



The impact of uses and motivation gratifications on tourist behavioral intention: The mediating role of destination image and tourists' attitudes

The-Bao Luong

Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Vietnam

Abstract:

Purpose: This study investigates the relationships between uses and gratification (U&G) theory, destination image, and tourists' attitudes and how they influence tourist behavioral intention.

Methods: The data was collected from 590 Vietnamese tourists through social media platforms like Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram. The Smart-PLS program (version 4.0) was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing.

Results: The outcome indicates all the hypotheses were supported. The result shows that U&G motivations positively affect both destination image and tourists' attitudes toward using technology. Destination image positively affects tourists' attitudes toward using technology. Tourists' behavioral intention is positively affected by destination image and tourists' attitudes toward using technology. Moreover, the research delved into the intermediary functions of destination image and tourists' technological attitudes regarding the association between U&G motivations and tourist behavioral intention.

Implications: This study contributes significantly to literature as it is one of the pioneering works in integrating U&G theory. The correlations between variables bring new findings inside the tourism literature field. Furthermore, this study offers practical applications for managing and marketing heritage sites by exploring the crucial factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit these sites.

Keywords: uses and gratification motivations, destination image, tourist's attitude toward using technology, tourist behavioral intention

JEL Classification: C91, D7, L83

Biographical note: The-Bao Luong (ltb@hcmute.edu.vn) is a Lecturer from the Faculty of Fashion and Tourism, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Research interests include Food Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and Tourist Behavior.

1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector-related enterprises have depended on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), mainly smartphones, to interact with tourists' technology (Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020; Palos-Sanchez et al., 2021; Tussyadiah, 2016). Several experts in the field of tourism have highlighted the requirement for additional research on the intersection of smartphones and tourism, utilizing a theoretical framework to evaluate both constructs and experiences (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022; Wang et al., 2016). Research in the tourism industry suggests that tourists primarily use mobile technology, specifically smartphones, during both the planning phase and while on vacation to gather information related to their destinations (Singh & Sibi, 2023; D. Wang et al., 2016), with smartphones being recognized as a primary valuable and efficient tool for this motivation (Lamsfus et al., 2015). There is, however, not much research on why tourists use cell phones to access

social media platforms and how this affects their experience in a place, their attitude about using smartphones during their vacations, or their future behavioral intentions. As such, the U&G theory may provide tourism researchers with an illuminating lens on visitor behavior, even though few studies have used it in this context.

Understanding visitors' uses and reasons for pleasure is critical in tourism studies. According to the uses and gratifications theory, individuals actively seek out and consume media or participate in activities to meet their unique wants and desires (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022). This theory emphasizes the underlying motives that motivate visitors to pick certain places, participate in activities, and show certain behaviors in the tourism industry. Researchers may acquire insights into the varied requirements and desires that tourists attempt to satisfy throughout their travel experiences by examining uses and fulfillment motives. This information is useful for destination management organizations and marketers to build focused marketing strategies, provide customized backgrounds, and



increase visitor satisfaction and behavioral intention (Krakover & Corsale, 2021; Logan, 2017). This research will contribute to the existing literature by offering insights into the complex interplay between motivations, destination image, attitude, and behavioral intention, thus informing effective destination marketing and management strategies.

In addition, different destinations and tourist attitudes have different dimensions of tourists' U&G motivations, leading to a lack of consensus among researchers. The previous survey identified three dimensions of tourist attitudes toward using technology (Moon & An, 2022): affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Some previous studies explored the correlation between motivation and tourists' attitudes (Lee, 2009; Li et al., 2023; Moon & An, 2022; Park & Lee, 2021; Wu & Kuang, 2021); and between motivation and destination image (Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018). Nonetheless, a research gap exists concerning the mediating influence of destination image and tourist attitude in the association between uses and gratification (U&G) motivations and tourist behavioral intention. There have been limited studies exploring this relationship. By examining these relationships, researchers could contribute to understanding the factors that affect tourists' decision-making processes and behaviors.

Although, there has been an increasing body of literature that has examined the relationship among uses and gratifications motivations (UGMs), destination image, tourists' attitude, and tourist behavioral intention and revealed a significant gap in the literature regarding the role of destination image and tourists attitude as a mediator of the above relationships (Gong et al., 2020; Krakover & Corsale, 2021; Nechoud et al., 2021; Park & Lee, 2021; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). Up to date, the influencing role of destination image and visitor perceptions as well has mostly been neglected and researchers have been paying attention to the direct relationships rather than the mediating role. Finally, by investigating the mediating effect and gaining a better insight into the processes that determine the above relations, the proposed study aspires to expand the existing pool of evidence and strengthen the extant theoretical framework in the domains of consumer behavior and tourism (Daskalaki et al., 2020; Pereira et al., 2022; Wu & Kuang, 2021).

Destination image and tourists' attitudes are the building blocks of tourist behaviors (Caber et al., 2020; Luong, 2023a, 2023b; Zhang & Lei, 2012). These subjective experiences generate the destination image, which often influences both their anticipated and unexpected behaviors. The tourist attitude is another focus area that measures people's judgment and decision-making capability relating to a particular place (Pinar et al., 2019; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Thipsingh et al., 2022). A good attitude will likely result in positive behaviors, such as active recommendations and revisits, whereas a bad one will discourage people or prevent them from enjoying an action (Han et al., 2019; Passafaro, 2020). Investigating the mediating influence of destination image and tourist attitude may be used to increase destination management and marketing tactics.

