



WORKING PAPER

ITLS-WP-15-07

**The influence of key determinants
on consumers' choice in tourism
destination**

**By
Peter Lok, Vincent Cheng² and Jo Rhodes³**

² Macau University of Science and Technology,
Macau

³ Macquarie University, Australia

April 2015

ISSN 1832-570X

**INSTITUTE of TRANSPORT and
LOGISTICS STUDIES**

The Australian Key Centre in
Transport and Logistics Management

The University of Sydney

Established under the Australian Research Council's Key Centre Program.

NUMBER: Working Paper ITLS-WP-15-07

TITLE: **The influence of key determinants on consumers' choice in tourism destination**

ABSTRACT: This study aims at developing a model that explains the effect of different stimuli types (ST) (i.e. online reviews and advertising) on a tourist's intention to visit (ITV) a new destination. Two separate studies were conducted to establish and validate the model that consists of stimulus mediators (SM): destination trust (DT) and interest (DI). 113 surveys were obtained in study 1 which focused on the effect of the different stimuli types. Study 2 used the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) to explore how advertising could persuade consumers to make purchasing decisions and how tourists could be persuaded to visit attraction sites. 146 surveys were obtained in study 2. Structured equation model (SEM) technique was adopted in the data analysis. The result of the first study showed that advertising has a stronger effect than positive online reviews. The second study showed that peripheral route of elaborate likelihood model has a stronger effect than central route in the context of tourism. That is, peripheral route that could generate a strong spontaneous impact by providing a vivid portrait of what a tourist would experience through an image cue.

KEY WORDS: *Advertising, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Intention to visit, Trust, Interest*

AUTHORS: **Lok, Cheng and Rhodes**

CONTACT: INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS STUDIES (C13)
The Australian Key Centre in Transport and Logistics Management
The University of Sydney NSW 2006 Australia
Telephone: +612 9114 1824
E-mail: business.itlsinfo@sydney.edu.au
Internet: <http://sydney.edu.au/business/itls>

DATE: April 2015

1. Introduction

The reliability of intangible services cannot be tested or experienced in advance; testing an intangible service burdens consumers with a dilemma in that they risk making a poor decision whilst then being unable to return the service. Choosing a tourist destination is an example of this hazardous decision making process as it may incur a high level of risk and uncertainty. Consequently, the topic of destination decision-making process receives substantial attention from both academic researchers and practitioners in the travel industry.

Destination image influences tourists' decision making-process in selecting a travel destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003, Goodrich, 1978). Despite the richness of the extant literature on destination image, it mainly focuses on the formation and characteristics of the destination image with limited research addressing why destination image can influence intention to visit a new destination. This study proposes that theories on human behavior such as the theory of planned behavior -TPB (Ajzen 1991) can be used to explain this process.

Past studies have used the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in different discipline areas to examine how intention can be influenced by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavior control (Ajzen, 1991). Um and Crompton's study (1990) provided evidence to support the premise that attitude is a significant predictor of destination selection (both in considering the set of alternatives selected and the final choice). Trust, an essential attitude attribute, is closely associated with risk and the interdependence between the consumer and service providers (Rousseau, et al., 1998); it addresses the tourist's concerns regarding perceived risk in selecting a destination that provides a range of intangible services.

One of the shortcomings of TPB is that it focuses primarily on cognitive evaluation and does not include emotional variables as do affective based behavior models (Cheung, et al., 2000). For example, Triandis' theory of interpersonal behavior (TIB) includes affects, habits and other social factors in predicting behavior (Triandis, 1977). A composite model, that consists of both

cognitive and affective factors, is more effective in predicting behavior intention (Brinberg, 1981). In this study, tourists' interest in a destination is added to construct a composite model. Interest in a destination is shown to be an important emotion that drives a tourist's need to travel to destinations (Sharpley, 2008). In the context of tourism, other factors like subjective norms and perceived control in TPB, and social determinants and perceived consequence in the TIB have relatively less importance to this study and therefore are not included. This research proposes to construct a model using trust and interest (i.e. cognitive and emotional aspects) in a destination as the mediating variables to study tourists' intention to visit a new destination.

The model was tested by using the effects of different types of stimulus to form the attitude and affect of the tourist. The research consists of two studies that use two different sets of stimulus. The first study uses advertising and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) or online reviews as the two stimuli. Following the result of the first study that indicated advertising has a stronger effect on both mediating variables, the second study compared the effect of the central route and peripheral route of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) which is a prominent model to persuasion in advertising. This study contributes to the theories that explain tourists' intention to visit (ITV) a new destination using both attitude and emotion based factors to construct behavior intention model. This ITV model could be generalized for making decisions to purchase intangible services in other businesses. Furthermore, the results of the two studies in this research contribute to a better understanding of the relative strength of different types of destination information influence tourists to select a destination through mediating variables such as trust and interest.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Trust

Trust is a basic construct in the research in many different disciplines that focuses on human activities. Rousseau et al.(1998) noted two necessary conditions in the conceptualization of trust. The first condition is risk and the second is the interdependence of one on another party.

These two conditions are present in most activities in economics, sociology, organization science and marketing and must be present for trust to occur. Trust is commonly referred to as a “willingness to be vulnerable” (Mayer, et al., 1995) and is closely related to the concept of risk. Trust is also defined more extensively as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (Moorman, et al., 1993 p.82). Rousseau et al. (1998 p.395) offer a multi-disciplinary definition and posit trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another”. This last definition seems to capture the essences of most other definitions of trust (Balliet and Van Lange, 2013).

From a marketing point of view, trust is a fundamental issue that forms a bond between customers and a brand (Hiscock, 2001). This study adopts a precise and short definition for brand: “A brand is a definition of a particular company or product” (Jones and Bonevac, 2013). It was found that trust in the brand has a positive effect on consumers' intention to purchase (Sichtmann, 2007). Although the concept of destination has some similarities with brand, it does not represent any company and their product or service. This study defines destination trust (DT) as the tourists' willingness to visit a destination in which they have confidence. This definition satisfies the two conditions for trust. Confidence is associated with a tourist's risk in the destination and the interdependence of the tourist and the destination.

When customers need to buy services that are intangible, their buying intention is critically affected by the perceived risk associated with the transaction (Grewal, et al., 1994). Making a decision to visit a novel destination also requires tourists to take into consideration a variety of perceived risks. Although there are various scales developed for brand trust and advertisement trust, there are virtually no such trust scales related to measuring destination trust. Despite the important role of trust in destination selection, very few studies include destination trust as an independent variable.

Trust can reduce perceived risk, and this leads to a positive influence on user's behavior intention (Lee and Song, 2013, Pavlou, 2003, Schaupp, et al., 2010). Studies in tourism and hospitality also reveal similar findings. Tourists' intention to book a hotel is influenced by their trust towards the property (Sparks and Browning, 2011). Trust was found to have a positive influence on tourist loyalty (Loureiro and González, 2008) and hotels rely on earning the guests' trust to establish a long term relationship (Bowen and Shoemaker, 1998). As a summary, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: An increase in destination trust will lead to an increase in tourists' intention to visit a new destination.

