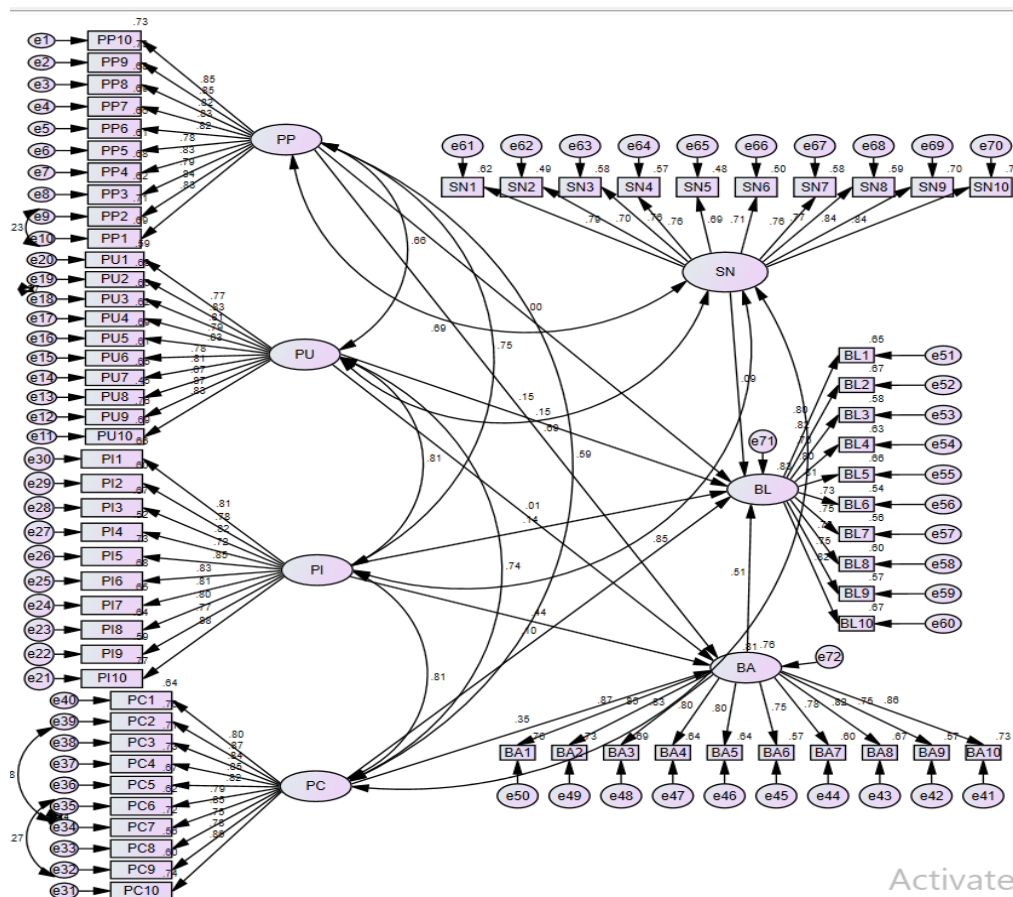


Figure 2. Structural Equation Modeling

Table 5. Model fit of SEM

	Fit Indices	Value	Recommended Value
Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.065	RMSEA<0.08
Incremental Fit	CFI	0.858	CFI should be greater than 0.8
	TLI	0.852	TLI should be greater than 0.8
Parsimonious Fit	$\chi^2/df$	2.763	$\chi^2/df < 5.00$

Table 5 shows that the overall fit of the model was good, with an RMSEA of 0.065, which is below the recommended threshold of <0.08. The value of CFI is 0.858, and TLI is 0.852, which is above 0.80, suggesting adequate incremental fit. Also, the value of 2.763 of chi-square/df is less than 5.00, which ensures that the model is adequate and parsimonious.