The research will examine the motivation for uses and gratifications, destination image, tourist attitude, and their impacts on tourist behavioral intention. Additionally, the study examines the impacts of destination image and visitor attitude. The current study intends to provide new insights into the field of tourism by investigating these relationships

and revealing the internal mechanisms through which the visitors' behavioral intention is formed. Equally, the findings of this study can benefit destination managers and destination marketers since they gain insights to employ effective strategies that can enhance destination image, create favorable visitor attitudes, and eventually affect desirable tourist behavior.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Uses and gratifications theory

Uses and Gratification (U&G) Theory, established in the 1940s, aims to research the relationship between mass media and people (Katz et al., 1973). According to this theory, media help people satisfy specific social and psychological needs and wants by using one or more of the given media (Ko et al., 2005). The basic premise of the theory suggests people's power to select the media they use (Wu & Kuang, 2021). Moreover, variations in the media and information environment can influence the user's gratification (Wu & Kuang, 2021). In tourism, visitors identify their requirements based on four motivations: social contact, information, entertainment, and convenience (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022), and use smartphones to meet them. Furthermore, because smartphones are highly interactive and interpersonal, U&G is well-suited to smartphone research (Logan, 2017). The six factors of U&G, including "source credibility, usefulness, remuneration, innovation, immersion, and real-time interactivity, contribute to value-creation behavior" (Li et al., 2023, p. 1). Additionally, the study surveyed Chinese millennial travelers on how and why they decide on hotels through WeChat (Gamage et al., 2022).

2.2 Destination image

The construct of destination image has been broadly researched in the tourism literature (Bui, 2022; Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018). The "tourism destination image" mentions the awareness that tourists have about specific characteristics of the destination, including perceptions of the tourism industry's infrastructure, the hospitality environment, the unique cultural attractions of the area, etc. (Chen & Tsai, 2007). While earlier studies primarily concentrated on the cognitive components of destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), more recent perspectives and practical approaches have documented the cognitive-affective framework of destination image (Krakover & Corsale, 2021). The motivation behind travel refers to an individual's desires and characteristics that prompt them to vacation to a specific location. As previously mentioned, this concept has been divided into two categories known as push and pull motivation (Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). The awareness of a destination is positively impacted by both personal factors (push factors) and external factors (pull factors) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Moreover, motivation factors are crucial in shaping the perceived image of a tourist attraction, particularly in terms of the quantity and quality of information available (Jalilvand et al., 2012). The study found that the entertainment, informativeness, and social aspects of gratification significantly impact a user's attitude toward a tourist attraction fan page (Ho & See-To, 2018).

Additionally, it has been observed that young Chinese free independent tourists are especially interested in obtaining trustworthy information regarding attraction sites from online sources (Gong et al., 2020). Given these findings, the study puts forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Uses and gratifications motivations positively affect destination image.

2.3 Tourists' Attitude

Attitude is a term used to describe a pre-existing tendency to respond consistently toward something, which may be either favorable or unfavorable depending on the situation (Pereira et al., 2022). Individuals' attitudes may be favorable or unfavorable, consistent with their responses to people, objects, or institutions (Ajzen, 2020). Among tourists, an attitude refers to their predisposition or feelings about vacation destinations and tourism services offered by those destinations based on their perception of the destination's products and attributes (Jiang et al., 2023). A study examining smartphone usage and attitudes towards it by tourists explores the relationship between U&G motivations. Furthermore, this study examines how tourists' attitudes toward smartphone use are related to the destination image. According to a recent study, college students' intentions to share information on the Internet were affected by news looking for, socialization, status, and entertainment (Lee & Ma, 2012). Researchers built upon prior studies to explore whether the influence of gratifications varied across different contexts. To this end, they introduced the passing time factor and modified information by looking for information contribution (Lee & Ma, 2012; Thompson et al., 2020). In addition, rewarding U&G motivations can effectively motivate users to share content (Park & Lee, 2021). E-tourist satisfaction was significantly impacted by U&G motivations, which were found to influence tourists' attitudes toward smartphone use (Moon & An, 2022). Tourism attitudes to sharing travel content are controlled by U&G motivations (entertainment, sharing information, rewards) (Li et al., 2023). Users with favorable views shared information more frequently (Wu & Kuang, 2021). Accordingly, the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: Uses gratification motivations positively affect tourist's attitude.

According to previous studies, tourists' attitudes are significantly influenced by the destination's image among tourists (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Pereira et al., 2022). An image of a destination can confirm or reinforce existing attitudes and behaviors, create new perspectives, or alter existing perceptions or attitudes (Hyounggon Kim & Richardson, 2003). Tourists' attitudes strongly influence travel decisions (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Attitude is vital in selecting potential and final destinations (Um & Crompton, 1990). Furthermore, tourists' attitudes are affected by the image of an organic destination (Hany Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015). Moreover, tourists' attitudes toward destinations are positively impacted by destination image (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Similarly, the research discovered a positive association between visitor motivation and attitude towards the place, mediated by

destination image (Pereira et al., 2022). Hence, the hypothesis proposed is:

Hypothesis 3: Destination image positively affects tourists' attitudes.