2.2 *Interest*

Interest is a feeling or emotion that causes a person to focus their attention on something (Silvia, 2006). It is also a general concept that covers other important emotions such as curiosity.

Tourists who want to travel to a destination are driven by some kind of need that induces them to take part in a touristic activity (Sharpley, 2008). These are motives that influence a person's behavior for satisfaction and play an important role in the stimulus-cognitive-response model of human behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Interest is, therefore, a motivation that is "a need that drives an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction" (Beeril and Martin, 2004, p626). Therefore, this study defines destination interest (DI) as an emotion that causes tourists' to focus their attention on a destination.

A number of empirical studies suggest motivation factors can be classified as extrinsic and intrinsic factors. While extrinsic factors can be represented by the culture in which the tourist lives, intrinsic factors can be represented by tourists looking for the difference and the freshness of the destination (Mehmetoglu, 2007). Cohen (1972) argued that novelty motivation depends on the tourists' quest for novelty. Tourism is one of the important media that people can use to acquire knowledge and develop new ideas (Falk, et al., 2012); and discovering something new is one of the most popular reasons for pleasure travel (Crompton and Keown, 2009). As

scholars have argued for the need for curiosity to be examined to understand why people travel (Mayo and Jarvis, 1981) curiosity is a major concept included in this study.

Curiosity is considered to be a critical motive that influences human behavior at all stages of their life (Loewenstein, 1994). It is proposed either as a feeling-of-interest or a feeling of deprivation. A feeling of interest is provoked when people feel that it would be enjoyable to discover new things. In the latter case, curiosity is stimulated when people feel a lack of important and meaningful information (Litman and Silvia, 2006). This lack of information will contribute to people's uncertainty. Curiosity is generally agreed to be defined as "a desire to acquire new knowledge and new sensory experience" (Litman and Silvia, 2006 p.318).

Berlyne (1960) categorizes curiosity into two dimensions: the first extending between perceptual and epistemic curiosity and the other between specific and diverse curiosities. Perceptual curiosity refers to "a drive which is aroused by novel stimuli and reduced by continued exposure to these stimuli" (Berlyne, 1954 p.180); this can lead to an interest in exploring new destinations. On the other hand, epistemic curiosity refers to a desire for knowledge. It examines people's interest in learning about new things. Specific curiosity refers to the aspiration for a particular piece of information and diverse curiosity refers to a more general seeking of stimulation. As a summary, curiosity is a major cause of DI. The external stimulation and a tourist's quest for new knowledge trigger exploration behaviour. Despite the importance of DI, little research has tried to explore the impact of the DI on a tourist's curiosity and thus the level of interest in the destination. To conclude the discussion on DI, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: An increase in destination interest will lead to an increase in a tourist's intention to visit a new destination.

3. Research Design

The relationships between types of stimulus mediator (SM), destination trust (DT), destination interest (DI), and intention to visit (ITV) are depicted in the research framework shown in Figure 1. Since the study expected that a change in stimulus type (ST) (advertising or eWOM) will produce some effects on DT and DI, hypothesis H3 and H4 are proposed as follows:

H3: A change in stimulus type (advertising or eWOM) will lead to a change in destination trust

H4: A change in stimulus type (advertising or eWOM) will lead to a change in destination interest

Two studies were used to establish and then verify the robustness of the model. In the first study, the stimuli consisted of traditional advertisements and online reviews. In the second study, the stimuli consisted of the two types of Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) routes that can be either central or peripheral.

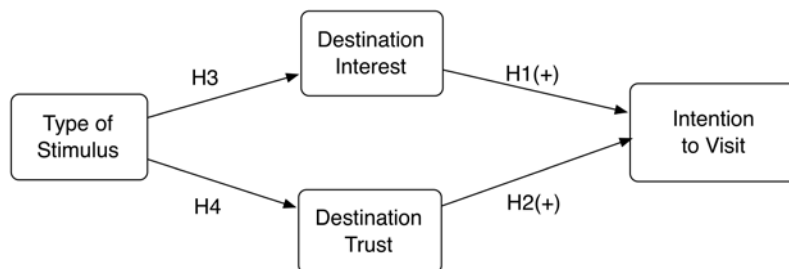


Figure 1: Research Framework

4. Data collection method

A quasi-experiment design using a structured questionnaire was adopted in this research. A pretest of the questionnaire was done with 30 respondents in each study. In both studies, the interviewers procured consent from the respondents to participate in the study. The respondents were asked to fill in some basic information regarding their knowledge of the destination as the first step, and then materials about a selected destination in either stimulus type (ST) were

presented to the respondents. After the respondents had read the materials, they were asked to complete the scales as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Destination Decision Model Measures

<i>Destination Trust (DT)</i>		<i>Study 1</i>				<i>Study 2</i>			
<i>Destination Trust (DT)</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>t-value</i>
T1	I have confidence that Macau will give me a delightful travel experience.	4.64	1.07	0.8981	<0.01	2.26	0.85	0.8317	<0.01
T2	Macau guarantee a satisfactory travel experience	4.76	1.06	0.9197	<0.01	2.58	1.07	0.7949	<0.01
T3	Travel to Macau would not disappoint me	4.63	1.15	0.9159	<0.01	2.60	0.95	0.8296	<0.01
T4	Macau meets my expectation	4.63	1.09	0.9003	<0.01	2.56	1.00	0.8719	<0.01
T5	I feel safe if I decide to visit Macau	4.73	1.15	0.9304	<0.01	2.73	1.06	0.8419	<0.01
T6	Macau is a nice place to stay	4.81	1.27	0.9022	<0.01	2.56	0.97	0.7947	<0.01
<i>Destination Interest (DI)</i>									
N1	I want to know more about Macau	5.11	1.31	0.8231	<0.01	2.53	1.06	0.8317	<0.01
N2	I want to receive some more information about Macau	5.02	1.23	0.9101	<0.01	2.53	1.06	0.7949	<0.01
N3	Macau has the attractions that I like	4.70	1.13	0.9150	<0.01	2.63	1.07	0.8296	<0.01
N4	Macau has a unique atmosphere that attracts me	4.66	1.07	0.9044	<0.01	2.37	0.93	0.8719	<0.01
N5	Travel to Macau can let me learn some interesting things	4.83	1.23	0.9321	<0.01	2.45	0.93	0.8419	<0.01
N6	Travel to Macau can let me try some interesting things	4.86	1.19	0.9309	<0.01	2.51	1.01	0.7947	<0.01
<i>Intention to Visit (ITV) : What is the likelihood that:</i>									
V1	You would travel to Macau	4.82	1.16	0.9510	<0.01	2.01	0.90	0.9376	<0.01
V2	You would recommend Macau to your friends	4.89	1.24	0.9544	<0.01	2.27	0.74	0.9309	<0.01
V3	You would consider Macau as a travel destination	4.82	1.19	0.9579	<0.01	2.18	0.91	0.9176	<0.01

The research used a multiple indicator, multi independent cause model (MIMIC) or group code approach taken from the literature for analysis (Aiken, et al., 1994, Russell, et al., 1998). The method resembles the use of dummy variables in regression analysis. The stimulus given to the respondents was modeled as observable variables. The group that read materials with online

reviews (study 1) or central route (study 2) are coded as 'zero' and advertisement (study 1) or peripheral route (study 2) as 'one'. If the path from the group variable to the latent variable was significantly different from zero, then the means of the two groups were different across the latent variable.