#### f. Correlation

Correlation analysis refers to a statistical method of measuring the extent and the direction of the linear relation between two variables, and whether an increase or decrease in another will accompany an increase or decrease in one variable. The most popular is the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), which has a range between -1 and +1, with +1 representing a perfect positive correlation, -1 representing a perfect negative correlation, and 0 representing no linear relationship. Cohen (1988) provides the following interpretation of Pearson  $r$ :  $r$  values of  $\pm 0.10$  to  $\pm 0.29$  equal a weak correlation,  $r$  values of  $\pm 0.30$  to  $\pm 0.49$  equal a moderate correlation, and  $r$  values of  $\pm 0.50$  to  $\pm 1.00$  equal a strong correlation.



**Table 6. Correlation**

	Perceived Pleasure	Perceived Usefulness	Perceived Interactivity	Perceived Credibility	Subjective Norms	Behavioral Attitude
Perceived Pleasure	1					
Perceived Usefulness	.628**	1				
Perceived Interactivity	.713**	.772**	1			
Perceived Credibility	.551**	.684**	.758**	1		
Subjective Norms	.646**	.655**	.784**	.759**	1	
Behavioral Attitude	.665**	.697**	.792**	.743**	.814**	1
Behavioral Intentions	.639**	.723**	.794**	.740**	.763**	.839**

In Table 6, the correlation results showed strong positive correlations that existed among all the constructs, confirming their theoretical fit. Perceived Interactivity had the strongest correlations, specifically with Behavioral Attitude ( $r=.792^{**}$ ) and Behavioral Intentions ( $r=.794^{**}$ ), revealing the topicality of interactive social media content on forming tourist behavior. Perceived usefulness and Perceived Credibility were significantly associated with Behavioral Intentions ( $r=.723^{**}$  and  $r=.740^{**}$ ), indicating that trust and usefulness of contents are very powerful agents of decision-making. Subjective Norms correlated with the greatest strength with Behavioral Attitude ( $r=.814^{**}$ ), showing that social influence has a central role to play in the development of a favorable attitude. Comprehensively, these findings illustrate the overall role of pleasure, usefulness, interactivity, credibility, and norms in fostering a good attitude and intention about domestic tourism.

#### g. Factor loading, AVE, and CR

Composite Reliability (CR) determines the internal consistency of each construct using factor loadings of its indicators. Factor loading is a correlation coefficient of an observed variable (item) and a latent construct (factor). It refers to the degree to which a specific item measures up to the construct. All items in the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) had high standardized factor loadings (greater than 0.70) above the acceptable cut-off value, which depicted strong indicator reliability. An acceptable CR value is 0.70 or above, which implies that the indicators of a construct are measuring the latent variable reliably. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a statistic in structural equation modeling (SEM) that measures convergent validity, i.e., the extent to which the items (indicators) of a construct actually measure the construct. The value of 0.50 or above is accepted as the acceptance criterion of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and it means that the construct explains at least 50 percent of the variance in its indicators and thus exhibits adequate convergent validity. Table 8 shows the factor loading, composite reliability, average variance extracted of the items, and construct.

**Table 7. Factor Loading, Composite Reliability, Average Variance**

Construct	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Perceived Pleasure	PP1 (0.821), PP2 (0.840), PP3 (0.777), PP4 (0.826), PP5 (0.780), PP6 (0.816), PP7 (0.830), PP8 (0.826), PP9 (0.855), PP10 (0.858)	0.955	0.678
Perceived Usefulness	PU1 (0.774), PU2 (0.835), PU3 (0.809), PU4 (0.792), PU5 (0.834), PU6 (0.785), PU7 (0.808), PU8 (0.649), PU9 (0.871), PU10 (0.824)	0.947	0.64
Perceived Interactivity	PI1 (0.811), PI2 (0.776), PI3 (0.808), PI4 (0.710), PI5 (0.854), PI6 (0.828), PI7 (0.810), PI8 (0.803), PI9 (0.776), PI10 (0.879)	0.949	0.651



Perceived Credibility	PC1 (0.803), PC2 (0.872), PC3 (0.848), PC4 (0.853), PC5 (0.815), PC6 (0.804), PC7 (0.859), PC8 (0.762), PC9 (0.777), PC10 (0.853)	0.955	0.681
Behavioral Attitude	BA1 (0.873), BA2 (0.856), BA3 (0.834), BA4 (0.799), BA5 (0.802), BA6 (0.753), BA7 (0.775), BA8 (0.816), BA9 (0.753), BA10 (0.853)	0.951	0.66