2.4 Tourist behavioral intention

A relationship with a service provider can be maintained (good behavior) or retreated (negative behavior) and established the customers' behavior (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017; Daskalaki et al., 2020; Zeithaml et al., 1996). An individual's behavioral intention can also predict what actions they may take in the future. Consumer behavior is typically investigated by examining willingness to visit and return, spending and repurchasing, response to service suppliers, and recommendations (Ajzen, 2001; Kim & Han, 2010; Luong, 2023a; Singh & Sibi, 2023).

Numerous studies have extensively studied how destination image perception influences behavioral intention. An example is the effect of positive destination images on choosing tourist attractions or visit intentions (Luong, 2023a, 2023b; Qu & Qu, 2015; Xuan Nhi et al., 2023). Further, tourists' recommendations and visit intentions can be influenced by destination images (Bui, 2022; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Thipsingh et al., 2022; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). Travelers who return to a destination are more likely to perceive it positively than travelers who visit for the first time (H. Qu et al., 2011). The primary purpose of destination marketing is to manage the overall perception of a destination and its attractions to influence tourists' destination choices (Bui, 2022; C. M. Chen et al., 2010; Chenini & Touaiti, 2018). Smart tourism is associated with memory-based tourism experiences and behavior intention (revisit and recommendation intention) through destination image (Sharma & Nayak, 2019). Hence, the hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Destination image positively affects tourist behavioral intention.

Attitudes tend to have different behavioral consequences in general and specific contexts, with particular attitudes affecting intentions and behavior more directly (Passafaro, 2020). Behavioral perspectives can be studied as a direct predictor of corresponding intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 2001; Y. Kim & Han, 2010). Individuals' attitudes can potentially affect behavioral intentions directly, including those influenced by feelings and emotions (Passafaro, 2020). An individual's behavior is directly impacted by their attitude toward environmental concerns to engage in green actions (like reducing waste and saving electricity) during conventions (Han et al., 2019). Different empirical studies have shown that tourists' attitudes influence their intention to visit (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Travelers' attitudes toward green hotels significantly determined to revisit intention (Kim & Han, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Tourists' attitude positively affects tourist behavioral intention.

Several studies have shown that destination images significantly influence tourists' impressions and intentions of

recommending (Caber et al., 2020; Gómez et al., 2018; Kuhzady et al., 2020; Styliadis et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2016). Further, destination images also mediate the correlation between cognitive images and affective images (Styliadis et al., 2017). The destination image explains the positive effect of consumption value on visit intention (Gómez et al., 2018). Compared with other studies, only people who have a holistic image of the destination are less likely to revisit those having a negative or conative image, while having a positive image also reduces the probability of returning (Stylos et al., 2016). City perception is one of the factors concerning satisfaction and quality, as well as the intention to revisit or event image (Li et al., 2021; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). The relationship between the behavioral intention of tourists and involvement in the couch surfing industry was partly mediated by destination image (Kuhzady et al., 2020; Nechoud et al., 2021). Moreover, the role of destination perception is crucial in tying the results of perceived risks, perceived constraints, and behavioral intention together (Nazir et al., 2021). The literature review reports the mediator's role of the destination image proved in this study (Nazir et al., 2021). Thus, the following hypothesis can be suggested:

Hypothesis 6: Destination image mediating effects in the relationship between uses and gratification motivations and tourist behavioral intention.

The literature review emphasizes the main consideration that motivation is crucial to perceptions concerning behavior in tourism and other industries (Mehmood et al., 2018; Poon & Koay, 2021; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2022). In the case of conventional travel plans, behavioral perception is the key factor of travel intention (Wang et al., 2022). Research also indicated that attitudes mediate the association between subjective norms and travel intention (Wang et al., 2022). Thus, destination attractiveness is mediated by how the tourist looks at the destination (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Prior literature indicates that attitudes toward heritage sites are possible mediators of traditional WOM and travel behavioral intentions between other factors (Mehmood et al., 2018). Specifically, research analyzing past visitors to Hong Kong indicated that trust in a destination was negatively related to the intention to revisit through tourists' attitudes (Poon & Koay, 2021). Based on the results, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 7: Tourist's attitude mediating effects in the relationship between uses and gratification motivations and tourist behavioral intention.

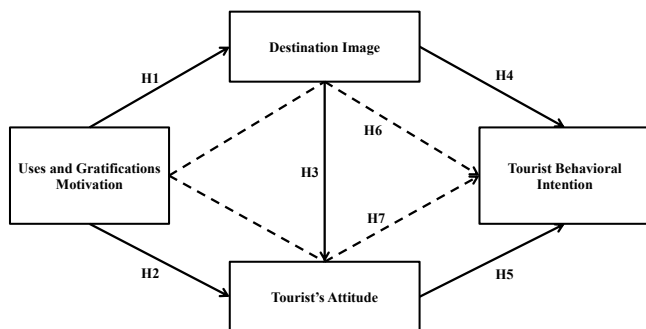


Figure 1. The research theoretical framework

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Destination site

Da Nang in Vietnam is an amazing place that combines the ultramodern and traditional culture. In addition to beautiful streets and great coffee shops, the city is rich in many pagodas and temples, most notably the Linh Ung Pagoda. Besides, visitors should visit the nearby Marble Mountains to enjoy the view of the city and surrounding area. South East Asia's best beaches, Non-Nuoc and My Khe Beach, attract water sports fans, sunbathers, and swimmers. Tourists can also admire the Dragon Bridge and experience the Floating Market, which is a great way to view the city at night. Thus, Da Nang can be an ideal place for a relaxing, fun, and enjoyable vacation.