Macau was selected as the destination in this study because tourism is a major economic support for this city. The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has an enormous amount of resources to promote Macau. Macau is famous on a global scale, and, therefore, it is easier to locate different sources of promotion information that can be used to construct the material as used in this study.

The DT scales in the questionnaire (T1 to T4) were adopted from the trust scale developed to measure the trust level of customers with their intention to purchase an intangible service like hotel rooms (Cheng and Loi, 2014, Cheng, et al., 2013). In addition, two more scales (T5 and T6) on trust derived from destination image literature (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003) were added to this original set. The Destination Interest (DI) scales (N1, N2, N5, and N6) were developed with reference to the role of curiosity in the motivation of tourists to travel (Litman and Silvia, 2006, Litman and Spielberger, 2003, Mehmetoglu, 2012). The scales center on the tourist's interest to know and learn about a new destination. Two scales (T3 and T4) about the attractions and atmosphere favoured by the tourist were added so that they will feel interest in the destination.

The use of behavior intention as a proxy has shown to be a good predictor of actual behavior (Douglas, 1971, Midgley and Dowling, 1993). In destination marketing, researchers use intention to travel as a predictor of the actual behavior of travelling (Beerli, et al., 2007, Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012, Ng, et al., 2007). Hence, the intention to visit (ITV) scales consist of items adopted from literature (Cheng and Loi, 2014, Park and Kim, 2008) that were used to measure the intention to purchase of hotel room. The scales employed seven-point items ranging from 'strongly agree' or 'very high' to 'strongly disagree' or 'very Low'.

5. Data Analysis Methods

The relationships between variables were analyzed using a structural equation modeling (SEM) method. This study used partial least square (PLS) as the SEM estimator because the focus was on model building and investigating the prediction power of the independent variables (Hair, et al., 2011, Sarstedt, et al., 2014). SmartPLS software 2.0M3 (Ringle and Alexander, 2005) was used to perform the analysis. The procedure of the analysis followed the recommendations of Hair, et al. (2011) and Henseler, et al. (2009), that involved two stages of testing for measurement and structural models. The number of samples follows the requirement proposed by Ringle et al. (2012) using Cohen's power tables (1992).

Tests of the measurement model comprise the checking of internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability), indicator reliability (loading > 0.7), convergent validity (average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.5), and discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion (AVE of each latent variable is larger than the variable's highest squared correlation with any other latent variable). The testing of the structural model involves examining the R-square values of the endogenous variable. Bootstrapping is then used to assess the path coefficient's significance with 5000 bootstrap samples. The last step, blindfolding procedure was used to check for predictive relevance in which Stone-Geisser's Q-square values of 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 could be described as large, medium, and small, respectively.

5.1 Study 1 – Advertising versus eWOM

Advertising and word-of-mouth (WOM) are two important media used in marketing to acquire long term new customers. In the internet context, WOM is usually referred to as electronic WOM (eWOM) to highlight the use of electronic media for the generation and consumption of WOM messages. Scholars have tried to compare the relative importance of advertising and WOM on many occasions. Some concluded that WOM is more important than an advertisement in leading consumers to try a product (Sheth, 1971). WOM has also been shown to be more

effective than advertising to convert unfavorable or neutral inclinations into positive ones (Day, 1971). eWOM is viewed as more trustworthy (Murray, 1991) and a more forceful influence in purchasing decisions (Mangold, 1987). With the ubiquitous adoption of the Internet and the popular use of eWOM, some scholars argue that eWOM is the most powerful force in the marketplace (Silverman 2001). eWOM referrals were also found to have substantially longer carryover effects than traditional advertising (Trusov 2009).

Despite the hype regarding the power of eWOM, marketers still invest a large amount of money in mobile advertising (Bart, et al., 2014). A reason may be that advertising, whether online or offline, is a powerful and consistent medium to drive consumer behavior for increasing brand advocacy and online search, visiting a site or generating eWOM (Graham and Havlena, 2007). While advertising may add more short-term value, eWOM adds more long-term value to a brand (Villanueva, et al., 2008). However, eWOM is hard to control, and the generation of eWOM is affected by multiple attributes (Buttle, 1998). It can be concluded that advertising and eWOM have different strengths in driving consumer behavior. In this study, advertising and eWOM are the two different kinds of stimulus used to verify the effectiveness of the ITV model.

5.2 *Data collection and analysis*

The study was conducted at the airports of Taiwan, the United States, and Mexico. Convenient sampling technique was adopted to obtain passengers dwelling in the departure lounges of the airports. The materials for the advertisement were adopted from MGTO's promotional materials. eWOM was represented by online reviews collected from Tripadvisor.com and travel information sites like British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) and Lonely Planet. Examples of the material for the Advertising and eWOM are shown in Appendix A and B respectively. There were 133 valid responses and their characteristics are shown in Table 2. The mean, standard deviation, loadings, and significance of the indicators are shown in Table 1. The test results in Table 3 show that the indicators satisfied the requirements of the reliability and convergent

validity tests. However, the discriminant validity requirement on the constructs DI and DT cannot be satisfied.

