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# The Influence of SNS Characteristics on Tourist Attractions Preference : Focus on China\*

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## Abstract

**Purpose** - The rapid spread of SNS and increase of SNS users have heralded great changes in the tourism industry. Therefore, this study focused on how SNS characteristics- usefulness, convenience, interactivity, and intimacy - influence diffusivity, reliability and, consequently, user's preference for tourist attractions.

**Research design, data, and methodology** - This study is designed not only to collect data with a questionnaire survey but also to test hypotheses with SEM by SPSS 18.0 and AMOS 18.0.

**Results** - Usefulness, interactivity, and intimacy positively affect diffusivity, whereas convenience does not positively affect diffusivity. In addition, intimacy has a negative influence on reliability. However, diffusivity and reliability have positive impacts on the preference for tourist places.

**Conclusions** - Certain characteristics of SNS facilitates the spreading of SNS tourist information. Usability and interactivity have positive impacts on the reliance of tourist information. Better communication can enhance the reliance of travel information. The influence of spreading tourist information has a positive influence on its reliance. Extension and reliance can have positive effects on the preference for tourist attractions.

**Keywords:** SNS Characteristics, Usefulness, Convenience, Interactivity, Intimacy.

**JEL classifications:** M10, M30, M31, M39.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most promising industries in the 21st Century. It is a high value-added industry which has a positive impact on employment and production. Most countries and regions have promoted the development of tourism. After the successes of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the Shanghai 2010 World Expo, China became a new tourism market that attracts global attentions.

The development of Chinese tourism has a close connection with its political reforms, economic development trends, and social and cultural development. After the economic reforms and opening, the rapid growth has increased the national income. Chinese tourism industry has also taken a great leap forward both at home and abroad (Korea Tourism Organization, 2010).

Despite the global economic recession, Chinese economy still maintains a rapid annual growth, exceeding 8%. With the significant increase in both investment and consumption, gross domestic product (GDP) has reached over 7.298 trillion dollars. Enormous potential of the country will attract more investors around the world. As concepts of leisure time and tourism have changed among people, World Tourism Organization predicts that the number of Chinese outbound tourists will reach 100 million in 2020. To inbound them into Korea, the researches on tourist behavior with SNS characteristics should be performed as soon as possible and their results have to be utilized

In the past, tourist information was obtained from books or travel agencies. Nowadays, with the prosperous development of the Internet, a variety of information sources are available online. People can easily get tourist information such as tourist places to visits, travel costs, and schedule through online resources. According to the report released by Korea Tourism Organization (2010), the number of young people who are getting information and knowledge about tourist attractions is on the rise. More than half of respondents trust information obtained online, and flexibly use it as a basic material for the travel plan.

The web 2.0 has expanded people's sights with SNS (Social Network Service). Compared with national or regional official website, it is more helpful to get travel information through social media like blog, twitter, and facebook. Today, people could

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choose their own favorite media, and people can create information as well.

SNS has widened tourist information service, which allows SNS users to gather tourist information conveniently and enjoyably whenever and wherever they want. The impact of SNS on tourism industry seems to be great and leading to great changes. Thus, with their creasing number of SNS users, it is critical to reveal the role of SNS in tourist industry.

The purpose of this study is to examine characteristics of SNS - usefulness, convenience, interactivity, and intimacy - and use the diffusivity and reliability as the parameter to reveal its importance at the user's tourist attractions preference.

First, this study aims to draw features of SNS from prior research on SNS characteristics.

Second, this study intends to find out whether features of SNS influence on preferences of travel spots by using proliferation and reliability as medium.

Third, this study tries to find strategic implications in regards to tourist attractions' preference based on the results of the analysis.

A survey was conducted for SNS users of Chinese tourist information service, and the survey data was analyzed with various statistic methods. Frequency, reliability, and correlation analysis was processed with PASW Statistics 18.0, and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS 18.0.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Current Status of Chinese Overseas Tourism

With continuous economic growth in China, the income of Chinese has also increased rapidly. Consequently, overall consumption would increase.

As society changes, tourism has faced new era. The quality of tourism will be improved with needs of people pursuing healthy, well-being, and environmental tourism. Recently, people have weighed their personal and family lives, and many Chinese started paying more attentions to having a quality life rather than better economic successes. This phenomenon is likely to directly influence on consumption associated with traveling. There has been a trend that overseas traveling rate is gradually increasing instead of cheap domestic travel.

