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Delineating the Influence of Social Media Use on Sustainable Rural Tourism: An Application of TPB with Place Emotion

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ABSTRACT

The present study unveils the factors affecting the potential behaviour of tourists to visit rural destinations. It also intends to measure the influence of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) on tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations, incorporating two additional constructs: social media use and place emotion. Moreover, this study unwraps the most influential factor affecting tourists' potential behaviour to visit rural destinations. An online questionnaire was utilised to gather the data, and 415 complete and usable responses were included in the analysis. The population of the survey includes Indian tourists. SPSS 20 and AMOS 22.0 software were used to analyse the data. The hypothesised model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The empirical results reveal that attitude towards rural tourism, subjective norm, social media use and place emotion significantly and positively influence intention to travel to rural destinations, while perceived behavioural control does not. The effect of social media use was found to be the most substantial among all the factors. The proposed model explains approximately 50% of the variance in the intention to visit rural destinations. Several theoretical and practical implications can be delineated from the findings of the present study.

KEYWORDS

Theory of Planned Behaviour, Rural Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Social Media Use, Place Emotion, Behavioural Intention.

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1. Introduction

The popularity of social media and its usage is increasing exponentially (Kumar et al., 2020), and it has become an integral part of the travel and tourism industry (Kumar et al., 2020; Azhar & Akhtar, 2020; Liao et al., 2021; Ansari et al., 2022). In recent years, social media has become the preeminent platform for exchanging travel, tourism, and hospitality-related information (Chu & Kim, 2018; Azhar et al., 2022). It directly affects tourism, particularly how travellers obtain and use tourism information (Xiang et al., 2015; Jamal et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2020) and alters the behaviour of tourists and businesses (Jamal et al., 2019; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012). Since tourism is an informative-intensive industry and social media usage is also increasing rapidly, it has become quite relevant to study the growing significance of social media in the tourism industry. Despite the fact that social media is becoming increasingly popular in the travel and tourism industry, there are still few studies that have measured the influence of social media on tourism sustainability, mainly rural tourism (Joo et al., 2020). Numerous studies have discussed social media and its impact on tourist behaviour (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Fons et al., 2011; Milano et al., 2011; Leung et al., 2013; Azhar et al., 2022). But very few studies have been carried out to measure the influence of social media usage on sustainable tourism (Joo et al., 2020). Therefore, the present study fills this void by measuring the influence of social media usage on sustainable tourism, more specifically, rural tourism.

In addition to social media, place emotion is also a crucial component in studying tourists' behavioural intention (Qiong & Zhao, 2016; Zhang & Wang, 2019). The idea of "place emotion," central to the study of environmental psychology, refers to the strong feelings of attachment and personal identification that people experience in relation to certain physical locations (Williams & Vaske, 2003). There is more to the idea of place than just its physical location; it is also a social creation that people invest with their own unique associations of meaning and value (Zhou et al., 2014). Tourists develop a personal connection to a destination (termed a "place attachment") when they associate favourable emotions with their experiences while being there. Since there seems to be no distinction between "place attachment" and "place emotion" (Halpenny, 2010; Zhou et al., 2014), "place emotion" has been used in the present study. Some previous studies have incorporated place emotion with the TPB model (Zhou et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2017; Zhang & Wang, 2019). To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has been conducted in the Indian context that has measured the integrated influence of the TPB model with social media use and place emotion on tourists' intention in rural tourism. Moreover, tourism studies need to consider how tourists feel about a place. Therefore, this research intends to discuss the significance of determinants that influence the potential behaviour of tourists using the TPB model, taking social media use and place emotion as additional constructs.

Tourism is one of the most vibrant, dynamic and rapidly expanding industries globally (Jena & Dwivedi, 2021; González-Padilla, 2022). According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the travel and tourism industry contributed 10.3 % to the global GDP in 2019. Moreover, the tourism industry creates nearly 10% of total employment worldwide (Market Width, 2019). The Indian tourism industry has emerged as one of the major contributors to the service sectors. WTTC ranked India 10th out of 185 countries in terms of total contribution to GDP from the travel and tourism industry in 2019 (IBEF, 2021). According to the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2021), "in FY20, 39 million jobs were created in the tourism sector in India, which was 8.0% of the total employment in the country". It is estimated that "by 2029, India's tourism sector is expected to grow 6.7% to reach Rs. 35 trillion (US$ 488 billion) and accounting for 9.2% of the total economy" (IBEF, 2021). In recent years, it has been realised that the Indian tourism sector has tremendous potential that might be tapped as a strategy for rural development. According to the 2011 census, a large part of the country's population (around 70%) lives in rural areas (Census of India, 2011). One may get a glimpse of the "real India" in the country's rural areas. Therefore, the Indian rural diaspora has ample potential to be promoted as rural tourism, and it has been recognised as a tool for rural rehabilitation (Jena & Dwivedi, 2021). Promoting rural tourism is crucial for creating employment, job opportunities and economic development of rural areas (Amaral, 2019). As prime minister of India has urged to be self-reliant under the call of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat", adopting a public stance in support of local products (vocal for local). Hence, developing and promoting rural tourism has become an important driver of self-reliant (Aatmanirbhar Bharat). The rural areas are also important since they preserve the country's

history, traditions, arts, and agricultural practices (Amaral, 2019). Rural tourism in India is believed an important driver to promote sustainable development. The research on rural tourism in India is still in the nascent stage. Hence, the present study bridges this gap by focusing on tourists' intention to travel rural destinations and explores social media use in the promotion of rural tourism.

