

Role of Trusting Beliefs and Trust in the Adoption of Online Reviews of Hotels : Extension of the IAM Model

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Abstract

This study examined the role of trusting beliefs (TB) and trust in online reviews of hotels. It proposed to extend the information adoption model (IAM) to describe the usefulness of online reviews. The other factors examined were source credibility (SC), relevance, and accuracy. The study's conceptual model was tested on 208 respondents using structural equation modeling (SEM). The study investigated the precursors to information usefulness (IU), which was strongly associated with information adoption (IA). It revealed that trust in online reviews had a strong association with their IU, but there was no direct relationship between the SC of these reviews and IU. SC was associated with trust, which was associated with IU. TB was also strongly associated with SC. Relevance was associated with IU, but accuracy was not associated with the same.

Keywords : trusting beliefs, trust, IAM model, source credibility, online reviews

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The growing influence of social media and social network sites has added a new dimension to traditional word-of-mouth (WOM). This new dimension is electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Traditional WOM is the passing of information between a non-commercial communicator (such as family and friends) and a receiver concerning a product, service, or brand (Dichter, 1966). The advent of technology makes sharing opinions on products/services, even with strangers, possible. The factors influencing eWOM are discussed widely in earlier studies (Cheung et al., 2008; Chih et al., 2013; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Wang et al., 2016). eWOM is “any statement made by former, actual, or potential consumers about a company or product, which is made available to a multitude of institutions and individuals via the internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p.39).

Diverse ways of eWOM include online reviews, opinions, ratings, feedback, comments, and many more. Online reviews are considered the main form of eWOM employed frequently by consumers, and they also influence the branding opportunities of the companies (Gottschalk & Mafael, 2017; Robinson et al., 2012; Shimpi, 2018). Litvin et al. (2008) defined it as all the informal online messages connected to the characteristics or usage of goods, services, or sellers and addressed to the customers. Through eWOM, the information disseminates more quickly than traditional WOM, and it is more reliable than the information composed by the sellers (Chen & Xie, 2008).

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As per Nam et al. (2020), 91% of individuals viewed product reviews before buying a product or service. Typically, buyers, especially youngsters, who cannot judge any product or service in person, rely on online reviews (Ku et al., 2012; Park et al., 2007; Singh et al., 2016). According to Reyes-Menendez et al. (2018), an individual user would put in nearly 2 hours to look for the right deal after surfing an average of 26 websites. In a study done in the hotel industry by Gretzel and Yoo (2008), about 75% of travelers globally contemplate eWOM while planning their trips. In another study by Cheung and Thadani (2012), 91% of the users were likely to refer to online user-generated content before purchasing, and 46% of users indicated that online content impacted their decisions. The additional information provided to travelers via online reviews helped reduce a hotel's uncertainty regarding fitting their needs and preferences (Neirotti et al., 2016). The reviewer's attitude, in the context of concern for others as well as expressing his/her enjoyment, was also highlighted while writing reviews (Thakur et al., 2022).

As per the study by Moore and Lafreniere (2020), multiple players (sellers, senders, receivers, other consumers, and platforms) are involved in online WOM. The receiver of the information, thus, is faced with the challenging task of determining what information to depend on. This decision depends on their probability of satisfaction with the product and online players' reliability and content. Previous research has studied the concept of trust in the context of trust in websites (Li & Suh, 2015; McKnight & Kacmar, 2007) or e-commerce vendors (Dhote & Zahoor, 2017; Wang et al., 2020).

Very few studies observed trust in the content of the reviews themselves. The study by Yoo and Gretzel (2010) suggested that trust in consumer-generated media (CGM) depended on the nature of the internet site, perceptions of other CGM creators, and CGM readers' personalities. The greater the trust in CGM reports, the greater the benefits an individual derives from CGM. The perceived expertise of e-reviews, the reliability of the e-platform, the level and manner of communication, interconnectedness, and transparency also influence trust (Grewal & Stephan, 2019; Li & Suh, 2015; Sidali et al., 2009).

Trusting beliefs (TB) influence trusting intentions, which leads to trusting behavior. In their study, McKnight and Chervany (1996) defined the association among different trust constructs emanating from the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It was concluded that TB and trusting intentions are cognitive-based constructs, whereas trusting behavior is a behavior-based construct.