In Table 7, the measurement model proved reliable with Composite Reliability (CR) values of between 0.947 and 0.955, all higher than the recommended value of 0.70. The highest reliability was evident in Perceived Pleasure (CR = 0.955) and Perceived Credibility (CR = 0.955), confirming that the research instrument effectively measures enjoyment and trust in the content of the social media. The AVE measures were between 0.64 and 0.681, which is above the 0.50 threshold, implying satisfactory convergent validity. Constructs like Perceived Interactivity (AVE = 0.651) and Behavioral Attitude (AVE = 0.66) had indicators that held strong explanatory power. Generally, all the constructs were reliably and validly measured, and these results form a solid basis to conduct further structural analysis.

**Table 8. Direct Effect**

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Perceived Pleasure--> Behavioral Attitude	0.258	0.026	6.806	0.000***
Perceived Usefulness--> Behavioral Attitude	0.128	0.03	2.973	0.003**
Perceived Interactivity--> Behavioral Attitude	0.51	0.038	9.949	0.000***
Perceived Credibility--> Behavioral Attitude	0.376	0.025	9.391	0.000***
Perceived Pleasure--> Behavioral Intentions	0.053	0.024	1.511	0.131
Perceived Usefulness--> Behavioral Intentions	0.178	0.027	4.587	0.000***
Perceived Interactivity--> Behavioral Intentions	0.19	0.037	3.92	0.000***
Perceived Credibility--> Behavioral Intentions	0.242	0.024	6.414	0.000***
Behavioral Attitude--> Behavioral Intentions	0.489	0.031	15.829	0.000***

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$

Table 8 shows the hypothesis testing for the direct effect. The survey findings of domestic tourists in China indicate the role played by various perception factors directly affecting the attitudes and intentions of the tourists towards tourist activities. Perceived interactivity ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and credibility ( $\beta = 0.376$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were both significant and strong direct predictors of tourist notions, implying that interactive and familiar tourism-related content is important in the determination of tourist perceptions concerning destinations. The subjects believed that pleasure ( $\beta = 0.258$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and usefulness ( $\beta = 0.128$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) influence attitudes, although their influence is weaker. About behavioral intentions, perceived usefulness ( $\beta = 0.178$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), interactivity ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and credibility ( $\beta = 0.242$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) also have a significant direct effect implying that Chinese tourists are more willing to act to tourism plans when the content is useful, interacting and credible. Interestingly, perceived pleasure ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p = 0.131$ ) has no direct influence over intentions, which implies that enjoyment could not be the sole form of motivation that drives tourists to go on tour. Lastly, the attitude toward behavior itself is also a quite strong direct predictor of intentions ( $\beta = 0.489$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), proving that the positive attitude leads to a strong motivation of the Chinese domestic tourists to change their perceptions into practical traveling behavior. Such results emphasize that the credibility and interactivity of social media tourism-related content play an important role in forming attitudes and intentions of Chinese domestic tourists. Out of nine hypotheses, eight hypotheses are accepted. Perceived Pleasure, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Interactivity, and Perceived Credibility show a direct effect on Behavioral Attitude. But Perceived Pleasure does not show a direct effect on Behavioral Intentions. And Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Interactivity, Perceived Credibility, and Behavioral Attitude show a direct effect on Behavioral Intentions.





**Table 9. Indirect effect**

Indirect Path	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P-Value
Perceived Pleasure --> Behavioral Attitude --> Behavioral Intentions	0.114	0.047	0.122	0.001**
Perceived Usefulness --> Behavioral Attitude --> Behavioral Intentions	0.065	0.011	0.087	0.031*
Perceived Interactivity --> Behavioral Attitude --> Behavioral Intentions	0.224	0.126	0.226	0.001**
Perceived Credibility --> Behavioral Attitude --> Behavioral Intentions	0.195	0.091	0.178	0.001**