According to the statistics related to Chinese traveling in 2011, the number of Chinese tourists abroad is 70.25 million, which is 22% more compared with the number of last year. It is 1.2 times more than the United States, and 3.5 times of Japan. The number of travel abroad in China will continue to increase, likely reaching 7.4 million in 2012. The spending on traveling is expected to reach \$ 80 billion near future (China Tourism Academy, 2012).

In 2010 statistics, Chinese tourists visited ten countries and regions the most. Hong Kong was the most popular tourist attraction, and followed by Macao, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, the United States, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore.

The numbers of tourists of seven countries and regions are more than 1 million. The tourists who visited Singapore were 825,700 (Caixin.com, 2012). In the first quarter of 2012, the sequence of outbound tourism in group is Hong Kong (24%), Macao (13%), Taiwan (10%), Thailand (9%), Korea (6%), Japan (5%), Singapore (5%), Malaysia (4%), Vietnam (3%), Australia (2%), and others (19%). The demand of short-distance traveling has remained high, but the traveling distance is expected to expand further. turn into long due to financial ability, time and cultural difference (Askci.com, 2012). However, in recent years, the growth rate of Chinese tourists is higher than some short-distance countries and regions which travel to the long-distance countries. For example: The United States of America, Oceania.

Social Network Service (SNS) can be interpreted by each word. "Social" means assemble. "Network" means the relationship between people. The relationship connected with people is social combined with Network (Kim, 2010).

The definition of SNS is the web service platform in this research, the users can share the Intelligence on the on-line and they can communicate with each other to build the relationships (Kwon et al., 2007).

Chinese SNS is getting more and more popularity, at the same time, the number of users still continue to increase. In our daily life SNS can be seen everywhere, especially the communication and the rich information acquisition of the political, economic, social, culture and art.

SNS has practical value not only in trading and marketing (Kim and Youn, 2013), but also in entertainment. SNS can bring people quality of life.

According to a survey result (Credit Suisse Group AG, 2011), Chinese SNS users utilize approximately 4.18 kinds of SNS platforms every day. The total time of the Internet usage is around 105.8 minutes (1.76 hours), and time spent on SNS is 40.28% of the internet times.36% of the users spend less than 30 minutes every day on average, whereas 20% of respondents spend more than three hours every day. Women use SNS more than men by 32%. SNS users between 18 and 25 take up 48% of SNS user population.

Today, tourists put more efforts to acquire more detailed tourist information compared to the past. As people enable to have richer traveling information and experience in direct and indirect ways, they tend to look for more detailed, up-to-dated, and useful tourist information. That information can help the tourism, leading and encouraging more tourists to go sightseeing.

Tourist information encompasses information about transportation, tourist attractions, facilities, and services. Tourist information can be defined either as information related to tour products by tourists or information about tourism market (Choi, 2004).Tourists seek to gain more information in order to make the best and reasonable choice by minimizing the risk and uncertainty of their trips (Chin, 2002).

### 2.2. Previous researches

SNS tourist information is defined as informational contents

related to tourist attractions and tour activities that is provided to internet users in order to help them make decisions regarding traveling. The information is delivered and shared through online sphere (Pyo, 2011). Therefore, SNS tourist information provides various kinds of knowledge, and it is to be accessed regardless of constraints of time and space. Basically, SNS enables closer relationships among users through online interactions. Unlike ordinary webpages, SNS contains personal information, such as age, education, occupation as well as basic data for network management, such as photos, videos, and friends. These features of SNS seem to make it as more friendly media among users.

<Table 1> shows the summary of prior research on SNS characteristics.

<Table 1> summary of prior research on SNS characteristics.

researcher	characteristics	
Smith (2007)	identity, existence, conversation, reputation, sharing, relationships, community	Social Network Service
Sul (2009)	accessibility, usefulness, currency, indestructibility	social media
Hwang (2010)	participation, making public, interaction, community, relationships	mobile SNS
Zhao (2011)	convenience, informativeness, Immediacy, perceived usefulness, expectation-confirmation	mobile micro blogging
Park & Kim (2011)	fame, economic efficiency, Quality Information, transaction stability, interaction	Social commerce
Han et. al. (2011)	frequency of interchange, intimacy, reciprocity, depth of feeling	Social Network Service
Kim(2011)	interaction, information, brand fame, Playfulness	microblog
Kang & Park (2011)	usefulness of feeling, easiness of feeling, pleasure of feeling	Social Shopping
Fang & Seo (2011)	usability, Easiness, price, participation, speed	Social commerce

Source: the argument is interrelated each Advisors' sentiment

According to the previous researches, major concepts are as follows.