3.2 Measures

To measure the variables of this study, previously validated measures were used. The U&G motivations were measured using a 19-item scale with 4-sub dimensions from previous research (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022). The attitude construct was assessed using a 14-item scale with two subdimensions proved by earlier research (Moon & An, 2022). Consistent with earlier studies, a 5-item scale was presented to measure the destination image construct (Pereira et al., 2022). Finally, the tourist behavioral intention construct was measured using a 6-item scale with 2-sub dimensions from prior research (Sharma & Nayak, 2019).

The survey instrument was carefully tested to guarantee that it is comprehensive, dependable, and valid. An expert Vietnamese translator first translated it into English and then into Vietnamese. Two native Vietnamese speakers with specialized competence in both tourism and linguistics reviewed the translated version to confirm its accuracy and comprehensibility. Their comments were integrated into the finalized questionnaire. The pilot test comprised four respondents with considerable field experience. In this way, the feedback obtained from the results of this activity enabled the experts to develop the questionnaire items that are better oriented towards clarity and practical applicability. Additionally, a behavioral attitude subdimension containing four items explaining tourists' attitudes toward technology use was discovered as redundant and easily misinterpreted during the pilot test. Hence, it was eliminated from the questionnaire to guarantee a higher level of measurement accuracy and differentiation.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Several social media platforms, including Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram, were used to distribute an online survey for this study. The survey was conducted between March 13th 2023, and April 15th, 2023. This study was prepared for Vietnamese domestic tourists aged 18 years and above. In order to determine the travel history of the participants, a screening questionnaire was administered. For the case of whether a respondent had visited Da Nang City, a filtering question was included, "Have you traveled to Da Nang City? If not, please skip this survey. Thank you so much". After applying this screening question, the study obtained 590 valid questionnaires for analysis.

Smart-PLS is a widely recognized statistical tool for partial least squares analysis suitable for this research objective. Therefore, this program enables the assessment of the relationships between variables and the effective testing of the study's hypotheses.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Participants' characteristics

Table 1 displays the participants' information. According to the results, the female participants were 71.19%, while 28.81% were male. 89.83% of participants are single. The most significant percentage of participants, 79.83%, are between 18 and 29. With 63.22% of participants have a monthly income under 8.000.000VND.

Table 1. Participants' demographics

Variable	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	170	28.81
	Female	420	71.19
Marital status	Single	530	89.83
	Married	60	10.17
Age (year)	18-29	471	79.83
	30-40	113	19.15
	41-50	6	1.02
	51-60	0	0.00
Education	Undergraduate	497	84.24
	Postgraduate	93	15.76
Monthly income (VND)**	Under 8.000.000VND	373	63.22
	8.000.001-16.000.000VND	117	19.83
	16.000.0001-24.000.000VND	60	10.17
	Above 24.000.001VND	40	6.78
Occupation	Student	422	71.52
	Private company	100	16.95
	Government officials	19	3.22
	Own business	49	8.31

Note: **1 USD = 24.115VND as on 22 November 2023

4.2 Normality and common method bias test

The results showed that skewness and kurtosis values met the criteria for demonstrating a normal distribution (Table 2) (Byrne, 2016; Hair et al., 2006).