As per the previous studies, trust is a precondition for using CGM to get information and for further vacation scheduling (Enter & Michopoulou, 2013; Mendes-Filho et al., 2018). Few studies in the past have studied both the cognitive constructs of trust, that is, TB and trusting intentions (Hassan et al., 2018; McKnight et al., 2011; Schlosser et al., 2006). None of the studies have studied trust concerning its different aspects based on the cognitive and behavioral paradigms of online consumer reviews. The present research has tried to bridge this critical gap. We modified the information adoption model (IAM) to examine the aspect of the adoption of online reviews in the context of the trust construct.

Review of Literature and Hypotheses Development

The information adoption model (IAM) is an integration of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) and the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Fred Davis proposed the widely popular technology acceptance model (TAM) in 1989. It has been used in numerous studies to examine the acceptance of a particular technology, that is, internet banking (Alalwan et al., 2017; Boateng et al., 2016), mobile banking (Martins et al., 2014; Riffai et al., 2012), and fitness apps (Beldad & Hegner, 2018; Schepers & Wetzels, 2007). The ELM model by Petty and Cacioppo in 1981 is a well-researched persuasion framework with applications on the various source, message, recipient, and context variables (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The central and peripheral routes are two routes of persuasion that can impact an individual's attitudes and behaviors.

Integrating the two theories, namely TAM and ELM, Sussman and Siegal (2003), came up with a new model, the information adoption model (IAM). As per the model, argument quality and source credibility (SC) are the two critical factors of information usefulness (IU), further determining information adoption (IA). It also describes how consumers within the electronic communication portals modify their intentions and behaviors and adopt information (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

Online reviews are a dominant information source for consumers. Amazon.com reviews show that product quality, sentiments, and uncertainty expressed in reviews influence information helpfulness. Also, product quality impacts these relationships between variables (Siering & Muntermann, 2013). The factors impacting online reviews depend on the level of online engagement of the consumers (Sirithanaphonchai, 2017). In the study by Sidali et al. (2009), 80% of their respondents had chosen hotel accommodations based on online reviews. A study by Hussain et al. (2017) revealed that eWOM positively influenced perceived risk by SC which impacted IA. Consumers used eWOM to reduce risk while decision-making. Online reviews of hotels influenced the adults of the Netherlands, and these reviews enhanced their hotel considerations. These reviews helped in increasing consumer awareness.

The growing usage of online reviews by travelers has encouraged many researchers to study the various features and characteristics of online reviews in detail. Evaluating the truth and cognitive, emotional, or intentional distortion of content significantly influences trust in online reviews (Zelenka et al., 2021). Previous studies categorized online reviews in the form of clusters based on the themes examined by the researchers. Schuckert et al. (2015) identified five topical clusters to categorize numerous online review studies. These are opinion mining/sentiment analysis, online reviews and buying, motivation, the role of reviews, and satisfaction and management. Another study by Hlee et al. (2018) categorized online reviews based on certain factors impacting them. These factors are the receiver factor, review factor, source factor, and context factor.

Information Usefulness (IU) and Information Adoption (IA)

IU is the perception of an individual that the information provided through online forums will affect the purchase decision (Cheung, 2014). IU acts as a mediator in the IA process. It refers to the point that consumers perceive information on online forums to be valuable when making a purchase decision (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

The IA process is the process in which information is converted into internalized knowledge and is also known as the internalization phase of knowledge transfer (Nonaka, 1994). IA involves people engaging wilfully in using information. Thus, IU is a significant aspect of determining IA (Cheung et al., 2008). Consumers would probably adopt the information if it is valid (Wixom & Todd, 2005) and screen out the rest (Purnawirawan et al., 2012). IA further influences consumers' purchase intentions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Individuals generally scan online remarks before they conclude (Qiu & Li, 2010) and then adopt the information which they believe to be consequential after considering its validity (Zhang & Watts, 2003) and quality (Jiang et al., 2021). Thus, the study proposes the following hypothesis :

↳ **H1** : There exists a positive linear association between IU and IA in the case of online reviews.