### 2.2.1. Usefulness

Some people use certain online platforms, with different purposes considering diverse functions and characteristics of those platforms. Tourists can explore these platforms in order to obtain better understandings and knowledge about their traveling destinations. In order to make the tourists reduce uncertainty of their traveling places and plan, accurate information related to the trip needs to be pursued in timely manners. Therefore, SNS

present a great potential by allowing numerous information from other tourists to flow. The media drastically widen the information range and make information achieving process a lot faster than the era of websites.

### 2.2.2. Convenience

Particular online platforms are preferred by people because of their convenience. Webster (1990) considered convenience as a feeling of dealing with something in an easy and comfortable ways. Lee (2010) defined in a broad way saying that convenience includes easiness, usability, and suitability of doing something or taking an action. Since online platforms nearly overcame the limitations of traditional media tourists have easily got traveling information for their trips. Moreover, SNS has further equipped them with immediate and various contents expanding its role in marketing perspective as the convenience of searching a large number of information, as information obtained through SNS can easily be cumulative so it can ensure that the information is authentic (Jo,2006).

### 2.2.3. Interaction

Interaction is the degree of the information exchange or dialogue on the network between individuals in communication process (Suh, 2003). As a means of marketing, online media enables interaction, unlike traditional media. Depending on development of information communication, the border between producers and consumers of the border became vague, and many people turned into prosumer, who consume and produce online contents at the same time. This phenomenon was spurred by active online interactions showing an important feature of Internet networking. Mere online communication through online platforms will not create and sustain relationship, however SNS provide the various functions to encourage interaction and to form social relationships.

### 2.2.4. Intimacy

Intimacy is the degree of closeness among individuals within a network composition. When people believe they have emotional intimacy with others, they are likely to show more psychological support and their interactions also increase, forming stronger ties between them. Intimacy is visualized as the shortest distance between two points in the graph theory, which is the nearest distance between two people in the field of social psychology. Since many SNS contains personal information such as age, education, and occupation, and visual images of users through photos and videos they help increase intimacy between users. Frequent exposure to personal and friendly information through SNS contributes to increase the feeling of intimacy among SNS users (Kim, 2005). Jin (2012) said that psychological intimacy achieved from SNS usage can help people overcome their physical distances in off-line relationships, and the relationship between people can be strengthened.

### 2.2.5. Diffusivity

In past research 'diffusivity' was interpreted as a part of Word of Mouth (WOM) effect, rather than diffusivity of information. Therefore, this study defines the term as diffusivity of SNS tourist information based on the traditional definitions. So we will use it as the background to. WOM is processed through recommendations and oral transmissions. Regardless of intention, personal opinions and thoughts about a product or service can influence others. Oral transmission of information occurs when receivers who obtained the information pass it on to others as a new transmitter (Pyo, 2011).

The forms of diffusivity through SNS are to leave a message, reprint articles, adapt and process articles. SNS users mostly just deliver existing online contents to other friends without damaging the original version or reproduce them to move other online platform (Rha, 2010).

### 2.2.6. Reliability

The definition of 'reliability' in the Oxford English dictionary is: First, people and things which are able to be believed. Second, even if there is no evidence we should ensure it is true. Third, people should have a confident sense of anticipation on some objects, and believe it in mechanism.

SNS possesses closedness and openness at the same time. When it comes to forming an online community, only SNS users can be included in the community. In the meanwhile, SNS is open platforms where people easily get information and share numerous resources with other users. The information obtained from SNS is filtered data, which is different from the data achieved from simple search. Internet users are exposed to overwhelming amount of information every day, and it is often hard to retrieve the right information from the internet. This wealth of information sometimes makes people hard to search and recognize what they want from the internet. However, SNS has refined information and recommendation functions that help users find information they want. Since SNS contribute to address those problems and the online platforms has gained popularity among tourists compared to tourist websites. SNS seem to have more advantages as trustworthy information sources, while traditional tourist websites are sometimes believed to convey exaggeration and wrong information. SNS is expected to play a larger role in recommendations about Tourist attractions, products and services. Thus, traveling companies and agencies need to grow their presence in SNS platforms in order to develop an effective marketing strategy.