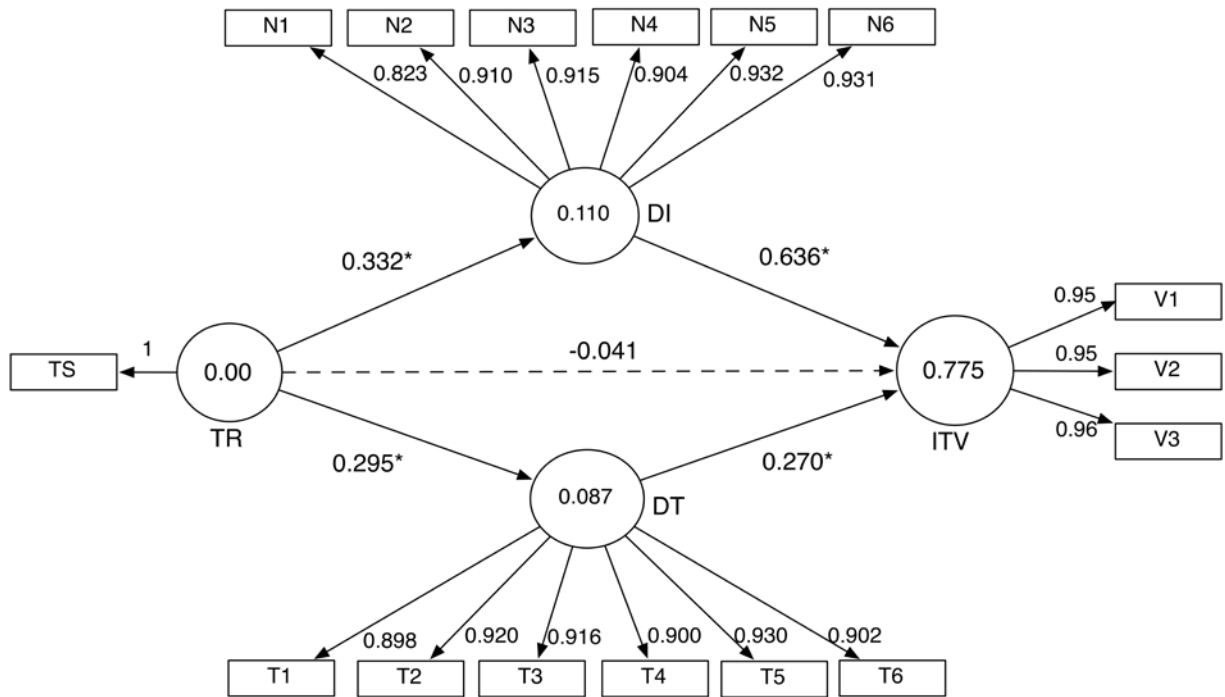
Table 3: Measurement model results

Study 1

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Average Variance Extracted</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Highest squared correlation with other variables</i>
Destination Interest (DI)	0.8160	0.9637	0.9546	0.8624*
Destination Trust (DT)	0.8302	0.9670	0.9591	0.8624*
Intention to Visit (ITV)	0.9109	0.9684	0.9511	0.7628

* Highest squared correlation with other variables > AVE

The results of the testing of the structural model are shown in Figure 2. All the paths except 'TS to ITV' are significant. Therefore, a change of types of stimulus only affects ITV through the mediating variables. TS has almost the same explained variance value to DT (8.5%) and DI (8.7%). The R-square of ITV has a value of 0.775, and a Q-square value of 0.6891. Given the existence of other factors like the needs of the tourist, social group influence and situational constraints that can influence a tourist's ITV, the variable destination trust, and destination interest are considered substantial. The Q-square value indicates that the model has good predictive power. Following the recommendation by Albers (2009), the total effects that are the sum of the direct effect and all indirect effects of a particular latent variable on another, are also reported in Table 4 with a summary of the results of hypothesis testing. The total effect provides "more reasonable grounds for conclusions on the inner path model relationships" (Henseler, et al., 2009).



Note: * = $p < 0.01$

-----► Path is not significant

Figure 2: Final Structural Model – Study 1

Since the constructs have high reliability, the indicators have high item loading and the explained variance is also high, the failure to satisfy the Fornell and Larcker discriminant validity “does not necessarily mean that the chance of committing a Type II error is high” (Grewal, et al., 2004, Shiu, et al., 2011). Therefore, this study posits that the change in types of stimulus has significant influence on a customer’s ITV through both intervening variables. Since advertising was shown to have stronger effect, a further study was carried out to validate the model focus on different types of stimuli in advertising.

Table 4: Study 1 - Total effect and summary of hypotheses testing

<i>Predictor variable -> response variable</i>	<i>Total Effect</i>	<i>t-statistics</i>		
TS -> DI	0.3323	4.4951		
TS -> DT	0.2945	3.8038		
TS -> ITV	0.2495	3.1160		
DT -> ITV	0.2704	2.6798		
DI -> ITV	0.6361	6.5280		

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>t-statistics</i>	<i>Result</i>
H1: An increase in destination trust will lead to an increase in intention to visit a new destination	0.386	3.970	Support
H2: An increase in destination Interest will lead to an increase in intention to visit a new destination	0.517	5.116	Support
H3: A change in stimulus type will lead to change in DT	0.295	3.650	Support
H4: A change in stimulus type will lead to change in DI	0.292	3.753	Support

$p < 0.01$, t -statistics = 2.58 $p < 0.05$, t -statistics = 1.96

5.3 Study 2 – Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) routes

The ELM is widely used to explain in advertising on how consumers can be persuaded to make purchasing decisions and how tourists can be persuaded to visit attractions. The ELM developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1984) focuses on the process of interpretation of the messages instead of how the variables and the messages affect the interpretation stage of information processing. ELM posits that there are two routes of persuasion: central and peripheral. The central route “resulted from a person’s careful and thoughtful consideration of the true merits of the information presented in support of an advocacy” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986 p.125). On the other hand, the peripheral route “occurred as a result of some simple cue in the persuasion context (e.g. an attractive source) that induced change without necessitating scrutiny of the true merits of the information presented” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986 p.125). Therefore, when the elaboration likelihood is high, people tend to use the central route to persuasion. On the other hand, the peripheral route will be more important when the elaborate likelihood is low. Whilst

examples have been given by Petty et al. (1992) on the application of the ELM in tourism and recreation, very limited empirical studies exist to verify these examples.

There are certain factors like involvement; argument quality, argument quantity and the source of information that are found to have different effects on the two routes to persuasion. Research has found that the level of involvement directly influences a tourist's information search behavior (Gursoy and McCleary, 2004). When tourists are searching and reading materials about a destination, they are likely to be in a high involvement state. Since management will have promotion material in various formats, it is likely that a tourist will receive these messages from at least one channel in the course of selecting a destination. Hence, factors such as involvement, the source of material, and argument quantity could be assumed to be relatively constant in both types of routes in destination selection. Thus, this study focuses on the argument quality when adopting different routes to persuasion. Under this condition, the evaluation is likely based on salient cues. The different styles of presenting the destination to the tourist would likely form different destination images that will affect the tourist's trust and curiosity on the destination.

5.4 *Data collection and analysis*

The data collection was conducted in the Guangzhou city of China. The respondents were selected from prospective tourists visiting travel agents in the city. Although Guangzhou is far from Macau, the transportation is very convenient. The barriers to visiting Macau are virtually nil. This characteristic helps to reduce the environmental factors that will affect tourist's ITV. Since some of the respondents can only read Chinese, the reverse translation method, reviewed by two experts with bilingual capability, was used to produce a Chinese version of the questionnaire.