Trust

Trust is the key concern of most internet users in case of exchanging information and integrating knowledge (Grabner-Kräuter & Bitter, 2015; Munar & Jacobsen, 2013). Trust is crucial in interpersonal and commercial associations (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) as it helps reduce human behavior's ambiguity on certain occasions (Lee et al., 2011). Specifically, in the case of an environment that involves people and technology, trust becomes a critical issue. In the case of online reviews, the extent to which the consumer feels the fairness and uprightness of

reviewers would decide the trust that an individual puts on the same. Thus, if an individual feels that someone posts reviews he/she can trust, then the usefulness of that review increases (Tormala et al., 2007). Consumers trust online reviews posted on independent websites rather than brands or corporate websites (Filiari, 2016; Wu & Lin, 2017). Online reviews are more useful if consumers believe they come from a highly trustworthy source (McCracken, 1989). Thus, the study proposes the following hypothesis :

↳ **H2** : There exists a positive linear association between trust and IU of online reviews.

Source Credibility (SC)

SC is a measure of a message's credibility by its recipient. It does not reflect on the message itself (Chaiken, 1980). It refers to the trust of the information receiver toward its source (Ohanian, 1990). The information is perceived to be useful and reliable when a highly credible source is providing that information. It helps in facilitating knowledge transfer (Ko et al., 2005). The perception of SC influences how information is processed and its usage (Nowak & McGloin, 2014). The quality of the information and its credibility determine the IU of a service or product and enable the users to evaluate the reviews in the best interest (Peng et al., 2016). The online environment gives people the liberty to voice their feelings without disclosing their identity. It suggests that the users should consider whether the reviewer is an expert and can be trusted to enable them to accept or refuse the information offered (Cheung et al., 2008; Herrero et al., 2015). If the online reviews are not perceived as credible, the individual will feel the source is not useful (McKnight & Kacmar, 2007). Thus, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

↳ **H3** : There exists a positive linear association between SC and IU of online reviews.

Credibility and trust are defined differently in earlier studies. Credibility relates to believability, while trust is about dependability (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). Thus, credibility is something/someone that is believable, while trust is the dependence or confidence in the other person/thing (McKnight & Chervany, 2001b). Trust mediates eWOM credibility and consumers' purchase intention (Rao & Rao, 2019). Although most online reviews are anonymous, consumers consider these reviews reliable. Individuals also consider them trustworthy (Sidali et al., 2009). The written reviews reduce the risk and increase trust (Hussain et al., 2017). Thus, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

↳ **H4** : There exists a positive linear association between SC & trust in online reviews.

Trusting Beliefs (TB)

TB means “one believes that the other party has one or more characteristics beneficial to oneself” (McKnight & Chervany, 2001a, p.46). They further defined four sub-constructs of TB, that is, competence, benevolence, integrity, and predictability. Consumers care more about benevolence rather than competence when it comes to making a purchase decision (McKnight et al., 2002). It allows the trusting party to rule out undesired behavior, thus reducing uncertainty (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Integrity has a more significant impact than benevolence or competence on a consumer's willingness to share his/her data with the vendor (Hosmer, 1995), implying that consumers care more for the vendor's integrity than his/her competence.

Credibility is multidimensional. In a study by Burgoon et al. (2000), authors identified the five dimensions to rate credibility. These are competence, character (including honesty and trust), sociability, dynamism, and dominance. An individual considers the message to be more trustworthy if the source of the message is perceived to be credible (Nowak & McGloin, 2014). Thus, it can be argued that the trusting belief should affect the source's

credibility. The higher the trusting belief, the higher the SC, and vice versa. Hence, the following hypothesis is :

↳ **H5** : There exists a positive relationship between TB and the SC of online reviews.