The TPB model (Ajzen, 1991) provides an adequate framework to describe the work related to social media usage, as the model claims that behaviour is intended and preceded by intention (van Zoonen et al., 2014; Sujood et al., 2022). TPB is the most widely used decision-making model that has been validated by previous researchers (van Zoonen et al., 2014; Narangajavana et al., 2017; Ali, 2018; Joo et al., 2020; Hamid & Azhar, 2021; Sujood et al., 2022; Azhar et al., 2022) in different contexts. Despite the fact that some researchers have incorporated the TPB model to investigate the process of decision-making in the backdrop of sustainable tourism (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Meng & Choi, 2016; Sujood et al., 2022), those studies have not stressed the functionality of social media use in rural tourism. Therefore, this study better understands and predicts tourists' potential behaviour to visit rural destinations and fills this gap by using an extended version of the TPB model by incorporating two additional constructs, viz., social media use and place emotion.

In 1987, the United Nations introduced the concept of sustainable development. Since then, the tourism industry has been increasingly concerned about sustainability (WCED, 1987). Therefore, sustainability has gained a lot of attention as a major issue in academia and industry. The decision-making process for sustainable tourism has been discussed in some previous studies (Kuo & Dai, 2012; Meng & Choi, 2016, Joo et al., 2020; Lampreia-Carvalho, 2021; Sujood et al., 2022). Still, there is a paucity of papers on the intention of tourists in the backdrop of sustainable tourism, specifically rural tourism. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to utilise the TPB model in order to assess the impact of social media and place emotion on rural tourism.

This study contributes to the discussion of sustainability, social media and place emotion by looking at the travel intentions to rural destinations through the lens of TPB in the Indian context. The originality of the present study lies in the fact that no single study has been conducted in the Indian context that has measured the integrated influence of the TPB model with social media use and place emotion on tourists' intention in rural tourism. To predict human intentions and behaviours, the TPB is often regarded as a very successful method (Ajzen, 1991), and its applicability varies to a wide range of fields (Juschten et al., 2019; Nowacki et al., 2021; Abdelwahed et al., 2022; Azhar et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2022). Keeping in view the wide applicability and adaptability of the TPB model, this model has been incorporated in the present study to measure tourists' intention to visit rural destinations.

The whole paper has been divided into various sections and subsections. The very first section opens with introduction followed by an extensive literature review in which the theory of planned behaviour and additional constructs undertaken in the study have been explained. Hypotheses have also been postulated in the same section. In the next section, the adopted methodology has been discussed in detail, which consists on research instrument, data collection and data analysis. The next section comprises results with various subsections such as the demographic profile of the respondents, descriptive statistics, measurement model, structure model and hypotheses testing. In the subsequent sections, a detailed discussion has been presented, followed by conclusion, theoretical and practical implications, limitations and future research directions.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The TPB model was first developed by Ajzen (1991); since then, it has been used to understand human behaviour in different contexts and has captivated tourism researchers' attention to understand and predict tourist behaviour. Understanding tourist behaviour is important because it reduces unnecessary marketing and promotional cost and contributes significantly to the profitability of the tourism business (Wang, 2004; Alegre & Juaneda, 2006; Hsu et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2013). As per the TPB model, human behaviour is led by three types of convictions: behavioural, normative and subjective (van Zoonen et al., 2014). Behavioural convictions describe attitude (ATT), normative describe subjective norm (SN), and subjective convictions describe perceived behavioural control (PBC) (van Zoonen et al., 2014). The TPB model states

that these three constructs, ATT, SN and PBC, determine behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB model has been validated and tested through considerable research and implementation in the tourism industry (Quintal et al., 2010; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). According to Ajzen (1991), the TPB model can be used in order to understand the decision-making process in the travel and tourism industry. Since then, tourism scholars have been using the TPB model to predict tourist behaviour (Joo et al., 2020).

2.1 Attitude and Travel Intention

Attitude (ATT) towards behaviour has become a popular issue in academic research because of its powerful reflection on human emotional states in the decision-making process (Hamid & Mohamad, 2019). The degree to which individuals have a favourable or unfavourable appraisal when they undertake given conduct has been defined as an attitude toward behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Tonglet et al., 2004; Han et al., 2009; Ho et al., 2020). In TPB, there is a significant association between attitude and behavioural intention (Davis, 1989; Ajzen, 1991). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitude is "an individual's positive or negative feelings (evaluative affect) about performing the target behaviour". The higher the level of a positive attitude exhibited by an individual, the more likely that person will engage in that action (Verma & Chandra, 2018). Attitude towards behaviour can be equated to evaluation factors such as understanding emotional responses, physiological arousal, and expressiveness originating from a tourist experience in tourism research (Patwary & Rashid, 2016). Some prior studies have validated a significant relationship between attitude and tourist intention (Pina & Delfa, 2005; Maestro et al., 2007; Loureiro, 2014; Joo et al., 2020, Hamid & Azhar, 2021). Therefore, on the basis of evidence found in previous studies, the forthcoming supposition is postulated for the present study:

H1. Attitude towards rural tourism positively influences tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations.

2.2 Subjective Norm and Travel Intention

Subjective norm (SN) has been extensively studied because of its power to impact tourist intention (Hamid & Mohamad, 2019). It is another influential component in the TPB model to predict behavioural intention and is explained as the viewpoint of people who play a predominant role in the life of an individual (Hamid & Azhar, 2021) and have a direct impact on his/her decision making (Verma & Chandra, 2018). The term subjective norm is termed as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991). Mathieson (1991) expressed that "subjective norm reflects the perceived opinions of referent others. A 'referent other' is a person or group whose beliefs may be important to the individual" (Mathieson, 1991, p.176). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) gave another very important definition which is "the person's perception that most people who are important to him/her think he/she should or should not perform the behaviour in question". There are many evidences that support subjective norm as an essential element influencing tourist intention to visit a place, indicating the significance of reference group influence in travel behaviour (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Kaushik et al., 2015; Soliman, 2019; Joo et al., 2020; Hamid & Azhar, 2021; Sujood et al., 2022; Azhar et al., 2022). Therefore, on the basis of evidence found in previous studies, the forthcoming supposition is postulated for the present study:

H2. Subjective norm positively influences tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations.