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.010$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Table 9 shows the hypothesis testing for the indirect effect. The results indicate that behavioral attitude is a major mediator between user perception and intentions of domestic tourists in China. Perceived interactivity ( $\beta = 0.224$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and credibility ( $\beta = 0.195$ ,  $p < 0.010$ ) were found to be the strongest indirect effects, with the realization that engaging and credible content influences the development of attitudes, which consequently influences intentions. The perceived pleasure also results in a significant indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.114$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that pleasant occasions enhance sentiments to drive future travel behaviour. Perceived usefulness has a smaller but statistically significant indirect effect ( $0.065$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), implying that helpful information also plays a role in contributing toward better attitudes. Comprehensively, these findings confirm the role of attitude as an influential channel between perceptions and intentions in domestic tourism decision-making. All four hypotheses are accepted. In this study, mediation analysis confirmed that Behavioral Attitude significantly mediated the relationship between Perceived Pleasure, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Interactivity, Perceived Credibility, and Behavioral Intentions.

**Table 10. Moderation effect**

Predictor	Coefficient	SE	T	P
Behavioral Attitude (BA)	0.679	0.945	7.1885	0.0000
Subjective Norms (SN)	0.271	0.1050	2.5883	0.0100
BA $\times$ SN (Interaction Term)	-0.0005	0.0025	-0.1935	0.8467

Note: Dependent Variable Behavioral Intentions

Table 10 shows that the moderation analysis identified that the subjective norms were not significantly interactive in the prediction of the behavioral intentions and the behavioral attitude ( $\beta = -0.0005$ ,  $p = 0.847$ ). This means that both attitude and subjective norms are relevant in the intention formation of tourists; however, the effects are independent of each other and not interactive. It seems that domestic tourists in China use personal testing as a hard criterion when making travel decisions. Although peer and family social approval is significant, it leads directly to intention rather than altering the availability of attitudes. It is an indication of a trend in which individual attitudes continue to be the key determinant of behavior. This could also be piloted in a cultural context since collectivist values talk of norms, yet individual attitudes dictate ultimate decisions. Thus, subjective norms do not moderate attitudes but rather work alongside the pair as subsidiaries of inducing intentions.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Interactivity and Engagement as Key Drivers

The results indicate that the perceived pleasure, perceived usefulness, perceived interactivity, and perceived credibility have very strong effects on behavioral attitudes, whereby the perceived interactivity is the most significantly effective. That is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), where more interactive elements (real-time feedback, personalized recommendations, and interesting interfaces) promote the perceived ease of use and usefulness, leading to better engagement of the users (Zhao et al., 2022; Chen & Wang, 2023). In line with the theory of engagement, the prevalence of interactivity



reveals the assumptions that the participatory experiences induce greater emotional and cognitive involvement that prompts more significant behavioral commitments (Brodie et al., 2021).

#### **4.2 Credibility and Trust in User-Generated Content**

The high impact of perceived credibility supports previous empirical findings that the credibility of information sources and content quality play a central role in informing user attitudes in online contexts (Alalwan et al., 2022). In the TAM framework, credibility facilitates perceived usefulness by checking with the user that the information is trustworthy and useful. In the case of domestic tourists in China, trustworthy user-generated information, including reviews and recommendations, is an influential measure of assessing destinations and platforms, thereby having a direct influence on intentions.

#### **4.3 The Roles of Usefulness and Pleasure**

Perceived usefulness was a strong direct predictor of behavioral intentions, consistent with TAM because usefulness is continually reported as more significant than hedonic enjoyment in decision-making (Venkatesh et al., 2016; Martins et al., 2022). Although perceived pleasure plays an important role in attitude formation, it does not directly affect intention. This difference highlights the fact that even though enjoyment can drive Chinese tourists towards digital tourism platforms, as long as actual intentions are concerned, tangible utility matters more than people may know: ease of interpretation and useful text receive greater prioritization in Chinese tourists than any other features of the tourist platform.