Relevance

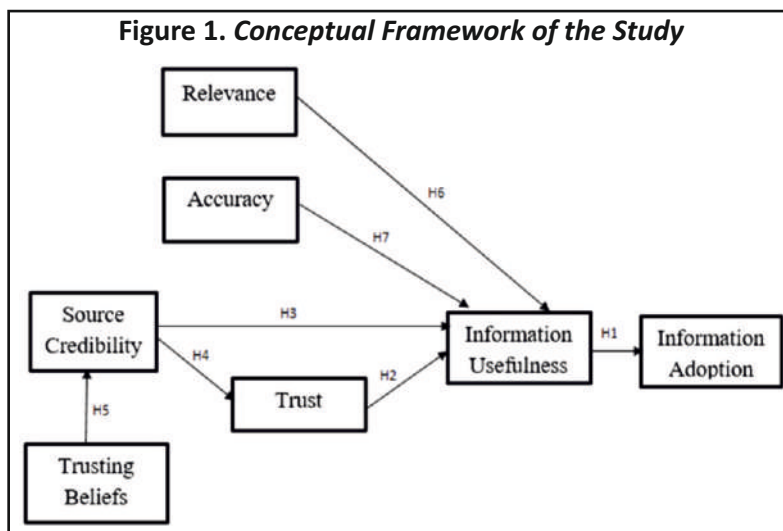
The relevance of the review states the degree to which an online review is helpful in a particular situation and depends on the specific customer needs (Wang & Strong, 1996). If the information a consumer receives is appropriate, the online review will be considered relevant. Online reviews by diverse target groups, who have their own opinions, can satisfy all kinds of information requirements (Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Since online users provide a solid weightage for time, the relevance of messages is essential (Cheung et al., 2008). Online users are likely to scrutinize all the web pages, though unlikely to read them all in detail (Madu & Madu, 2002). Thus, relevance plays an important role when making decisions (Dunk, 2004). It is the most dynamic element that impacts online consumers' buying behavior (Hussain et al., 2017). Thus, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

↳ **H6** : There exists a positive relationship between the relevance of the online reviews of the hotels and their usefulness.

Accuracy

The accuracy of information is directly linked to its reliability and influences a consumer's insight that the message is precise (Wixom & Todd, 2005). It is “the perfection in the recording of stored information to a suitable state in the actual world that the information symbolizes” (Nelson et al., 2005, p. 203). A consumer's perception regarding the accuracy of information depends on how he/she perceives the information, that is, if the information is reliable, believable, or credible (Wang & Strong, 1996). If the accuracy of information increases, the chances of its adoption also increase. It is one of the strongest predictors of adopting information from online reviews (Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Determining consumers' insight regarding the accuracy of information is vital to evaluate their buying behavior (Cheung et al., 2008). Thus, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

↳ **H7** : There exists a positive relationship between the accuracy of the online reviews of hotels and their usefulness.



Grounded on the above hypotheses, we propose the study's conceptual framework as depicted in Figure 1.

Methodology

This section highlights the data collection method and questionnaire development to collect the responses, followed by the hypothesis testing proposed in the model.

Sample and Data Collection

We used a structured questionnaire based on empirically validated and reliable scales for data collection. In the next stage, we conducted a pilot test on 50 respondents and made suitable alterations as per their feedback. The questionnaire was sent to 280 respondents in Delhi – NCR (National Capital Region) in November – December 2020. The sampling techniques included snowball and judgemental sampling techniques to collect the data. Finally, 208 responses were used for further analysis after looking for missing values and outliers. Almost 69% of the sample were females, 68% belonged to the age group between 18–25 years, and 65% of the respondents were graduates.

Measures

All the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with (1) indicating '*Strongly Agree*' to (5) as '*Strongly Disagree*.' The items for information adoption (IA) were adapted by Filieri and McLeay (2014) and Cheung et al. (2008). It has three items. The scale to measure information usefulness (IU) was measured using the three items scale by Bailey and Pearson (1983). Trust was measured using a five-item scale derived from Sidali et al. (2009). The construct: source credibility (SC) has four items adapted from Wu and Shaffer's study (1987). Nine items were used to measure an individual's trusting beliefs (TB) from the study by McKnight et al. (2002). The relevance was measured using a three-item scale derived from Citrin (2001). Finally, the accuracy was measured using a three-item scale by Wixom and Todd (2005).