2.3 Perceived Behavioural Control and Travel Intention

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) denotes the understanding of how easy or difficult an activity is to conduct (Seow et al., 2017; Japutra et al., 2019; Hamid & Mohamad, 2019). It is the final element in the TPB model and a very strong predictor of behavioural intention (Verma & Chandra, 2018). Ajzen (1991) defined PBC as "the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour". In the words of Ajzen and Madden (1986), PBC is defined as "perceived behavioural control refers to the individual's perceptions of the presence or absence of requisite resources and opportunities". Perceived behavioural control examines how well an individual can handle variables that may allow or limit the behaviour necessary to address a certain circumstance (Verma & Chandra, 2018). Some previous studies have identified a range of restrictions

or impediments that prevent tourists from travelling, such as distance, language, expense, safety, familiarity, and government rules (Han et al., 2019; Soliman, 2019). Therefore, on the basis of evidence found in previous studies, the forthcoming supposition is postulated for the present study:

H3. Perceived behavioural control positively influences tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations.

2.4 Social Media Use and Travel Intention

Social media plays a substantial role in the field of online tourism when it comes to designing travel plans (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Azhar et al., 2022). It allows travellers to express their notions and assists interactions with each other in order to obtain or spread travel-related information (Wyles et al., 2019). This opportunity encourages community members or peers to share their thoughts, experiences, and viewpoints (Daugherty et al., 2008; Wyles et al., 2019). More importantly, a variety of online virtual communities have proven to be valuable resource information for sustainable behavioural change (Chung & Koo, 2015). The majority of rural tourism businesses are too small to invest in extensive promotion and marketing (Lane, 1994). However, small rural tourism businesses and tour destinations might get benefits from social media marketing (Joo et al., 2020). Some previous researches have shown that posts published on social media related to tourism has an important influence on tourists' behavioural intention (Narangajavana et al., 2017; Joo et al., 2020; Sultan et al., 2020; Azhar et al., 2022). Therefore, on the basis of evidence found in previous studies, the forthcoming supposition is postulated for the present study:

H4. Social media use positively influences tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations.

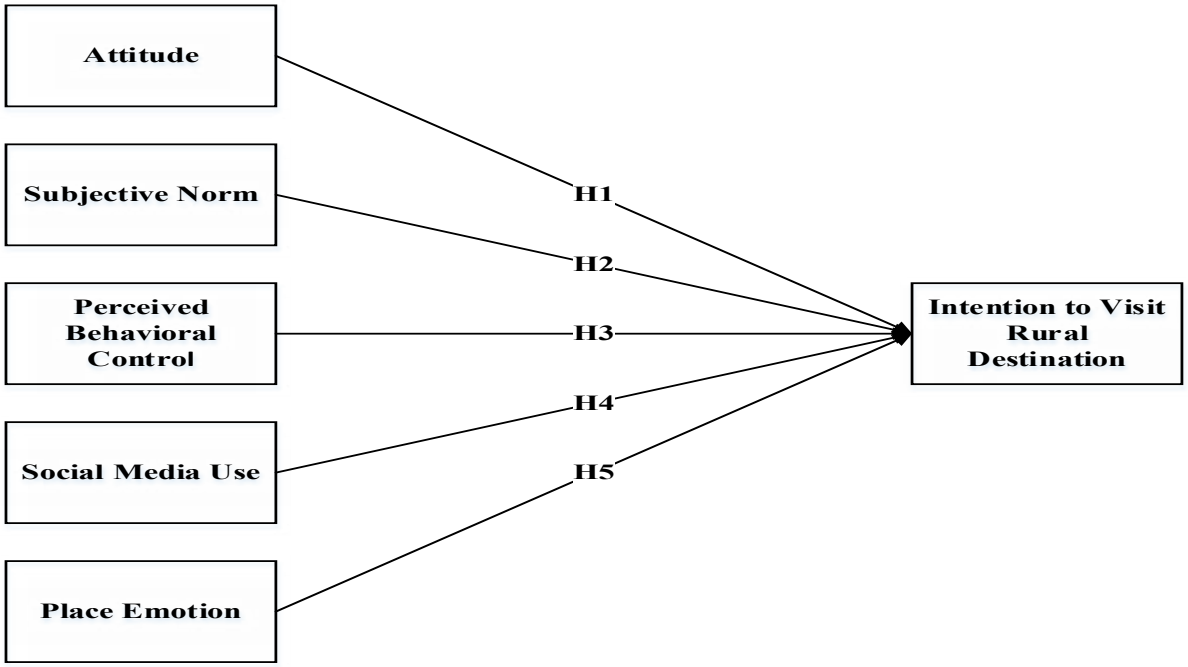
2.5 Place Emotion and Travel Intention

Humans are fundamentally comprised of emotion (Brave & Nass, 2007), which is formed innately from the neural system of the brain (Izard, 2013). On the other hand, place plays a significant role in the course of people's everyday lives since their perspectives and experiences are shaped in large part by their surrounding environment (Goodchild, 2011; Winter & Freksa, 2012; Goodchild, 2015). Since this is the case, it follows that a person's memories and emotions are strongly influenced by the place in which they were formed and visited (Kabachnik, 2012; Hasan et al., 2013; Scheider & Janowicz, 2014). To a large extent, visitors' place emotions play a pivotal role in the expression of tourists' self-image, sense of self-worth, and social identity through tourism activities (Ekinci et al., 2013; Zhou et al., 2014). Some prior studies (Zhou et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2017) used emotion and emotional attachment as an additional construct with the TPB model to expand the theory and to interpret tourist behavioural decision-making process and intention to visit the place (Zhang & Wang, 2019). Hung and Petrick (2012) argued that the emotional relationship between a tourist and a place has a significant effect on the tourist's intention. Therefore, on the basis of evidence found in previous studies, the forthcoming supposition is postulated for the present study:

H5. Place emotion positively influences tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations.