Table 2. The first-order construct

Construct and Items Measurement	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Social interaction (SIR)						
SIR1 "While in Da Nang, I use my smartphone to share my experiences."	-0.137	-0.323	0.734	0.804	0.864	0.559
SIR2 "I make use of my smartphone to offer guidance to fellow tourists while in Da Nang."	1.086	-0.993	0.866			
SIR4 "I engaged in numerous discussions about Da Nang using my smartphone on this trip."	1.484	-1.227	0.819			
SIR3 "I use my smartphone to capture photos and videos of my trip in Da Nang."	0.110	-0.814	0.738			
Information (INF)						
INF1 "While on this trip, I employed my smartphone to search for restaurant reviews online."	0.110	-0.814	0.738	0.819	0.874	0.583
INF2 "I use my smartphone to arrange transportation (via Grab or Uber) during my visit to Da Nang."	2.351	-1.411	0.757			
INF3 "To discover appealing destinations to visit, I utilized social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, or TripAdvisor through my smartphone during this trip."	0.839	-0.979	0.792			
INF4 "During my trip to Da Nang, I relied on Google Maps to navigate my way around the city using my smartphone."	3.957	-1.75	0.731			
Entertainment (ENT)						
ENT1 "I used my smartphone on this trip to upload pictures to my social media accounts."	0.367	-0.716	0.820	0.842	0.889	0.618
ENT2 "I take photos using my smartphone during this trip to create lasting memories."	-0.752	-0.291	0.821			
ENT3 "I use my smartphone to capture videos and record trip memories."	-0.249	-0.78	0.755			
ENT4 "Using my smartphone, I share my trip photos with others during this trip."	0.639	-0.544	0.731			
ENT5 "I use my smartphone to share videos of my trip with others."	0.852	-0.877	0.682			
Convenience (CNV)						
CNV1 "I use my smartphone on this trip to retrieve information about upcoming destinations."	-1.013	-0.023	0.788	0.925	0.947	0.817
CNV2 "To stay informed about Da Nang, I used my smartphone to obtain real-time updates during this trip."	0.225	-0.576	0.887			
CNV3 "I used my smartphone to obtain up-to-date information about Da Nang during this trip quickly."	0.924	-0.83	0.719			
CNV4 "My smartphone is handy during this trip, allowing me to adjust my travel plans in response to unforeseen circumstances quickly."	0.216	-0.592	0.824			
CNV5 "I use my smartphone during this trip to remain flexible with my travel plans and make changes promptly if necessary."	-0.077	-0.286	0.696			
Affective attitude (AFT)						
AFT1 "I find using my smartphone during this trip to be entertaining."	-0.490	-0.271	0.916	0.884	0.912	0.635
AFT2 "Using my smartphone during this trip was a pleasant experience, in my opinion."	-0.144	-0.296	0.937			
AFT3 "I derive enjoyment from using my smartphone during this trip."	-0.714	-0.205	0.896			
AFT4 "I find using my smartphone during this trip to be an appealing activity."	1.051	-0.653	0.865			
Cognitive attitude (CNT)						
CNT1 "I consider using my smartphone during this trip great value."	-0.682	-0.137	0.883	0.876	0.910	0.671
CNT2 "Using my smartphone during this trip is an effective tool."	-0.710	-0.139	0.819			
CNT3 "I find using my smartphone during this trip to be practical."	-0.131	-0.369	0.755			
CNT4 "I believe that using my smartphone during this trip is beneficial."	-0.532	0.091	0.763			
CNT5 "Using my smartphone during this trip is helpful, in my estimation."	-0.150	-0.377	0.807			
CNT6 "I think using my smartphone during this trip is informative."	0.231	-0.877	0.744			
Destination image (DES)						
DES1 "Da Nang, as a travel destination, possesses a unique character."	1.330	-1.241	0.824	0.872	0.922	0.797
DES2 "Da Nang is a beautiful tourist destination."	-0.425	-0.165	0.746			
DES3 "Da Nang is an exciting tourist destination."	0.708	-0.859	0.823			
DES4 "Da Nang is an exciting tourist destination."	-0.893	0.066	0.844			
DES5 "Da Nang is an amusing/interesting tourist destination."	-0.535	-0.140	0.853			
Intention to recommendation (RCM)						
RCM1 "I intend to share positive feedback about Da Nang with others."	1.717	-1.425	0.898	0.824	0.896	0.741
RCM2 "I will release positive information about Da Nang on social media."	-0.602	-0.319	0.858			
RCM3 "I plan to suggest Da Nang as a destination to others."	0.888	-0.985	0.921			
RCM4 "I intend to recommend Da Nang to my friends and family."	0.888	-0.985	0.921			
Intention to revisit (RVS)						
RVS1 "I wish to return to Da Nang."	-0.439	-0.513	0.891	0.824	0.896	0.741
RVS2 "I intend to revisit Da Nang."	-0.081	-0.758	0.791			
RVS3 "In the future, I want to revisit Da Nang."	0.417	-0.849	0.897			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Furthermore, all VIFs (inner model) were less than 5 (Table 3), showing that common method bias did not arise in this study (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Collinearity statistics (VIF) – Inner model

Paths	VIF (inner model)
Destination image → tourist behavioral intention	4.886
Destination image → tourists' attitude	2.790
Tourists' attitude → tourist behavioral intention	4.886
Uses and gratifications motivations → destination image	1.000
Uses and gratifications motivations → tourists' attitude	2.790

4.3 Validity and reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values of constructs were higher than 0.7 (Table 2); thus, the constructs' reliability was confirmed (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, the factor loading of all items (except SIR3) was over 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). As well, the AVE scores were greater than 0.50 (Table 2), suggesting convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, the discriminant validity was also confirmed in Table 4 (Hair et al. 2019).

Table 4. Discriminant validity

	AFT	CNT	CNV	DES	ENT	INF	RCM	RVS	SIR
AFT	0.904								
CNT	0.715	0.797							
CNV	0.750	0.801	0.786						
DES	0.878	0.780	0.781	0.819					
ENT	0.622	0.693	0.775	0.703	0.764				
INF	0.580	0.617	0.576	0.586	0.614	0.748			
RCM	0.700	0.668	0.662	0.732	0.518	0.478	0.893		
RVS	0.554	0.658	0.629	0.646	0.572	0.569	0.763	0.861	
SIR	0.564	0.529	0.556	0.587	0.572	0.612	0.558	0.530	0.808