Data Analysis and Results

To test the theoretical model, partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is used for analyzing the data and hypothesis testing. The tool deployed is Smart PLS v.3.2.7 based on total variance to estimate the parameters (Hair et al., 2019). The two-step analysis in PLS-SEM is done. Firstly, the outer loadings of the

Table 1. Outer Loadings

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	p-values
Acc1 <- Accuracy	0.567	0.554	0.114	4.972	0.000
Acc2 <- Accuracy	0.528	0.521	0.111	4.775	0.000
Acc3 <- Accuracy	0.973	0.972	0.111	8.759	0.000
IA2 <- IA	0.678	0.674	0.072	9.365	0.000
IA3 <- IA	0.845	0.850	0.077	11.032	0.000
IU1 <- IU	0.814	0.811	0.050	16.197	0.000
IU2 <- IU	0.705	0.703	0.067	10.594	0.000

<i>IU3 <- IU</i>	0.703	0.705	0.063	11.146	0.000
<i>Rel2 <- Relevance</i>	0.658	0.658	0.075	8.812	0.000
<i>Rel3 <- Relevance</i>	0.786	0.787	0.084	9.350	0.000
<i>SC1 <- SC</i>	0.669	0.665	0.087	7.680	0.000
<i>SC2 <- SC</i>	0.655	0.653	0.083	7.935	0.000
<i>SC3 <- SC</i>	0.852	0.848	0.062	13.683	0.000
<i>SC4 <- SC</i>	0.856	0.851	0.063	13.568	0.000
<i>TB4 <- TB</i>	0.452	0.446	0.128	3.543	0.000
<i>TB5 <- TB</i>	0.587	0.577	0.095	6.206	0.000
<i>TB7 <- TB</i>	0.904	0.891	0.068	13.284	0.000
<i>TB8 <- TB</i>	0.687	0.681	0.084	8.210	0.000
<i>TB9 <- TB</i>	0.719	0.710	0.107	6.700	0.000
<i>Trst1 <- Trust</i>	0.687	0.686	0.065	10.604	0.000
<i>Trst2 <- Trust</i>	0.629	0.625	0.073	8.634	0.000
<i>Trst3 <- Trust</i>	0.733	0.727	0.070	10.435	0.000
<i>Trst4 <- Trust</i>	0.832	0.826	0.069	11.989	0.000

Table 2. AVE and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Accuracy	0.749	0.836	0.746	0.516
IA	0.728	0.753	0.737	0.587
IU	0.785	0.791	0.786	0.551
Relevance	0.782	0.796	0.787	0.525
SC	0.848	0.860	0.847	0.584
Trust	0.818	0.822	0.813	0.524
TB	0.811	0.842	0.809	0.471

indicators were examined. The indicators having less than 0.5 loading values were removed (Hair et al., 2011). These were : IA1, Rel1, TB1, TB2, TB3, and TB6. Table 1 shows the outer loading of each item on its construct.

Secondly, the internal consistency and reliability were examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. AVE (average variance extracted) was used to measure the convergent validity. Though the recommended value of AVE is 0.50 or higher (Hair et al., 2011), values lower than 0.5 have been reported and accepted in social science studies (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Floyd & Widaman, 1995; Hegner et al., 2017; Jain & Sharma, 2019). Table 2 shows the AVE and reliability of all antecedents. The discriminant validity is measured using the hetrotrait - monotrait ratio (HTMT). The value of all antecedents was less than 0.85 (Hair et al., 2011), as shown in Table 3.

The model explains a 58.8% variation in IU and 40.6% in IA. The variation in SC is 38.5%, and that in trust is 23.1%. Based on the results, five out of seven hypotheses are supported. IU significantly influences IA. Therefore, the hypothesis H1 ($\beta = 0.638, p < 0.05$) is supported. The path coefficient between trust and IU is significant ($\beta = 0.492, p < 0.05$); thus, hypothesis H2 is supported. The relationship between SC and IU is not significant (H3) ($\beta = 0.289, ns$), while the relationship between SC and trust is significant (H4) ($\beta = 0.480, p < 0.05$). The results

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	Accuracy	IA	IU	Relevance	SC	Trust	TB
Accuracy							
IA	0.491						
IU	0.538	0.641					
Relevance	0.543	0.328	0.573				
SC	0.716	0.107	0.240	0.362			
Trust	0.614	0.685	0.619	0.301	0.466		
TB	0.768	0.600	0.649	0.601	0.608	0.677	