The hypotheses can be presented as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



Source: Own Elaboration

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Instrument

After reviewing comprehensive literature on behavioural intention, "a well-structured online questionnaire was developed based on a 7-point Likert scale (where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree)". According to Finstad (2010), "Seven-point Likert items have been shown to be more accurate, easier to use, and a better reflection of a respondent's true evaluation" (Finstad, 2010, p. 109). All the items used in the present study have been extracted from high-grade journals. Small adjustments have been made to the articulation and phrasing of the adapted items so that they could be made more relevant and suitable for the present study. The whole questionnaire was divided into two distinct parts. The first part consists of questions pertaining to "demographics of the respondents" i.e. "gender", "age", "marital status", "education", "occupation", and "monthly income (INR)". The second part consists of questionnaire pertaining to measuring the core constructs of the TPB along with two additional determinants, social media use and place emotion. Sources of all the measurement items are given in Table 1. For additional information, see Appendix A.

Table 1. Items used in Questionnaire

Construct	No. of Items	Sources
Attitude	4	Sparks and Pan (2009); Zhang et al. (2017)
Subjective Norm	4	Sparks and Pan (2009); Lin et al. (2012)
Perceived Behavioural Control	3	Sparks and Pan (2009); Han et al. (2010)
Behavioural Intention	4	Bagozzi et al. (2003); Fielding et al. (2008); Han et al. (2010)
Social Media Use	4	Ellison et al. (2007)
Place Emotion	4	Kyle et al. (2005); Zhang et al. (2017)

Source: Own Elaboration

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected via an online questionnaire on a convenience basis. This is a fast and simple sampling procedure (Jager et al., 2017). Moreover, it is easy to contact a large number of audiences of similar interests using online surveys (Han & Hyun, 2017), which is otherwise tricky since finding and recognising them is challenging (Das & Tiwari, 2021). The present study is based on a cross-sectional approach. In this approach, "data is collected from different individuals at one point in time" (Setia, 2016). Before distributing the questionnaire, it was decided to perform a pilot test with 50 answers to ensure that the questions and language were straightforward and easy to comprehend for the responses. The pilot test rendered accurate and reliable results, and only after that the google form link was deployed on social media web pages of travel agencies from February 1 to March 31, 2022. Indian tourists, who follow the social media web pages of travel agencies, were the targeted respondents. There were 454 responses collected in total during the stipulated time period; nonetheless, missing data caused the authors to exclude 39 replies. In all, 415 valid responses were included in the study.

3.3 Data Analysis

In order to evaluate the data, SPSS 20 and AMOS 22.0 software were used. Initially, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out in order to investigate the validity and reliability of the measurement model. This was done in accordance with the two-step process outlined by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). One of the important reasons for using this procedure is that this CFA approach gives researchers a comprehensive set of tools for evaluating and updating theoretical models (Jöreskog, 1978; Bentler, 1983; Browne, 1984). After the measurement model was evaluated for adequacy, SEM was applied to check the appropriateness of the proposed model and tested the hypotheses. This is due to the fact that many crucial variables (latent variables) in social science are difficult to examine directly, such as attitude, behaviour, intention, motivation etc. (Sihombing & Pramono, 2021). Many indicators are used to measure these latent variables in SEM, which may contain measurement errors. Thus, SEM is the most crucial instrument for evaluating and understanding latent variable associations (Guo & Lee, 2007; Byrne, 2010; Deng et al., 2018) and is found suitable for the present study. The adequate sample size for using SEM should be 1:10 relative to the number of items in the questionnaire (Teo et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2013; Hair et al., 2014). Comrey (1973) recommended a 300 sample size to run factor analysis. In addition to this, Gorsuch (1983) suggested that the participants-to-item ratio should be 5:1 or 10:1 to run factor analysis. In the present study total number of items is 23 against the 415 sample size. Participant-to-item ratio is far more than the recommended ratio. Therefore, the sample size of the present study meets the aforementioned requirement and is adequate enough to run factor analysis and SEM.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The present study was executed on potential Indian tourists. In the end, 415 responses were included in the final analysis, with males making up 54.2% of the sample and females 43.6%. A total of 86.3 per cent of the respondents are single and 65.5 per cent come from the age group of 18-27. As many as 53.2 per cent of respondents are undergraduates, and 86.3 per cent of the respondents reported their occupation as student. 38.3 per cent of respondents' monthly income is up to INR 15,000. For detailed information, see Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent's Profile (n=415)