The materials for both the Chinese and English versions are genuine information adopted from MGTO's promotion materials. Examples of the material for the central route and peripheral route are shown in Appendix A and C respectively. Materials for the central route mainly

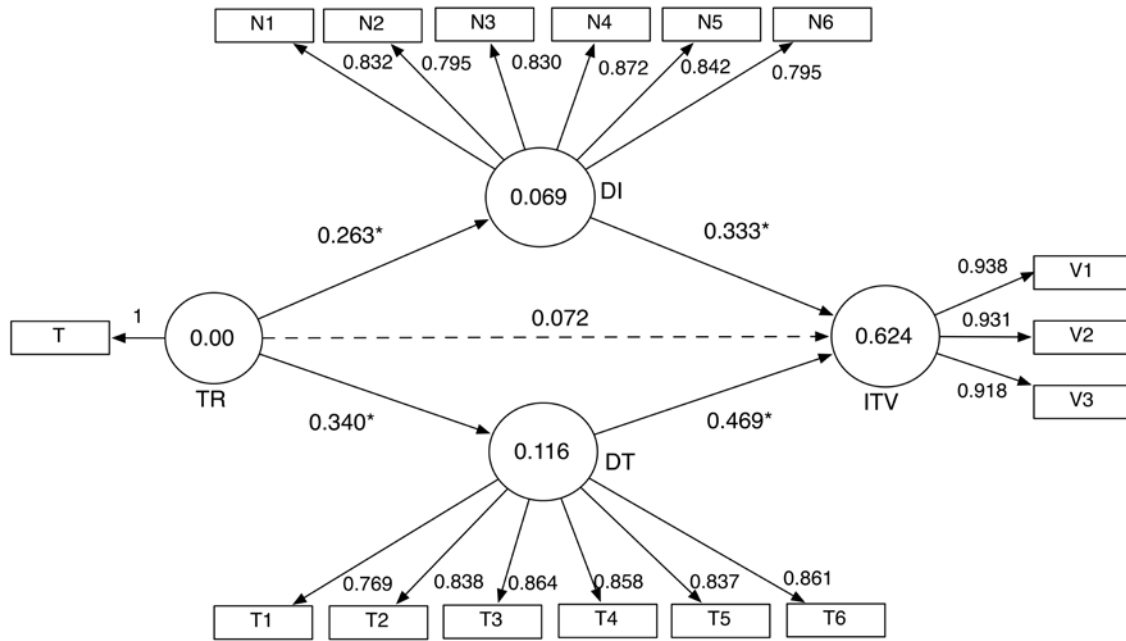
consisted of texts written by MGTO to introduce the attractions with a detailed description of why the tourist should visit the place. Materials for the peripheral route consisted of images as a cue that enabled the tourists to feel the atmosphere of different aspects of Macau without any argument that promoted the destination. The same set of scales as in study one was used.

There were 146 valid responses and all respondents reported that they had not traveled to Macau previously. The characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 4. More than half of the respondents knew something about Macau, but very few knew a great deal about this destination. The mean, standard deviation, loading and significance of the indicators are shown in Table 1.

Table 5: Study 2 - Measurement model results

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Average Variance Extracted</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Highest squared correlation with other variables</i>
Destination Interest (DI)	0.6854	0.9289	0.9081	0.6310
Destination Trust (DT)	0.6942	0.9315	0.9115	0.6310
Intention to Visit (ITV)	0.8626	0.9496	0.9203	0.5783

The test results in Table 5 show that the indicators satisfied the requirements of convergent validity. In contrast to study 1, the condition for discriminant validity of all constructs were satisfied in this study. The results of the testing of the structural model are shown in Figure 3. All paths except 'TS to ITV' are significant. TS has a better explained variance value to DT (11.6%) than DI (6.6%). The R-square of ITV has a value of 0.624, and a Q-square value of 0.5174. The values are less than those of study one, but the coefficients are still considered substantial and the model has good predictive power. The total effect of each predictor variable on the response variables is reported and results of the path analysis are summarized in Table 6.



Note: * = $p < 0.01$

-----► Path is not significant

Figure 3: Final Structural Model – Study 2

Table 6: Study 2 - Report on total effect and hypothesis testing

Predictor variable -> response variable	Total Effect	t-statistics
TS -> DI	0.2633	3.6962
TS -> DT	0.3401	4.9520
TS -> ITV	0.3262	4.8709
DT -> ITV	0.4691	5.3469
DI -> ITV	0.3329	3.8936

Hypotheses	Coefficient	t-statistics	Result
H1: An increase in destination trust will lead to an increase in intention to visit a new destination	0.582	6.938	Support
H2: An increase in destination Interest will lead to an increase in intention to visit a new destination	0.206	2.312	Support
H3: A change in stimulus type will lead to change in DT	0.340	5.057	Support
H4: A change in stimulus type will lead to change in DI	0.257	3.638	Support

$p < 0.01$, t-statistics = 2.58 $p < 0.05$, t-statistics = 1.96

6. Discussion and findings

6.1 Findings on the Intention to visit (ITV) model

The results from both studies provide strong empirical support for the proposed ITV model. The insignificance of path Trust stimuli (TS) to ITV in both studies contended that a tourist's ITV could be explained by the two mediating variables of destination interest (DI) and destination trust (DT). The small amount of difference in variance explained might be due to the different kinds of stimulus used and the cultural difference of the respondent groups.

When the total effects are examined, the total effect of "DI to ITV" is 0.6361 in study 1 and 0.3329 in study 2. In contrast, the total effect of "DT to ITV" is 0.2704 in study 1 and 0.4692 in study 2. According to Cohen (1992), a value of 0.35 means a strong effect and 0.15 means a moderate effect at the structural level. DI has a much stronger effect on ITV than DT in study 1 and the reverse happened in study 2. This may be due to the characteristics of different stimuli used in the two studies and is further discussed in the corresponding sections discussing the effect of the stimuli. Finally, TS has a strong total effect on ITV that is demonstrated by a value of 0.2495 in study 1 and 0.3262 in study 2.

The finding of the effect of DT on ITV is consistent with previous studies that trust has a positive influence on tourists' intention to take a risk on committing themselves to purchasing intangible services such as hotel rooms. On the other hand, the finding of DI confirms Mehmetoglu's (2012) argument that curiosity, a major component of DI, that leads to the exploration of a destination by the tourist is a major constituent of holidaying interest. The strong support for the ITV model shows that while much of the research on destination decision-making focuses on the building of destination image that is projected on a tourist, it is the formation of attitude and emotion by the tourist related to different persuasion routes that bears an important mediating effect on a tourist's propensity to visit a destination.

The study also highlights the necessity to further research the relationship between trust and interest. There are very few studies that consist of both trust and interest in a single behavioral

model. Although trust and interest are very different constructs from a theoretical perspective, the first study showed that the two constructs have a strong correlation that reflects a lack of discriminant validity. While the second study has significantly lower levels of correlation between the two constructs, they are still present at a moderate level. From a theoretical consideration, it is not clear whether trust and interest have any causal relationship or some other confounding factors affect both constructs with a different degree of the two types of stimuli. There is also no literature that attempts to connect the two constructs to explain behavior intentions.

On the practical side, this study shows that different types of information about a destination can reduce the uncomfortable feeling experienced by a consumer of being exposed to risk (Buttle, 1998). From this perspective, management might focus on strengthening the persuasion effort of their image building to raise a tourist's trust such that the destination can provide the experience they expect. It is equally important that the advertising campaign also arouses the tourists' curiosity and their desire to explore the destination.

6.2 *Findings on advertising versus eWOM*

Although a large number of studies have argued that eWOM has a stronger effect than advertising, the findings in study one suggest a different result in the context of tourism. Some studies suggest that this may be due to the effect of advertising on increasing brand advocacy and online search, and on visiting a site or generating eWOM (Graham and Havlena, 2007). This study offers an alternative or complementary explanation with the ITV model. The stronger effect of advertising on eWOM can be explained through the two stimuli's effect on ITV through DT and DI. In this study, the advertising material comes from management which is an official source of information. The advertising material mainly consists of vivid images design and wording to arouse a tourist's interest. From this perspective, a high level of DT and DI is induced in a tourist's mind. In contrast, eWOM consists of mostly online reviews from anonymous amateur travellers. Furthermore, it is often found that ambivalent reviews exist for

the same destination or attractions. These will reduce the positive effect of eWOM in tourists' DT. The writing or photographs posted by amateur travellers may not be as good as the carefully designed images created by professional marketers. The inferior presentation by the amateur travellers will place their eWOM in a less effective position in arousing the destination interest of the viewer.