### 2.2.7. Preference of Tourist Attractions

Tourist attractions include places "of interest where tourists visit, typically for its inherent or exhibited natural or cultural value, historical significance, natural or built beauty, offering leisure, adventure, amusement and medical services for aging travelers." Sohn and Chang (2002) shared that likeability serves as a foundation to form an emotion for an object. When people have a

positive perception on a place they naturally form a positive attitude toward the place (Park, 2008). The preferences are resulted from the positive attitude of tourists toward sight-seeing places based on various reasons (Jeon, 1996).

## 3. Research Methodology and Hypotheses

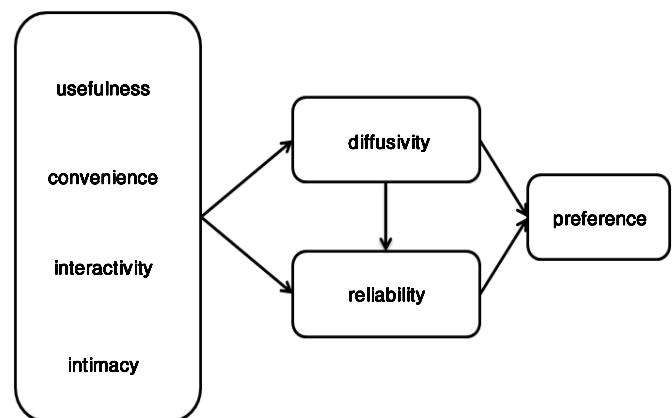
### 3.1. Research Model

By developing the previous research further this study suggests a research model like <Figure 1>.

This model uses four characteristics of SNS, which are usefulness, convenience, interactivity, and intimacy, and assumes that these characteristics will positively influence on preferences of tourist attractions using diffusivity and reliability as mediated variables.

In order to achieve test the model, the analysis is divided into two parts: the first part consists of examination of SNS characteristics and the influence of the SNS characteristics on diffusivity and reliability. The second part analyzes whether diffusivity and reliability is positive related to preference of tourists attractions.

To test some hypotheses, methodologies are used with structural equation model including reliability analysis, correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis etc.



<Figure 1> A proposed model of this study

### 3.2. Hypotheses

#### 3.2.1. SNS Characteristics and Diffusivity

H1: Characteristics of SNS will have a significant effect on the diffusivity.

According to Yi (2011), SNS's usefulness has a positive impact on WOM. Kim and Kim (2010) shared test results that also mentioned that the online tourism information's usefulness increased the results of WOM. Thus, this research hypothesis is

as follow:

H1-1: The usefulness of SNS will have a significant effect on the diffusivity.

According to Song's research on characteristics of blog, which are information security, entertainment, convenience, and responsiveness and users' demographics, statistics analysis showed that people between the age of 26 and 30 have more WOM effect when convenience of a blog is high (Song, 2009).

In addition, convenience has an impact on the attitude toward brand community. The attitude of online college community influence purchase decision and WOM, so usefulness of information has positive impact on WOM (Rhie, 2010). Thus, this hypothesis is as follow:

H1-2: The convenience of SNS will have a significant effect on the diffusivity.

Kim et al. (2003) revealed interactivity has positive influence on information flow, friendly feeling toward brand, and WOM. Lee (2008) also shared that online interactions among members of a cosmetic community increased WOM effects.

Therefore, this hypothesis is like this:

H1-3: The interactivity of SNS will have a significant effect on the diffusivity.

Intimacy as a characteristic of a brand community has positive impact on purchase intention and WOM communication (Rhie, 2010).

Kim and Chung (2009) showed that interactivity, intimacy, economic personality, and entertainment have influence on the attitude on brand blog, which is related to purchase intention and WOM. Jung et al. (2014) said that SNS information that was a kind of online word of mouth would have good influence upon consumers' purchasing decision-making. So this hypothesis is as follow:

H1-4: The intimacy of SNS will have a significant effect on the diffusivity.

### 3.2.2. SNS Characteristics and Reliability

H2: SNS characteristics have influences to reliability.

Hong (2012) said that SNS characteristics WOM, usefulness, have positive impacts on the reliability of brand community. To determine loyalty and to provide activeness methods for travel agency website, we give the research.

According to research conducted by travel agencies, there is intentionally influence on website reliability.

Choi (2010) also supported like other studies that proved reliability in SNS, fully utilizing the theory of "expectation - consistent". This research hypothesis is as follows:

H2-1: The usefulness of SNS will have a significant effect on the reliability.