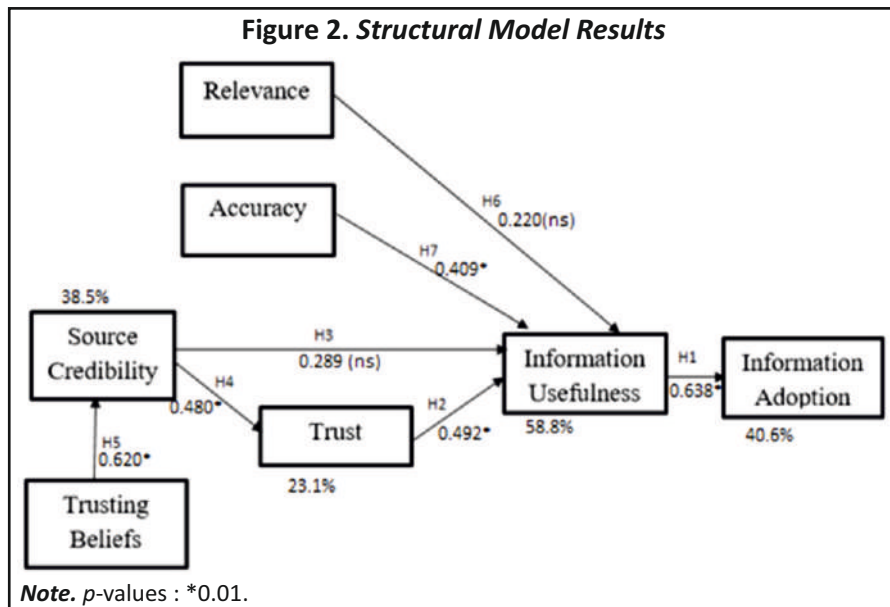


Table 4. Results of Standardized Estimates of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	Hypothesis Supported/ Not Supported
H1	Information Usefulness → Information Adoption	0.638	0.000	Supported
H2	Trust → Information Usefulness	0.492	0.000	Supported
H3	Source Credibility → Information Usefulness	0.289	0.202	Not Supported
H4	Source Credibility → Trust	0.480	0.000	Supported
H5	Trusting Belief → Source Credibility	0.620	0.000	Supported
H6	Accuracy → Information Usefulness	0.220	0.242	Not Supported
H7	Relevance → Information Usefulness	0.409	0.000	Supported

support H5 ($\beta = 0.620, p < 0.05$), hypothesizing that trusting belief positively influences SC. The path coefficient between accuracy and IU is insignificant ($\beta = 0.220, ns$); hence, hypothesis H6 is not supported. Relevance

positively influences IU, thus supporting hypothesis H7 ($\beta = 0.409, p < 0.05$). Table 4 summarizes all the hypotheses' relationships. Thus, we infer that the structural model strongly supports the conceptual model, with five out of seven statistically significant hypotheses.

Discussion

The present study examines the role of TB and trust in online reviews of hotels by extending the information adoption model (IAM). With the advent of technology, more and more consumers are using online reviews before they book any hotel while traveling, as examined in the earlier studies done by Gretzel and Yoo (2008), Cheung and Thadani (2012), and Sidali et al. (2009). Although the earlier studies have taken various antecedents to examine their association with online reviews, none of the past studies have taken the cognitive and behavioral aspects of trust together to examine their usefulness in online reviews of hotels. The present study is an attempt to fulfill this critical research gap.

The results of the present study show that IU is associated with IA. If an individual finds the information shared in online reviews useful, he/she is more likely to adopt that information. The propensity to adopt the information increases with the increase in the usefulness of the information. The results are similar to previous studies' results (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Purnawirawan et al., 2012; Wixom & Todd, 2005). The study also investigates the precursors to IU. It reveals that trust in online reviews is strongly associated with IU, but the SC of online reviews does not have a direct relationship with IU. The SC is associated with trust, which is associated with IU. TB is also strongly associated with SC.

The above results show the importance of trust in online reviews. Most of the reviews posted online are anonymous. There is no way through which the recipient can identify the identity of the reviewers. Due to this lack of transparency, the recipients may not find the information given by the reviewers useful and hence would not be adopting the same. However, on the other hand, if the recipient of the information believes that the reviewer is giving an impartial review with utmost integrity, then the credibility of the reviewer increases. The recipient of the reviews needs to trust that the reviewer is competent enough to give the reviews as well as he/she is giving the reviews in good faith, taking care of the recipient's interests. The recipient of the reviews should be able to predict the kind of stay in the hotel based on online reviews.