The results of this study substantiated the advertising effort. The effects of advertising resonate most strongly for hedonistic products that most tourists would enjoy in their trip (Pham, et al., 2013). Since eWOM is virtually not controlled by management, a focus on advertising and using it wisely according to the research findings could also generate a strong persuasion effect.

6.3 *Findings on ELM routes*

Based on the ITV model, the findings provide empirical support for the application of ELM on destination choice as suggested by Petty and Cacioppo (1992). From the coefficient of the paths in study two, it can be posited that the peripheral route has a stronger influence than the central route. This result may be due to the characteristic of the material of the peripheral route that could generate a strong spontaneous impact by providing a vivid portrait of what a tourist would experience through an image cue. Textual-visual information formats usually have a greater influence on motivation than text-only information (Lee and Tussyadiah, 2010). The visual information helps to reduce the perceived risk due to its ability to let the tourist get a better image of the destination. Since the focus of this research is tourists visiting a destination for leisure purposes to gain a delightful tour experience, the peripheral route that contains cues that do not need a high level of elaboration might better match the situation of leisure tourists.

Although the peripheral route has more strength on ITV, the central route cannot be ignored. The peripheral route may have more strength when the tourist first encounters the destination's promotion material thereby creating an intention to visit behavior. The image formed might erode rapidly when the tourist is engaged in other activities or is receiving materials from competing destinations due to lower persistence of attitude change resulting from peripheral

cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, the two routes are not competing with each other but rather on when to use the different routes. Management might pursue a strategy by first capturing the attention of the tourist using peripheral route cues and then follow up with the central route to strengthen the behavior intention. Since there will be a period between a tourist's formation of an intention to visit and the actual travel to the destination, this kind of reinforcement to the tourist's behavior intention towards a destination is crucial.

7. Conclusion

This paper proposes an ITV model with two mediating variables namely: destination trust and destination interest. The research provides contribution in the mechanism on how different types of stimuli affect tourist's intention to visit a new destination through a composite behavior model. In addition, the findings revealed that destination trust (DT) has a stronger influence on tourist's intention to visit (ITV) than destination intention (DI) (Table 4 &5). The research also revealed that advertising has a stronger effect than eWOM on a tourist's ITV. As a natural extension, the second study provides empirical support on how to apply Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) to persuasion in a tourist's choice of destination. These findings provide useful theoretical support for management on how to design their strategy to provide better effects to improve tourists' intention to visit their tourist spots.

The study may have some limitations in the generalization of findings on consumer behavior intention due to the selection of destination choice as the subject of study. Destination shares some attributes but also differs from a brand in that it does not represent a company or product. Furthermore, tourists usually consider materials provided by management as trustworthy and the nature of a tourism service is largely intangible and hedonic in nature. Future research might test the model using other types of products or services.

REFERENCES

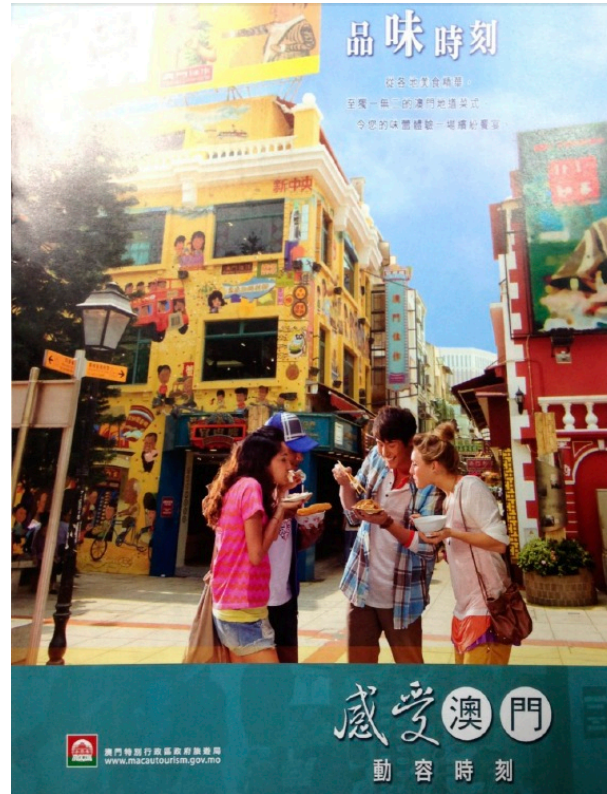
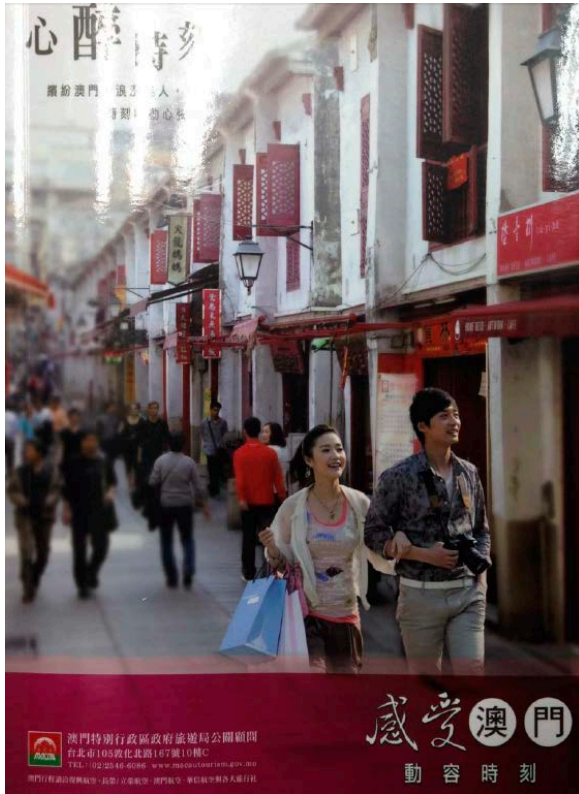
- Aiken L S, Stein J A, and Bentler P M. (1994). Structural equation analyses of clinical subpopulation differences and comparative treatment outcomes: Characterizing the daily lives of drug addicts. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* **62**(1): 488-499.
- Ajzen I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process* **50**: 179-211.
- Balliet D, and Van Lange P A M. (2013). Trust, Conflict, and Cooperation: A Meta-Analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, **139**(5): 1090-1112.
- Bart Y, Stephen A T, and Sarvary M. (2014). Which Products Are Best Suited to Mobile Advertising? A Field Study of Mobile Display Advertising Effects on Consumer Attitudes and Intentions. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* **51**(3): 270-285.
- Beeril A, and Martin J D. (2004). Tourists' characteristics and the perceived image of tourist destinations: a quantitative analysis - a case study of Lanzarote, Spain. *Tourism Management* **25**(5): 623-636.
- Beerli A, Meneses G D, and Gil S M. (2007). Self-congruity and destination choice. *Annals of Tourism Research* **34**(3): 571-587.
- Berlyne D E. (1954). A theory of human curiosity. *British Journal of Psychology* **45**(180-191):
- Bowen J T, and Shoemaker S. (1998). Loyalty: a strategic commitment. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* **39**(1): 12-25.
- Brinberg D. (1981). A comparison of two behavioral intention models. *Advances in Consumer Research* **8**: 48-52.
- Buttle F A. (1998). Word of mouth: understanding and managing referral marketing. *Journal of strategic marketing* **6**: 241-254.
- Cheng T P V, and Loi M K. (2014). Handling negative online customer reviews: The effects of elaborative likelihood model and distributive justice. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* **31**(1): 1-15.
- Cheng T P V, Rhodes J, and Lok P. (2013). The mediating effect of brand trust between online customer reviews and willingness to buy. *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations* **11**(1): 22-42.
- Cheung W, Chang M, and Lai V. (2000). Prediction of internet and world wide web usage at work: a test of an extended Triandis model. *Decision Support Systems* **30**: 83-100.
- Cohen E. (1972). Toward a sociology of international tourism. *Social Research* **39**(164-182):
- Cohen J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin* **112**(1): 155-159.
- Crompton S, and Keown L A. (2009). Going on vacation: Benefits sought from pleasure travel. *Canadian Social Trends* **87**: 44-53.