#### **4.4 Subjective Norms and Social Influence**

The subjective norms had a significant direct impact on the behavioral intention, supporting the TPB assumption that social expectations affect behavior (Ajzen, 2020). The moderation test, however, revealed no significant interaction between the subjective norms and the attitudes. This implies that although peer influence, influencers, and societal trends create intentions in tourists directly, they do not affect the correlation between intentions and the firmness of the attitude. This is indicative of a two-way process in the Chinese context, in which personal attitude and social influence impact mutually, as has been found in recent evidence with social commerce (Liu et al., 2023).

### **5. CONCLUSION**

This research investigated the role of Xiaohongshu and Douyin, two of the most popular social media platforms in China, on domestic tourism through their capacity to influence the perception of tourists, the attitude toward domestic tourism, and the intention to take action regarding tourism. According to the findings, user perceptions are the strong determinants of behavior, where the most powerful ones are the interactivity, the credibility, and the usefulness. Pleasure also proved to have only an indirect effect, fortifying the attitude which, in turn, increases behavioral intentions. More importantly, it confirmed attitudes as an important mediating mechanism, thereby justifying the roles played by these types of constructs connected to perception and behavioral planning. It is also apparent that subjective norms had an independent influence on intentions, where perception did not change, although individuals still felt pressure to take tourism-related actions.

The value of the study lies in the contribution to the tourism literature by combining perception-based variables with existing well-established behavioral principles, chiefly that of attitudes as mediators of social media-related decision-making. The research determines interactivity and credibility as the most potent predictors, which underscores the mechanism behind the influence of social media content on tourist involvement. These results are not only of interest in China but also have an international applicability since international research on the role of short-video platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and others, also affirms that user- and knowledge-generated and interactive content redefines destination image, travel decisions, and domestic tourism flows.

To advance these findings, future studies may implement a longitudinal study design to monitor shifts over time in the perception and practices and consider other factors, including perceived risk, trust in technology, and prior travel experience. The comparative cross-cultural analysis would help in identifying socio-cultural variations in the use of social media in tourism decision-making, and qualitative methods would assist in enriching the depth of context in quantitative analysis. In terms of managerial implications, the research will provide a propositional insight into tourism marketing and the destination managers. Second, it is important to optimize interactivity, live streaming, real-time questions and answers, and active engagement with their communities, which are important aspects that could be implemented to ensure more involvement of users. Second, credibility should be enhanced by having influencer partners disclose relationships and authentic user-generated content, and making the accounts verifiable. Third, usefulness and travel advice should be highlighted by incorporating local advice with useful hints like information on replenishment or weather, an itinerary, and so on to make the networks a reliable planning tool for tourists. Lastly, pleasure has an indirect effect, whereas through developing content that is visually aesthetically pleasing, emotionally engaging, and entertaining, the user experiences can be enriched and more positive attitudes developed towards tourism.

Finally, this paper demonstrates that other factors that play a major role as determinants of positive perception and behavioural intentions in domestic tourism are interactivity, credibility, usefulness, and positive experiences. These elements



can be integrated into digital campaigns selectively by tourism stakeholders in China and around the world to develop deeper engagement and support intent to travel, and in turn, achieve sustainable growth in domestic destinations.

### 5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The study adds to the theory of TAM, TPB, and engagement since it reveals that interactivity and credibility are the strongest factors that influence attitudes and intentions. It also brings out the separate role that hedonic pleasure plays as an attitudinal rather than a behavioral construct, and it emphasizes the intrinsic (as opposed to moderating) effect of subjective norms in explaining tourist choice. The insights can be used to augment the current frameworks by illustrating how the perceptions of users can be transformed into actual travel behaviors in the Chinese domestic tourism situation.

### 5.2 Managerial Implications

In the case of Xiaohongshu, improving the real-time interaction tools (i.e., interactive Q&A or live-sharing features) will provide an effective method to increase user attitudes. In the case of Douyin, more content verification and trust-building approaches with the influencers should be employed to reinforce credibility. In the cases of tourism organizations, useful, trustworthy information, accompanied by playful and interactive functions, can go a long way in developing the intentions of domestic tourists. Lastly, because subjective norms are independent, it should not be expected that campaigns should focus either on individual motivations (attitudes) or on the broad social dynamics to be effective as a whole.

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