Demographic Variable	Sub-Variable	Frequency	Per cent
Gender	Male	225	54.2
	Female	181	43.6
	Others	9	2.2
Age	Below 18	47	11.3
	18-27	272	65.5
	28-37	73	17.5
	38-47	10	2.5
	48-57	8	2.0
	Above 57	5	1.2
Marital Status	Single	358	86.3
	Married	42	10.0
	Others	15	3.7
Education	Undergraduate	221	53.2
	Graduate	27	6.5
	Postgraduate	54	13.0
	PhD	81	19.5
	Others	32	7.8
Occupation	Student	358	86.3
	Employed	26	6.3
	Retired	5	1.2
	Businessperson	5	1.2
	Others	21	5.0
Monthly Income (INR)	Upto 15,000	159	38.3
	15,001-30,000	91	21.9
	30,001-45,000	103	24.8
	45,001-60,000	17	4.1
	Above 60,000	45	11.0

Source: Primary data

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The mean values of all the variables range from 4.2012 to 4.9180, and the standard deviations of all the variables fall between 1.18703 to 2.05991. The mean value of attitude (ATT) is the highest of all the variables (4.9180), and social media use (SM) has the lowest one (4.2012). Social media use (SM) induces the highest standard deviation (2.05991), while perceived behavioural control (PBC) shows the lowest one (1.18703). The detailed information is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD
ATT	4.9180	1.42687
SN	4.5604	1.42145
PBC	4.8214	1.18703
BI	4.8926	1.77364
SM	4.2012	2.05991
PE	4.6770	1.53923

"ATT-Attitude, SN-Subjective Norm, PBC-Perceived Behavioural Control, BI-Behavioural Intention, SM-Social Media Use, PE- Place Emotion"
Source: Primary Data

4.3 Measurement Model

CFA was executed using AMOS 22 to confirm "the factor structure and validation of scale" (Brown, 2015). Conceptually, two kinds of validity were tested using CFA: "convergent and discriminant validity" (Joo et al., 2020). The degree to which different approaches to assessing the same concept provide consistent findings is called convergent validity. According to Khan et al. (2022), "convergent validity reveals whether or not the elements or components of a measure are substantially related to one another". For secure convergent validity, three conditions must be fulfilled (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). First, "the values of all the factor loadings should be greater than 0.70". Second, "the composite reliability (CR) should also be more than 0.70" (Cronbach, 1951; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 1998; Field, 2005) and last, "the value of average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct should never be less than 0.50" (Nunnally, 1978; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998). In addition, Cronbach's alpha value should also exceed 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). This study reached those limits: factor loading ranges between 0.796 to 0.938, CR ranges between 0.919 to 0.951, and AVE varies between 0.745 to 0.828. All these values meet the required threshold limit. Finally, the value of CR should be more than the value of AVE. Hence, all the above criteria of convergent validity were satisfied. In spite of this, the discriminant validity was evaluated by checking that AVE was larger than MSV. In this investigation, all of the latent variables had AVE values that were larger than their respective MSV values. For detailed information, see Table 4.

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Statistics

	Items	Factor Loading	AVE	MSV	CR	Cronbach α
Attitude (ATT)			0.813	0.114	0.945	0.945
	ATT1	0.914				
	ATT2	0.900				
	ATT3	0.922				
	ATT4	0.917				
Subjective Norm (SN)			0.782	0.072	0.934	0.932
	SN1	0.924				
	SN2	0.926				
	SN3	0.938				
	SN4	0.796				
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)			0.783	0.072	0.915	0.915
	PBC1	0.888				
	PBC2	0.906				
	PBC3	0.906				
Behavioural Intention (BI)			0.794	0.341	0.939	0.939
	BI1	0.843				
	BI2	0.827				
	BI3	0.839				
	BI4	0.801				
Social Media Use (SM)			0.828	0.341	0.951	0.950
	SM1	0.895				
	SM2	0.894				
	SM3	0.871				
	SM4	0.886				
Place Emotion (PE)			0.745	0.134	0.919	0.918
	PE1	0.896				
	PE2	0.899				
	PE3	0.910				
	PE4	0.797				

Source: Primary Data

The extent to which measurements of several constructs are different from one another and do not have any connections with one another is referred to as "discriminant validity" (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Khan et al., 2022). Discriminant validity exists if AVE exceeds the square of the coefficient in each dimension and shows its relation to other dimensions (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to the findings, the value of the AVEs for all of the associated constructs was more than the square of the correlation that existed between the constructs. As a result, the constructs in this study were found to have discriminant validity. For detailed information, see Table 5.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

	ATT	SN	PBC	BI	SM	PE
ATT	**0.901**					
SN	0.134	**0.884**				
PBC	0.177	0.268	**0.885**			
BI	0.337	0.208	0.267	**0.891**		
SM	0.009	-0-066	0.142	0.584	**0.910**	
PE	0.048	0.076	0.239	0.366	0.319	**0.863**

*** $p < 0.001$; the square root of AVE diagonally in bold.
"ATT-Attitude, SN-Subjective Norm, PBC-Perceived Behavioural Control, BI-Behavioural Intention, SM-Social Media Use, PE-Place Emotion"
Source: Primary Data

4.4 Structure Model

In order to determine the reliability and validity of the constructs, the measurement model is used in the qualitative assessment process (Henseler et al., 2009). In light of this, the authors of this research began by conducting CFA to examine whether or not certain sets of variables had been preset to be correlated in the hypothesised manner. According to the early findings of the CFA, there was a satisfactory model fit with the indices listed below (Table 6):

Table 6. SEM Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Cut off Values	Model Study	References
Absolute Fit Measure			Kline (1998); Marsh and Hocevar (1985); Byrne (1994); Hair et al. (2006); Raykov and Marcoulides (2000); Arbuckle (2008); Harrington (2009); Meldrum (2010)
CMIN/DF	<3	2.480	
RMSEA	<0.05, <0.08	0.060	
Incremental Fit Measure			
CFI	>0.90	0.968	
TLI	>0.90	0.961	
GFI	>0.90	0.908	
NFI	>0.90	0.947	
IFI	>0.90	0.968	
RFI	>0.90	0.936	