4.4 Second-order factor model

The study identified UGM, TAT, and BEH as the second order factors. The UGM construct included 4 sub-dimensions (SIR, INF, ENT, and CVN). The TAT construct included 2 sub-dimensions (AFT and CNT). The BEH construct included 2 sub-dimensions (RCM and RVS). Furthermore, CR, AVE, and Cronbach's alpha values of TAT and BEH meet the accepted (Table 5) (Hair et al. 2019). The UGM construct was also accepted, even though the UGM's AVE value was slightly under 0.5, but CR and Cronbach's values were higher than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, all factor loading values of first-order constructs are higher than 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5. The second-order construct

Second-order /First-order constructs	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Uses and gratifications motivations (UGM)		0.921	0.931	0.431
Social interaction (SIR)	0.762			
Information (INF)	0.816			
Entertainment (ENT)	0.897			
Convenience (CNV)	0.890			
Tourists' attitude (TAT)		0.927	0.939	0.607
Affective attitude (AFT)	0.914			
Cognitive attitude (CNT)	0.937			
Tourist behavioral intention (BEH)		0.904	0.926	0.678
Intention to recommendation (RCM)	0.945			
Intention to revisit (RVS)	0.932			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

4.5 Hypothesis analysis

All hypotheses were accepted in this study (Table 6 and Figure 2). The hypothesis showed that uses and gratification motivations significantly impact destination image (H1: $\beta =$

0.801, $p < 0.01$). Uses and gratifications motivations affect tourists' attitudes (H2: $\beta = 0.358$, $p < 0.01$). Destination image significantly impacts tourists' attitudes (H3: $\beta = 0.605$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 6. Structural model statistics and hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t	Result
H1	Uses and gratifications motivations → destination image	0.802	49.165**	AC
H2	Uses and gratifications motivations → tourists' attitude	0.360	13.639**	AC
H3	Destination image → tourists' attitude	0.604	21.933**	AC
H4	Destination image → tourist behavioral intention	0.283	4.377**	AC
H5	Tourists' attitude → tourist behavioral intention	0.281	3.901**	AC
H6	Uses and gratification motivations → destination image → tourist behavioral intention	0.227	4.264**	AC
H7	Uses and gratification motivations → tourists' attitude → tourist behavioral intention	0.101	4.117**	AC

Note: t: t-Statistics; AC: accepted; NA: not accepted; **: < 0.01

The study indicated that destination image appreciably impacts tourist behavioral intention (H4: $\beta = 0.344$, $p < 0.01$). The tourists' attitude significantly influences tourist behavioral intention (H5: $\beta = 0.440$, $p < 0.01$). In the indirect effect, the relationship between uses and gratification motivations and tourist behavioral intention is mediated by destination image (H6: $\beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.01$) and tourist's attitude (H7: $\beta = 0.158$, $p < 0.01$).

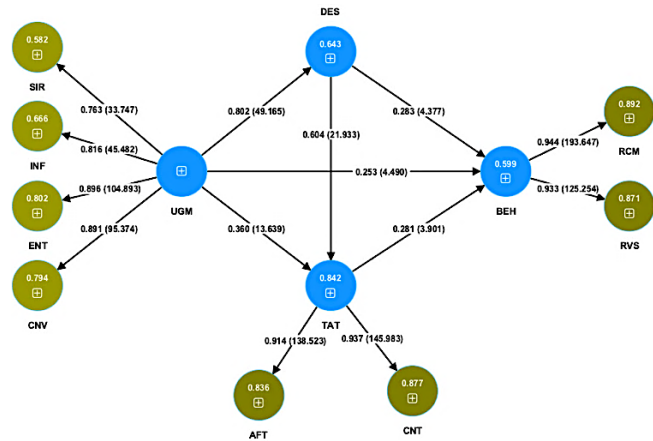


Figure 2. Results of PLS-SEM analysis.

4.6 Predictive capability

The outcomes resulted in a 64.2% variance in the destination image, 84.1% in tourists' attitudes, and 58.2% in tourist behavioral intention explained by model constructs. Furthermore, all Q^2 values in this study are higher than 0.35, indicating that this study has a strong predictive significance (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 7. Predictive capability

Construct	R ²	Q ² predict
Destination image (DES)	0.642	0.640
Tourists' attitude (TAT)	0.841	0.708
Tourist behavioral intention (BEH)	0.582	0.504

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

This study has examined the relationship between U&G motivations, destination image, and tourists' attitudes to identify the factors that affect tourist behavioral intention among Vietnamese tourists. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between uses and gratifications

motivations and destination image. Consequently, the U&G motivations leading Vietnamese tourists to visit a destination significantly affect how they perceive and evaluate it. These results support that motivations significantly affect tourists' perceptions and attitudes toward a destination (Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018; Jalilvand et al., 2012). This means that Vietnamese tourists' motivations, whether they desire to relax, explore the culture, or have an adventure, also play a crucial role in shaping their general evaluation of a specific place. Knowledge about such motivations might help destination marketers and tourism officials develop effective approaches to enhancing the place's reputation and adding more Vietnamese tourists to the target audience.

The outcomes of this research reveal that U&G motives have a significant impact on the attitude of Vietnamese visitors. Indeed, the aspects that motivate Vietnamese visitors to visit a site change their attitude, affecting the overall sentiments. Some studies have also indicated that it is necessary to understand the visitors' motives to determine their feelings and behaviors (Moon & An, 2022; Thompson et al., 2020; Wu & Kuang, 2021). For Vietnamese visitors, factors such as the yearning for distinctiveness, socializing, or self-development lead to good sentiments about a place. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge and practice of destination marketers and tourism practitioners who can organize promotional activities in alignment with these motives to improve their perceptions of a place.