The increase in TB (competence, benevolence, integrity, and predictability) would increase the SC of the reviewer. However, if there is no trust in the source's credibility, then the information is of no use to the recipient. The trust factor is essential to make the information useful for the reviewer, which he/she can adopt. The results of the present study are similar to the studies done in the past (Burgoon et al., 2000; Cheung et al., 2008; Mack et al., 2008). It was concluded from these studies that traditional WOM has more credibility as compared to eWOM because traditional WOMs are considered to be more trustworthy (Liu, 2006). In the case of traditional WOMs, the reviewer and receiver could interact face-to-face with each other. The receiver may have strong personal ties with the reviewer and the trust factor, in any case, is higher in the case of resilient personal relationships. The parties engender a sense of mutuality or involvement and are considered more credible and influential (Burgoon et al., 2000). It makes the cognitive and behavioral constructs of trust the important antecedents for the usefulness of online reviews.

The other construct which is found to be associated with the usefulness of online reviews is relevance. If the online review is considered relevant for the recipient, its usefulness will increase. Measuring the accuracy of the information given online by the reviewer is difficult. If the reviewer is anonymous, it is difficult for the recipient of the review to judge whether the information he/she gave online is accurate. The accuracy is not found to be associated with IU.

Managerial and Theoretical Implications

The study has important implications for the tourism industry. Online reviews have become a critical decision-making factor for people booking hotels online. The people go through them before they make the final decision. The study has extended the information adoption model (IAM) and made TB and trust the critical antecedents of the model. The difference between face-to-face and online reviews has been made clear in the study. People tend to have implicit trust in the person in front of them as other factors could be looked at rather than only the spoken words. The individual could judge his/her body language, the tone of his/her speech, and the motive behind the reviews. However, all these factors are missing in the case of online reviews.

The study shows that the review needs to be relevant and that an individual needs to trust the review. In the case of online reviews, an individual just has a few written words from some anonymous reviewer. The implicit trust between the two parties, the reviewer and recipient, is missing. It would be difficult for the recipient to fathom whether the reviewer is giving the review honestly and impartially. It would also be challenging to understand the motive behind the review and whether the person is giving the review in good faith, keeping in mind the recipient's interest.

The main concern for the various parties in the online reviews is to increase the trust in these reviews by the recipients. If the trust is there, then the reviews' usefulness increases, hence their adoption. One way to increase trust is to ask the reviewers to identify themselves. Ideally, they should disclose the information after availing of the hotel's services. The individual can always mention the season or the month in which she/he visited the hotel in case she/ he is not comfortable giving the exact dates of her/his stay. The purpose of the visit should also be mentioned, whether it was an official trip or a personal trip with the family. These things would give a clear perspective to the recipient by increasing the integrity and competence of the review itself. The recipient can interpret the context in which the reviewer is writing the review. These steps would help to increase the SC of who is writing the review and subsequent trust in the reviews. This would increase the usefulness of the reviews following their adoption.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The present research is not entirely free from limitations. We studied the influence of trust and TB on the IU and the adoption of online reviews. There are other methods, like blogs, which an individual can use to get to know about the destination hotels that are beyond the scope of this study. Also, many other factors that impact the information's usefulness, like perceived risk, website design, recipient demographic factors, timeliness, and reviews' comprehensiveness, can be studied.

A comparative study in the context of varying demographic and socio-cultural backgrounds is proposed for future research directions. It should help analyze how similarly or differently people adopt the information in online reviews. The study has 68% of the respondents aged between 18 – 25 years. A more heterogeneous sample with respondents from different age groups or generations, GEN X, millennials (GEN Y), or i-generation (GEN Z), could be used. Further, factors related to the individuals themselves, as mentioned above, should be tested to improve generalisability. The present study has taken all the antecedents of TB as one construct. Future studies can take these constructs separately and see their influence on SC. Despite the limitations mentioned above, the usefulness of the study cannot be denied in understanding the antecedents of online reviews in a better way.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Shalini Gautam conceived the idea, identified the research gaps, and developed the research model.

Dr. Priyanka Malik finalized the review of the literature. All three authors contributed equally to collecting the empirical data. Shanu Jain helped in the analysis of data using PLS-SEM. The conclusion and implications were finalized after a thorough discussion among all the authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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