Source: Primary data

CFA statistics generate a few different indexes. The Chi-square (CMIN/DF) sheds light on the number of observed and predicted covariance matrices, which is 2.480. According to Kline (1998), CMIN/DF<3 indicates an acceptable fit. The incremental fit measure was assessed using GFI = 0.908, TLI = 0.961, CFI = 0.968, NFI = 0.947, IFI= 0.968, RFI = 0.936, and RMSEA = 0.060. "The recommended value of such indices should be more than 0.90, but some more than 0.80 is also acceptable" (Benson & Fleishman, 1994; Curran et al., 1996; Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2014). According to MacCallum et al. (1996), RMSEA<0.08 shows a mediocre fit. For additional information, see Table 6.

4.5 Hypotheses Testing

Since the measurement model offered evidence of reliability and validity, those estimates were analysed to assess the hypothesised associations among the constructs in the conceptual model. The quality of the inner model is demonstrated by the standardised path coefficients and significance levels (Hair et al., 2012). SEM path analysis was used in order to evaluate the hypotheses that were given (H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4, H_5).

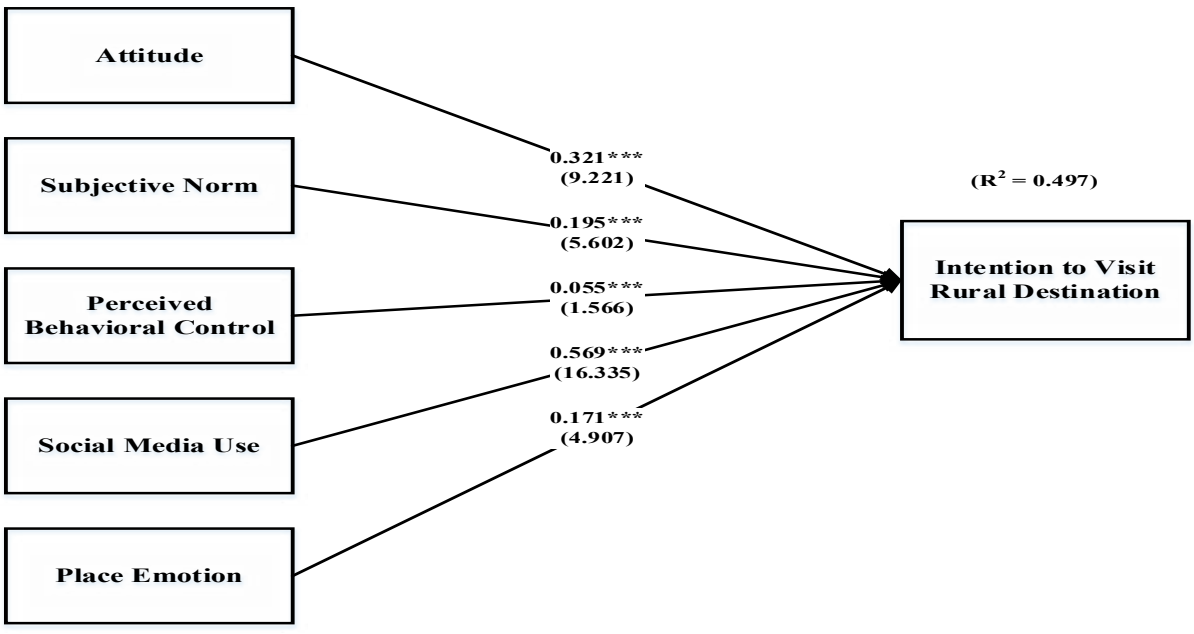
It is noticed that out of the five hypotheses, four hypotheses support the results and are thus accepted. Out of the core constructs of TPB, two constructs that are "ATT (β = 0.321, *t*-value= 9.221, *p* <0.001) and SN (β = 0.195, *t*-value= 5.602, *p* <0.001)", are found to be significant and thus positively influence behavioural intention to visit rural destinations. "PBC (β = 0.055, *t*-value= 1.566, *p* <0.117)" is not found significant and thus does not influence the behavioural intention to visit rural destinations. In addition, "social media use (β = 0.569, *t*-value= 16.335, *p* <0.001) and place emotion (β = 0.171, *t*-value= 4.907, *p* <0.001)" have a positive and significant influence on behavioural intention to visit rural destinations. Hence, four hypotheses, H_1, H_2, H_4 and H_5, support the evidence and are thus accepted, while hypothesis H_3 does not support the evidence and is thus not accepted. For more details, see Figure 2 and Table 7.

Table 7. Summarised Hypotheses

Relationship	Std. β	*t*-value	*p*-value	Results
BI ← ATT	0.321	9.221	***	Supported
BI ← SN	0.195	5.602	***	Supported
BI ← PBC	0.055	1.566	0.117	Not Supported
BI ← SM	0.569	16.335	***	Supported
BI ← PE	0.171	4.907	***	Supported