Therefore, as the results of this research show the influence of destination image on the attitudes of Vietnamese visitors, they definitely deserve further reference. Similarly, previous studies emphasized the significance of destination image for the formation of visitors' opinions and behaviors (Jalilvand et al., 2012; Hany Kim & Stephenkova, 2015; Pereira et al., 2022). In other words, destination image may affect the development of positive attitudes of Vietnamese visitors towards the destination if it implies a good natural or cultural background or safety and the like. Hereby, the results of the study may reveal important implications for destination marketers and state that it is crucial to enhance and actively influence the destination image in order to receive positive attitudes and attract more Vietnamese visitors.

The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between destination image and tourist behavioral intention when it comes to Vietnamese visitors. Specifically, the perception and evaluation that the Vietnamese have of a place greatly influences their desire to visit it again, as well as their potential to advocate for it through positive word of mouth. Previous studies have consistently highlighted the importance of a destination's image to the behaviors of travelers at their destinations (Luong, 2023a, 2023b; Pinar et al., 2019; Thipsingh et al., 2022; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). A positive and attractive perception of a destination that fosters aesthetics, authenticity, and innovation could encourage Vietnamese tourists to engage in more positive behavior (Chenini & Touaiti, 2018). Therefore, the findings of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications for destination marketers and the tourism industry in general. Furthermore, the findings reveal a positive relationship between attitudes and behavioral intention. Vietnamese tourism visitors' overall views of a specific destination can significantly affect the desire to engage in desired acts, including revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth. The

literature review demonstrates the important role of attitudes in predicting behavioral intention in relation to tourism (Ajzen, 1991; Han et al., 2019; Passafaro, 2020). Thus, if attitudes to travel destinations are portrayed positively, based on satisfaction, perceived value, and emotional connection, Vietnamese tourists increase their intention to partake in the desired action. The findings have clearly discussed managerial implications for marketers and practitioners in the tourism context.

In addition, the results obtained suggest that the destination's image operates as a mediator in the relationship between visitor behavior and U&G motives. This mediation effect has previously been identified in many relationships that comprise the tourist environment (Caber et al., 2020; Gómez et al., 2018; Kuhzady et al., 2020; Nechoud et al., 2021; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). Consequently, one can assume that Vietnamese tourists' views and impressions of the place have an impact on the arrangements they make after getting to the place. The mentioned reasons for traveling are essential to understand how tourists grade and perceive a destination. There are numerous implications for destination marketers and tourism professionals; thus, there is a need to improve place image in order to promote favorable behavioral intent of Vietnamese visitors.

Lastly, the result also confirms that tourists' attitude serves as a mediator between U&G motivation and behavioral intention. The role of mediation that attitude plays signifies that Vietnamese visitors' attitudes, induced by incentives, can bridge that gap with the following behaviors. The role of attitude has been emphasized in several other studies with regard to the motivation gap between tourists' motives and their subsequent behavior (Mehmood et al., 2018; Poon & Koay, 2021; Wang et al., 2022). This implies that it is important for Vietnamese tourists, resulting in their motivation and the development of their behavioral intention concepts. This result has some managerial implications for DMOs and tourism practitioners by demonstrating the importance of influencing tourists' attitudes to induce the desired behavioral intentions among Vietnamese tourists.

5.2 Theoretical implications

The current research makes theoretical contributions. The theoretical implication that U&G motivations lead to the significance of a destination image can be generalized to suggest that people's perceptions of a destination are not only defined by its physical characteristics but also by the shape of the psychological needs they fulfill. The result is that U&G's motivations have been validated (Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018; Jalilvand et al., 2012). U&G theory has successfully shaped buyers in both media and tourism. U&G theory is observed in tourist behavior, where zero tourists choose their tourist destination based on their psychological needs, which is also a mechanism of choice. Therefore, discovering how U&G motivations shape a destination image contributes greatly to the theory and literature of tourist behavior. Moreover, U&G motives shaped how tourists mediated the use of technology is observed in buyers of media; hence, the discovery validates the study's theory (Lee & Ma, 2012; Li et al., 2023; Moon & An, 2022; Thompson et al., 2020; Tussyadiah, 2016). The U&G theories apply to the tourist industry and are often used in media and communication studies. Tourists make use of media and

communication to suit their needs and encourage themselves, allowing researchers to study travel patterns and choices. Identification of travelers' U&G objectives may help identify and create unique experiences. Therefore, explaining the psychological and emotional impacts of tourist experiences on people and the underlying variables that make them engage in activities has contributed to the achievement of understanding tourism behavior and coming forth with effective marketing methods.