- Day G S. (1971). Attitude change, media and word of month. *Journal of Advertising Research* **11**(6): 31-40.
- Douglas S P. (1971). Intentions to buy as predictions of buying behavior. *Proceedings of 2nd Annual Conference Association for Consumer Research* **1971**: 331-343.
- Echtner C M, and Ritchie J R B. (2003). The meaning and measurement of destination image. *The Journal of Tourism Studies* **14**(1): 37-48.
- Falk J H, Ballantyne R, Packer J, and Benckendorff P. (2012). Travel and learning: a neglected tourism research area. *Annals of Tourism Research* **39**(2): 908-927.
- Fornell C, and Larcker D F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research* **XVIII**: 39-50.
- Goodrich J N. (1978). The relationship between preferences for and perceptions of vacation destinations. *Journal of Travel Research* **17**(2): 8-13.
- Graham J, and Havlena W. (2007). Finding the "Missing Link": Advertising's impact on Word of Mouth, web searches, and site visits. *Journal of Advertising Research* **December**: 427-435.
- Grewal D, Gotlieb J, and Marmorstein H. (1994). The moderating effects of message framing and source credibility on the price-perceived risk relationship. *Journal of Consumer Research* **21**: 145-153.
- Grewal R, Cote J A, and Baumgartner H. (2004). Multicollinearity and measurement error in structural equation models: Implications for theory testing. *Marketing Science* **23**(4): 519-529.
- Gursoy D, and McCleary K W. (2004). An integrative model of tourists' information search behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research* **31**(2): 353-373.
- Hair J F, Ringle C M, and Sarstedt M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice* **19**(2): 139-152.
- Hiscock J. (2001). Most Trusted Brands. *Marketing* **March 1st**: 32-33.
- Iso-Ahola S. (1982). Toward a social psychological theory of tourism motivation: A rejoinder. *Annals of Tourism Research* **9**(2): 256-262.
- Jalilvand M R, and Samiei N. (2012). The impact of electronic word of mouth on a tourism destination choice: Testing the theory of planned behavior (TPB). *Internet Research* **22**(5): 591-612.
- Jones C, and Bonevac D. (2013). An evolved definition of the term 'brand': Why branding has a branding problem. *Journal of Brand Strategy* **2**(2): 112-120.
- Lee G, and Tussyadiah I P. (2010). Textual and visual information in eWOM: a gap between preferences in information search and diffusion. *Information Technology & Tourism* **12**(4): 351-361.
- Lee J-H, and Song C-H. (2013). Effects of trust and perceived risk on user acceptance of a new technology service. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal* **41**(4): 587-598.

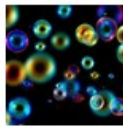
- Litman J A, and Silvia P J. (2006). The Latent Structure of Trait Curiosity: Evidence for Interest and Deprivation Curiosity Dimensions. *Journal of Personality Assessment* **86**(3): 318-328.
- Litman J A, and Spielberger C D. (2003). Measuring Epistemic Curiosity and Its Diverive and Specific Components. *Journal of Personality Assessment* **80**(1): 75-86.
- Loewenstein G. (1994). The psychology of curiosity: A review and reinterpretation. *Psychological Bulletin* **116**(1): 75-98.
- Loureiro S M C, and González F J M. (2008). The importance of quality, satisfaction, trust, and image in relation to rural tourist loyalty. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* **25**(2): 117-136.
- Mangold G W. (1987). Use of commercial sources of information in the purchase of professional services what the literature tells us. *Journal of Professional Services Marketing* **3**(1/2): 5-17.
- Mayer R C, Davis J H, and Schoorman F D. (1995). An integrative model of organization trust. *Academy of Management Review* **20**(3): 709-734.
- Mayo E J, and Jarvis L P. (1981). *The psychology of leisure travel*. CBI: Boston
- Mehmetoglu M. (2007). Typologising nature-based tourists by activity. *Tourism Management* **28**(651-660):
- Mehmetoglu M. (2012). What determines holidaying interest? Extrinsic versus intrinsic motivations. *Journal of Social, Evolutionary & Cultural Psychology* **6**(1): 93-110.
- Midgley D F, and Dowling G R. (1993). A longitudinal study of product form innovation: the interaction between predispositions and social messages. *Journal of Consumer Research* **19**: 611-625.
- Moorman C, Deshpandé R, and Zaltman G. (1993). Factors affecting trust in market research relationships. *Journal of Marketing* **57**(1): 81-101.
- Murray K B. (1991). A test of services marketing theory: consumer information acquisition activities. *Journal of Marketing* **55**: 10-25.
- Ng S I, Lee J A, and Soutar G N. (2007). Tourists' intention to visit a country: The impact of cultural distance. *Tourism Management* **28**: 1497-1506.
- Park D H, Kim S. (2008). The effects of consumer knowledge on message processing of electronic word- of- mouth via online consumer reviews. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* **7**(4): 399-410.
- Pavlou P A. (2003). Consumer Acceptance of Electronic Commerce: Integrating Trust and Risk with the Technology Acceptance Model. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* **7**(3): 101-134.
- Petty R E, and Cacioppo J T. (1984). Source factors and the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. *Advances in Consumer Research* **11**(1): 668-672.