***Significant at the 0.01 level
Source: AMOS Output

Figure 2. Structural Model and Hypotheses



Source: Own Elaboration

The results reveal that out of the constructs under study, four constructs, viz. "attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), social media use (SM) and place emotion (PE)," are significant in predicting behavioural intention to visit rural destinations. These constructs explained approximately 50% (R^2 = 0.497) of the variance in the behavioural intention to visit rural destinations.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to measure the influence of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) on tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations, incorporating two additional constructs: social media use and place emotion. In this study, the TPB model was used to examine the effect of social media use on the travel-related decision-making process. The TPB model has been tested and validated in many previous studies, including tourism research (Joo et al., 2020; Hamid & Azhar, 2021; Sujood et al., 2022; Azhar et al., 2022). However, the present study is distinct in its relevance because it uses the TPB model in studying rural tourism, leading to the revitalisation of rural areas and contributing substantially to sustainable tourism development. A model consisting of five hypotheses was developed on the basis of available literature. The proposed model was tested and interpreted using structural equation modeling (SEM) on AMOS 22.0 software. The final model of the study explains 50% of the variance in the tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations. According to Armitage and Conner (2001), "from a database of 185 independent studies published up to the end of 1997, the TPB accounted for 27% and 39% of the variance in behavior and intention, respectively", and the present study has a variance of 50% in the tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations. Hence, this study confirms the validity of the extended TPB model. The findings of this study reveal that hypotheses H_1, H_2, H_4 and H_5 support the evidence, while hypothesis H_3 does not. Out of the core components of the TPB, attitude towards rural tourism (β=0.321) and subjective norm (β=0.195) are found to have a significant and positive influence on intention to travel to rural destinations. These findings are in line with previous studies (Meng & Choi, 2016; Park et al., 2017; Joo et al., 2020; Ashraf et al., 2020; Nowacki et al., 2021; Hamid & Azhar, 2021; Sujood et al., 2022; Ng & Cheung, 2022). The reason for this could be that tourists choose to visit sustainable rural destinations for intrinsic reasons, knowing that their visit would be beneficial to themselves and the environment as well. Perceived behavioural control (β=0.055) is found not to be significant and thus does not influence intention to travel to rural destinations. This result is in align with the findings of previous studies (Liu et al., 2020; Sujood et al., 2022; Abdelwahed et al., 2022). The reason for this could be that being a developing nation, there are infrastructural flaws in Indian rural regions. The poor roadways and railways connectivity to rural areas create an obstacle to visiting rural India. The electricity and water supply in rural India is still facing challenges. Due to poor connectivity, lack of basic amenities and weak infrastructure, getting basic products and services in rural India is still problematic. These could be some possible reasons that might demotivate tourists from visiting rural destinations.

Social media use and place emotion were taken as additional constructs in the present study. Social media use (β=0.569) is found to be significant and thus positively influences intention to travel to rural destinations. This outcome is the opposite of Joo et al. (2020)' finding that shows an insignificant association between social media use and intention to travel to rural destinations. The reason for this could be that in recent years the usage of social media has accelerated exponentially, and its widespread reach and influence have grabbed the attention of travellers when it comes to taking travel-related decisions. Place emotion (β=0.171) is also found to be a significant predictor and thus positively influences intention to travel to rural destinations. This outcome is in accordance with Zhang and Wang (2019). Among all the constructs under study, social media use (β=0.569) came out as the strongest and most influential predictor of intention to travel to rural destination. Attitude towards rural tourism (β=0.321) is the second most influential predictor of intention to travel to rural destinations. Subjective norm and place emotion came out as the third and fourth most influential predictors of intention to travel to rural destinations.

6. Conclusion

Unlike the previous studies, the present study intended to examine the influence of social media use and place emotion on intention to visit rural destinations by incorporating the theory of planned behavior. The present study is distinct from previous studies in many ways. First, it has undertaken two additional constructs, viz. social media use and place emotion with the TPB model which increases the explanatory power of the model. Second, this study contributes to the discussion of sustainability, social media and place emotion by examining travel intentions to rural destinations through the lens of TPB, which is a distinct

combination of the constructs. Third, to the best of researchers' knowledge, no study has been conducted in the Indian context that has measured the integrated influence of the TPB model with social media use and place emotion on tourists' intention in rural tourism. Fourth, research on rural tourism in India is still in the nascent stage. Hence, the present study bridges this gap by focusing on tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations and explores social media use in the promotion of rural tourism.

With the use of social media, this research uncovered the factors that influence rural tourism decisions. Social media use and attitude are the strongest predictors that have a greater impact on tourists' intention to visit rural destinations, followed by subjective norm and place emotion, respectively. Consequently, it stands to reason that in order to contribute in the growth of sustainable tourism, marketers should place an emphasis on information related to social media use, attitude, subjective norm and place emotion. Rather than focusing just on the attractions of tourism destinations, marketers should work to foster a communal spirit and highlight the practical advantages of rural/sustainable tourism as a whole. If marketers were to place a greater emphasis on promoting the sharing of travel experiences, this might contribute to tourism's continued expansion in a sustainable manner. More progress might be made to enable and promote sharing via social media. Marketers may encourage social media sharing by holding contests and awarding rewards to those who upload posts on social media related to their travel experiences to rural destinations. It can lead to sustainable public benefits and may influence attitude and encourage more powerful subjective norm and place emotion effects.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The present study broadens the scope of available literature on the theory of planned behaviour in the context of sustainable tourism, more specifically, rural tourism. This study has tested and validated the widely used TPB model, taken social media use and place emotion as additional factors and makes significant contributions to the fields of rural tourism and travel intention with its suggested model and theoretical framework. This research provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding travel intention within the setting of rural tourism. The findings of the present study demonstrate the relevance of the TPB model from the perspective of information and communication to psychology and emotion. First, it extends the existing literature on tourists' intention to visit rural destinations by integrating social media use and place emotion with the TPB model. The newness of this study lies in the fact that no previous study has been carried out in the Indian context that has incorporated social media use and place emotion with the TPB model to measure tourists' intention to visit rural destinations. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by providing a strong theoretical backing for future researchers and academicians. Second, the findings support the need to combine social media use and place emotion with the TPB model to better understand the main determinants of travel intention. Third, the extended model gives a clear explanation of the significant drivers of travel intention, which would help future researchers and academicians better grasp the aspects of social media use and place emotion.