The results show that destination images have a significant impact on tourists' attitudes toward technology, which matches the result of some previous studies (Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Pereira et al., 2022). Previous studies indicated that the attitude toward technology has a positive relationship with destination image (Chen et al., 2010; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Qu & Qu, 2015; Thipsingh et al., 2022). Further, with the help of technologies such as smartphones proving to be supportive during the journey, tourists at this instance have a good experience given that, however good it is reported to be, it leads to positive behavioral intentions, a point that is highly supported by the previous (Han et al., 2019; Passafaro, 2020; Peng & Wu, 2019). Most of this concept has been argued to have a keen influence on tourism-related behavior, and decisions can be well explained by previous literature to quite an extent. In line with this, mobile applications and digital platforms have increasingly been integrated into tourist research and booking in the business setup. By merging the destination image and tourists' attitudes towards technology use in the prediction of tourist behaviors, more insights have emerged that bring to light an important contribution to the studies and theories.

Finally, the findings confirm similar to previous findings (Kuhzady et al., 2020; Stylidis et al., 2017), the relationship between U&G motivations and tourists' behavioral intentions is mediated by destination image. As for attitudinal factors of the tourists towards the use of technology, past research found that they would mediate the relationship between the U&G motivations and the behavioral intention of tourists (Mehmood et al., 2018; Poon & Koay, 2021; Wang et al., 2022). On another note, these days, a lot of research has dived into the mediation effects of technology on tourist motivation and their behavior intentions (Kuhzady et al., 2020; Stylos et al., 2016). It further advanced the literature and theory by identifying the complexities of the tourist's decision process and the influences that contributed to their behavior.

5.3 Managerial implications

The implications to management from these results are three main. First, the findings help industry practitioners tailor remote well-being, personal growth, and social interaction through tourism. U&G motivations or concerns share similarities with the positive effect on destination image. Tourists are motivated to travel for individual and social interaction, information, convenience, entertainment, and information to share on social media destinations they have experienced. From this understanding and meeting of the motivations, a positive destination image could be created, which eventually would lead to returning of positivity. Aside from attracting many tourists, a positive destination image may also help bring the tourists doing some emotional fulfillment mission. This implies that the tourism industry

needs to focus on the junction between U&G motivations and positive effects on the destination image in motivating to visit a destination.

Second, U&G motivations and destination image have practical value in relation to the tourism industry implications for tourists' attitudes towards using technology. For the tourist firms, a better understanding of U&G motivations of the tourists with respect to their attitude towards technology provides a channel through which to market and deliver services more appropriately. Businesses could help reach the highest level of customer satisfaction and that of the tourist experience whenever they create the marketing message with the tourists' motivation in mind and, at the same time, offer the corresponding technologies that will meet the desires of the tourists. On the other hand, the process would have an overall positive image with more members and, as a result, tourism destinations. In most competitive industries in tourism, businesses should look at understanding U&G motivations and the destination image for one to flourish, especially considering the attitudes of the tourists towards technology.

Finally, there are also existing mediating relationships between U&G motivations and tourist behavioral intention through destination image and tourists' attitudes toward the technology of tourists. A tourist destination has to maintain a strong destination image and reputation to attract tourists. In addition to those, the relevance of tourist attitudes toward technology, as more and more technology is integrated into the process of tourists' travel, cannot be ignored. Positive images of the destination will guide tourists on where to travel. A positive attitude toward technology will assist tourists and make their trip enjoyable when they return home. Through technology, the quality of life of the people in destinations positively increases visitor loyalty and extends the spending period in their destinations. Other than that, this has had practical implications of showing the business insight into why they have to customize a customer experience that is appealing to technological travelers. In addition, managers found that in destination marketing, they decide on strategies to capitalize on this knowledge to influence the decision-making of prospective visitors and to keep an understanding of the effect of destination image and technology on tourist behavioral intentions in mind. Digital location guidance and virtual experiences provoke the review of these online testimonies, which is basically a show of previous visitors provided through the promotion of these reviews and testimonials.

5.4 Limitation and future research

There is a sense that there were a number of limitations to this study. For one, the participants who took part in the study are most certainly a high percentage of females. While this is acknowledged, it was not explicitly the drive behind the possible differences or effects that took place with respect to this variable. Therefore, the validity of assumed gender differences in findings is presumably not to be made certain. These may inhibit generalization in the research findings and ground insight into the generality with regard to the gender-specific dynamics concerning destination image and tourist behavior. The recommendations of future studies revolve around a more balanced pool representation and a better investigation of gender-related variables to gain more insight

into these potential influences on the attitudes and behavior of tourists. Second, the rate of students participating in the present study was relatively high. However, the fact that this particular targeted segment supplied meaningful data on their perception and behavior patterns, these findings can somewhat cage the generality to the broad population of tourists. It can also be noted that the characteristics and preferences of student travelers present some resulting judgments that come to mind, and limits are taken into account when generalizing the findings to other segments of tourists. The other advice for further research would be to consider a more diverse sample in terms of different demographic groups. This study, based on the findings of the Vietnamese tourists who have come to Da Nang City, has drawn a conclusion that although insightful in the results and hence valuable, they really cannot be generalized to another destination. Future research could collect data from multiple participants and destinations to compare and generalize the outcomes across different contexts. Furthermore, while this study recognizes the significance of tourists' smartphone usage in fulfilling their desires and seeking information, it is essential to acknowledge that other internet-related factors may also influence their attitudes, perceptions, and future behaviors. Therefore, future research could explore additional factors such as e-word of mouth, social identity, social media tourism information search, promotion, and other relevant variables to deepen the understanding of visitor behavior and its determinants.

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