Park et al. (2005) revealed that when customers start while using online shopping mall with trust and satisfaction functions

as mediated variables feeling on the convenience of use and the use of it, taking the lover for the medium, the reliability and satisfaction has a positive impact respectively.

Lee (2007) convenience has a positive impact on website reliability. This research hypothesis is as follows:

H2-2: The convenience of SNS will have a significant effect on the reliability.

Choi (2004) verifies that interactivity verifies the attitude of reliability and the result is influential.

Mun (2007) insisted that interactivity in online community has a positive impact on reliability. On the contrary, the less interactivity in on-line community there are, the less reliability was observed. This research hypothesis is as follow:

H2-3: The interactivity of SNS will have a significant effect on the reliability.

According to Han et al. (2011), some SNS characteristics like intimacy, kindness, and emotional intensity have great positive influence on level of trust of the agricultural products consumers in electronic commerce.

Kim et al. (2009) revealed that intimacy has a positive influence on loyalty and reliability of ski resort. This research hypothesis is as follow:

H2-4: The intimacy of SNS will have a significant effect on the reliability.

### 3.2.3. Diffusivity and Reliability.

H3: Diffusivity has influence on reliability.

By Kim and Prabhakar' study (2000), the direct evaluation for shopping mall through the electronic channel is difficult, so trust comes to be obtained by way of the words of mouth of others.

Lee (2003) revealed that the factors of influence network and Shopping mall trust are WOM, recommendation of the customer and subjective norms.

Pyo (2011) also studied that SNS information of the reliability result had beneficial positive correlation.

### 3.2.4. Diffusivity by tourism

H4: Diffusivity has influence on the degrees to the choice of tourist place.

Suh (2008) revealed when consumers decided preferred tourist place after knowing WOM information by online, they were influenced not only by objective on-line WOM information than subjective online one but also by negative on-line WOM information than affirmative online one.

### 3.2.5. Reliability by Tourism

H5: reliability has influence on the degrees to the choice of tourist place.

According to the research of Kim (2005), the study about the influence of enlarged products by level of reliability and similarity, in case of high sensitive involvement products, reliability level(expectation and conformance, satisfaction, spreadness) has

more influential on them than similarity.

Kim et al. (2009) said that the higher Brand image and level of reliability is, the higher the preferred brand would be.

By Chun (2011), in case of getting travel information, trust about on-line WOM was positive on brand choice(preference).

### 3.3. Operational Definition of Variables

The operational definitions on the variables in this study are listed on <table 2>. Each one(usefulness, convenience, interactivity, intimacy, diffusivity, reliability, tourist attraction preference) is supported by many scholars.

<Table 2> operational definition

Variables	Operational definition	Quantity of item	Related study
usefulness	it is necessary and helpful worth to use.	4	Davis(1989); Kim(2008); Choi(2010).
convenience	it does not be restricted by time and space, and easy to be used.	4	Webster(1990); Lee(2010).
interactivity	On SNS, user can communicate.	5	Suh(2003); Mun(2007); Kim(2011).
intimacy	On SNS there is a close relationship between users.	4	Han et. al.(2011); Jin(2012).
diffusivity	There no exists positive and negative aspects, only spread for the third person.	4	Shih et al.(2004); Kim et.al.(2006); Pyo(2011).
reliability	It is worthful or sure of expection.	6	Rotter(1967).
tourist attraction Preference	The degree of lightsighing.	4	Park(2008); Wang(2010).

from: Comprehensive many scholars views in composition

## 4. Empirical Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

### 4.1. Respondent characteristics

310 participants took part in the survey questionnaire, who have used SNS tourist information in China during the period of 2012.4 - 2012.5. The highest frequency of times of SNS use is 145, 46.8% on 1 – 3 hours. The frequency of male is more than that of female. Half of respondents are students. And 87.7% of respondents use renren or weibo frequently.

The respondents' answers are on <table 3>.