6.2 Practical Implications

A number of practical and managerial implications could be drawn from the findings of this study. Local and global social media advertisers, who wish to influence tourists' travel intention, could be benefited from the findings. Specifically, the findings of this research could be useful for those in the hospitality industry that serve tourists in rural tourist areas, such as tour operators, hotels, and travel agencies. The findings of this study would allow people, those involved in the travel, tourism and hospitality business in the country, to chalk out new policies, plans and strategies to cater the needs of rural tourists. Marketers should realise the worth of social media, and more emphasis should be given to the quality of the shared content over these platforms for making a strong impact on the minds of users. This study found that tourists' intentions to travel rural destinations are influenced by their use of social media and revealed that attitude towards rural tourism is the second most powerful predictor of intention to travel to rural destinations. Thus, industry practitioners and marketers should try to understand the factors affecting attitude over social media and should make their marketing and advertisement campaigns accordingly. It can therefore be stated that marketers should prioritise content over social media connected to atti-

tude to promote sustainable tourism. Instead of simply highlighting the appeals of certain tourist places, marketing strategies should be such that they could develop the social mood and attitude of users and could showcase the functional benefits of rural/sustainable tourism subsequently. Place emotion is also a significant predictor of travel intention to visit rural destinations. Therefore, local service providers must provide service in such a way so that real rural atmosphere and authenticity of the destination (rural area) could be restored and retained in the minds of tourists. This would enrich tourists experience and thus enhance satisfaction. In addition, tourism professionals and departments of tourism management should adopt a responsible stance to conserve the environment and local culture as a development goal. The only way to maintain the usefulness of local resources, fulfil the needs of rural tourists, and grow rural tourism is to cultivate rural tourism in a manner that does not cause damage to the surrounding ecosystem.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

The present study was intended to assess the impact of the TPB, with additional constructs, viz. social media use and place emotion on intention to travel to rural destinations in the Indian context. This study, like any other study, is not exempted from limitations. Despite achieving its objectives and providing a number of theoretical and practical implications for academicians and industry professionals, the study has certain limitations that will pave the ground for future investigations. First, it applied the TPB model to predict tourists' intention to travel to rural destinations. Future studies might incorporate other behavioural theories to predict travel intentions, such as social cognitive theory and behavioral reasoning theory. Second, social media use and place emotion were taken as additional constructs with the TPB model in the present study. Future studies could employ more constructs to predict tourists' intention, such as user-generated content (UGC), quality of content etc. Third, the present study is cross-sectional in nature. A longitudinal research design could be used in future research to get more robust results. Fourth, this study adopted questionnaire technique for collecting the data. Different data collection techniques could be applied in future studies, such as the interview method. Fifth, this study undertook 415 responses for interfering the results. A large sample size could be taken in future researches to get more in-depth and generalised results. Sixth, in this study, data was collected using the convenience sampling technique; however, future studies could use different sampling techniques for data collection. Seventh, this study was executed in India. Being a developing country, it has a huge impact on referent others on behavioral intention. As a result, future research could be conducted in other developed countries for more robust results and generalisation. Finally, the research framework proposed in the present study could be validated and tested in a variety of settings other than tourism. As a consequence of this, the outcomes may differ.

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Appendix A

Attitude (adapted from Sparks & Pan, 2009; Zhang et al., 2017)
ATT1: It is pleasant to participate in rural tourism activities.
ATT2: It is meaningful to participate in rural tourism activities.
ATT3: Rural tourism can create beautiful memories.
ATT4: Rural tourism can increase vision.

Subjective Norm (adapted from Sparks & Pan, 2009; Lin et al., 2012)
SN1: Family members think that it is meaningful to take part in rural tourism.
SN2: Most people prefer that I should take part in rural tourism.
SN3: Friends have recommended me to take part in rural tourism.
SN4: Friends think that it is meaningful to take part in rural tourism.

Perceived Behavioural Control (adapted from Sparks & Pan, 2009; Han et al., 2010)
PBC1: It is easy for me to participate in rural tourism.
PBC2: I feel there is nothing that prevents me from taking part in rural tourism.
PBC3: If I want, I can take part in rural tourism.

Behavioural Intention (adapted from Bagozzi et al., 2003; Fielding et al., 2008; Han et al., 2010)
BI1: I intend to participate in rural tourism.
BI2: I am planning to take part in rural tourism.
BI3: I am willing to take part in rural tourism in future.
BI4: I will take part in rural tourism because of local special activities.

Social Media Use (adapted from Ellison et al., 2007)
SM1: Social media is a part of my tourism activity.
SM2: Social media has become a part of my travel plans.
SM3: I feel out of touch when I have not logged onto social media while traveling.
SM4: I feel I am part of the social media tourism community.

Place Emotion (adapted from Kyle et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2017)
PE1: Rural tourism means a lot to me.
PE2: I get much satisfaction out of rural tourism.
PE3: I actively take part in rural tourism.
PE4: I am very much interested in rural tourism.

Gender: Male / Female / Others

Age: Below 18 / 18- 27 / 28-37 / 38-47 / 48-57 / Above 57

Marital Status: Single / Married / Others

Education: Undergraduate / Graduate / Postgraduate / Ph.D. / Others

Occupation: Student / Employed / Employee / Retired / Businessperson / Others

Monthly Income (INR): Upto 15,000 / 15,001- 30,000 / 30,001-45,000 / 45,001-60,000 / Above 60,000