- Pham M T, Geuens M, and de Pelsmacker P. (2013). The influence of ad-evoked feelings on brand evaluations: Empirical generalizations from consumer responses to more than 1000 TV commercials. *International Journal of Research in Marketing* **30**(4): 383-394.
- Ringle C M, Sarstedt M, and Straub D W. (2012). A critical look at the use of PLS-SEM in MIS Quarterly. *MIS Quarterly* **36**(1): iii-xiv.
- Rousseau D M, Sitkin S B, Burt R S, and Camerer C. (1998). Not so different after all: A cross-discipline view of trust. *Academy of Management Review* **23**(3): 393-404.
- Russell D W, Kahn J H, and Spoth R. (1998). Analyzing data from experimental studies: A latent variable structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* **45**(1): 18-29.
- Sarstedt M, Ringle C M, and Hair J F. (2014). PLS_SEM: Looking Back and Moving Forward. *Long Range Planning* **47**: 132-137.
- Schaupp L C, Carter L, and McBride M E. (2010). E-file adoption: A study of U.S. taxpayer' intentions. *Computers in Human Behavior* **26**: 636-644.
- Sharpley R. (2008). *Tourism, tourists and society*. ELM: Huntingdon
- Sheth J N. (1971). Word of month in low risk innovations. *Journal of Advertising Research* **11**: 15-18.
- Shiu E, Pervan S J, Bove L L, and Beatty S E. (2011). Reflections on discriminant validity: Reexamining the Bove et al. (2009) findings. *Journal of Business Research* **64**: 497-500.
- Sichtmann C. (2007). An analysis of antecedents and consequences of trust in a corporate brand. *European Journal of Marketing* **41**: 999-1015.
- Silvia P J. (2006). *Exploring the psychology of interest*. Oxford University Press USA: Oxford New York
- Sparks B A, and Browning V. (2011). The impact of onlines reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management* **32**: 1310-1323.
- Triandis H C. (1977). *Interpersonal behaviour*. Brook/Cole: Monterey, CA
- Um S, and Crompton J L. (1990). Attitude determinants in tourism destination choice. *Annals of Tourism Research* **17**: 432-448.
- Villanueva J, Yoo S, and Hanssens D M. (2008). The Impact of Marketing-Induced Versus Word-of-Mouth Customer Acquisition on Customer Equity Growth. *Journal of Marketing Research* **XLV**: 48-59.

Appendix A – Example of Advertising material about destination in Study 1 and peripheral route in Study 2



Appendix B – Example of WOM about destination in Study 1



Greybeckh

Contributor

★ 14 reviews

🌐 Reviews in 8 cities

👤 8 helpful votes

“Not to be missed.”

👍👍👍👍👍 Reviewed November 6, 2013 **NEW**

We visited the Museum as part of a tour that included St Paul. The museum is extremely clean, quiet and cool. This is a great way to learn about the history of Macau, the surrounding islands and the 400 years of Portuguese colonisation. Some of the items on display pre date Roman history and are truly wondrous. The view from the fort is spectacular and is great way to get some good pics of Macau.

Visited November 2013

[Less ▲](#)

Was this review helpful?

[Problem with this review?](#)

[See 2 more reviews by Greybeckh for Macau](#)

[Ask Greybeckh about Macao Museum](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.

Appendix C – Example of Central Route material about destination in Study 2

Macau Highlights

Sightseeing

Macau World Heritage: Comprising over 20 ancient monuments and urban squares interwoven in the heart of the city, the historic district is collectively known as "The Historic Centre of Macau" and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005. It stands today as a living testimony to the integration and co-existence of eastern and western cultures over a unique chapter in history. Leisurely explore the Historic Centre of Macau – you will discover various magnificent heritages and unveil their wonderful stories!



Museums & Galleries: Finding another place in the world so tiny and with such a rich cultural and historical heritage is probably next to impossible thus a variety of museums in Macau offer visitors a unique perspective on the territory's ~~chequered~~ past. Professionally curated exhibitions put both traditional and modern themes under the microscope to spotlight the diversity of art and culture which nourishes the city!

Other Attractions: Even after you've seen Macau's many UNESCO-listed heritage sites, the city still has plenty of attractions to offer, some traditional and some brand-new. Adventure, fun, encounters with culture and religion, contact with nature and wildlife – plus an unparalleled opportunity to experience other cultures and communities at every turn – mean there need never be a dull moment in exciting Macau. Explore and enjoy!

Shopping

Reflecting a dramatic growth in tourism, numerous major luxury brands are conveniently available in Macau.

Shopping in the territory need not be limited to an increasing number of international label boutiques in hotels as a variety of local brands and souvenir shops offer quality goods ideal for gifts for family and friends. ~~Tai~~ Old Village is a treasure trove of souvenir shops, snacks, traditional cakes and exquisite furnishings where visitors can find the ideal gift or souvenir for family and friends.



The Ruins of St. Paul's is Macau's internationally renowned historic landmark, with the full cultural ~~flavour~~ of the city permeating the local creative products found here. In this area, you can find many souvenir shops plus a host of delicious cake, pastry and biscuit confections. In addition, long-established antique furniture stores offer visitors bargain-price period and reproduction pieces that can be efficiently shipped to buyers' home countries at reasonable rates.

Dining Out

Macanese Dishes / Recipes: Macanese cuisine is cooked with many ingredients that recall the unique history of Macau and its Portuguese maritime culture.

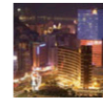


During the 16th and 17th Century, Portugal energetically established a sea route to the East, paving the way for merchants engaged in the spice trade in Africa, India and the coast of Malacca, bringing, in turn, these spices and food cultures to Macau. In addition, many Portuguese married local Chinese in Macau and inhabitants from the above-mentioned regions. Thus, different foreign and Chinese ingredients plus cooking styles were gradually incorporated into traditional Portuguese dishes cooked by Macanese families over the past centuries.

Local Pastries: ~~Tai~~ Island is renowned for its traditional pastries, and along the famous food street Rua do Cunha in ~~Tai~~ Old Village some shops have been baking and selling fragrant sweetmeats for generations. In Macau, you can find pastry shops around Senado Square and along Rua de S. Paulo near the Ruins of St. Paul's. Many other delectable confections found in local shops make great authentic 'Taste of Macau' presents for visitors to take home. A famous Portuguese specialty in Macau, 'Pastéis de Nata' - or little egg tarts - are sold at good cafes and bakeries in the city and in Coloane, and are best when eaten hot direct from the oven!

Gaming

With a gaming history stretch back for more than 3 centuries, Macao was renowned as "Monte Carlo of the Orient" and "Las Vegas of the East". Recently, Macao's gross gaming revenue has even exceeded the Las Vegas Strip occasionally, which makes it becomes the largest gaming city in the world.



Macau's booming gaming industry is characterised by greyhound and horse racing, ~~Paca~~ and slot machines as well as the internationally renowned table games of its large casinos, providing a wealth of entertainment options for visitors. The legal age of entry to casinos in Macau is 21.

In recent years, Macau's gaming industry has developed at a rapid pace, with a number of larger casinos offering a free direct shuttle bus service to and from border crossings. Many casinos feature international cuisine restaurants, recreational facilities and top-flight family entertainment as well as gaming.

Source: Macau Government Tourist Office