<Table 3> demographic results

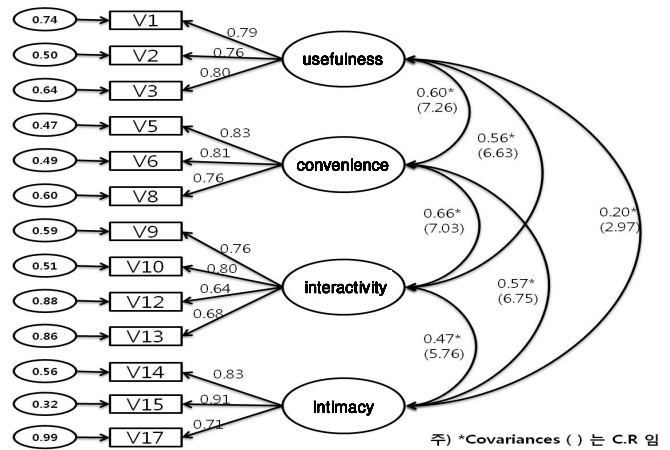
Classification		Frequency	Percentage(%)	Classification		Frequency	Percentage (%)
times of SNS use	Less than 1 hour	64	20.6	frequently used SNS sites	Blog	9	2.9
	1-3hour	145	46.8		Weibo	118	38.1
	3-5hours	67	21.6		renren	154	49.6
	5-10hours	26	8.4		QQqone	26	8.4
	More than 10 hours	8	2.6		community	3	1.0
Sex	Male	163	52.6	SNS's Tools	text	87	28.1
	female	147	47.4		Pictur e/ photo	55	17.7
Age	10s-20s of age	26	8.4		video	14	4.5
	20s-30s of age	281	90.6		stereo	0	0.0
	30s-40s of age	3	1.0		flash	4	1.3
	40s-50s of age	0	0.0		recom mendation	149	48.1
	More than 50	0	0.0	others	1	0.3	
Job	Student	171	55.2	usage' s tools	PC	69	22.3
	office job	99	31.9		noteb ook	168	54.2
	Official	8	2.6		mobile phone	3	1.0
	self-employed	2	0.6		mobile phone	3	1.0
	specialized job	14	4.5		smart phone	70	22.
	Housewife	0	0.0				
	Unemploy -ed	16	5.2				

### 4.2. Reliability Analysis

The reliability between external variances are as follows. According to the table, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each Item is higher than 0.7, so that we can find out internal consistency which is positive for continue studying.

<Table 4> reliability

Classification		Quantity of item	Cronbach's α
SNS's Characteristics	usefulness	4	.859
SNS's Characteristics	convenience	4	.854
SNS's Characteristics	interactivity	5	.858
SNS's Characteristics	intimacy	4	.878
diffusivity		4	.843
reliability		6	.849
preference		4	.852



<Figure 2> Confirmatory Factor Analysis of SNS Characteristics

### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

<Table 5> correlation analysis

Variables	usefulness	convenience	interactivity	intimacy
usefulness	1.000			
convenience	.465**	1.000		
interactivity	.181**	.405**	1.000	
intimacy	.426**	.572**	.453**	1.000

In this study, the coefficient of correlation of "convenience-intimacy" is a little higher than 0.5. But it does not seem that they are correlated seriously. Others' coefficients of correlation are lower than 0.5. So they are not correlated. In general, if coefficient of correlation does not greatly exceed 0.5, it can be considered as acceptable regarding multicollinearity (Kim, 2010).

### 4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In order to increase the goodness of fit, it deleted the items V4, V7, V11, V16 in the line with the value of SMC which is based on a value less than 0.4. The value of SMC is shown below <Figure 2>. And according to the results of confirmatory factor analysis, GFI=0.933, AGFI=0.897, CFI=0.958, NFI=0.932, IFI=0.958, RMSEA=0.068, and overall, the goodness of fit is satisfactory(<Table 6 >).

<Table 6> Confirmatory Factor Analysis of SNS Characteristics

Item	Quantity	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	RMSEA
SNS Characteristics Initial	17	4.259	0.840	0.783	0.876	0.845	0.877	0.103
SNS Characteristics Final	13	2.444	0.933	0.897	0.958	0.932	0.958	0.068
Recommended Level			more than 0.9	more than 0.9	more than 0.9	more than 0.9	more than 0.9	less than 0.1

### 4.5. Evaluation of Measurement Model

In order to increase the goodness of fit of measurement model, the 4 items v4, v7, v11, v16 were deleted, so the results are as follows.  $\chi^2=704.914$ ,  $DF=282$ ,  $P=0.000$ ,  $CMIN/DF=2.500$ ,  $GFI=0.848$ ,  $AGFI=0.811$ ,  $NFI=0.858$ ,  $IFI=0.910$ ,  $CFI=0.909$ ,  $RMSEA=0.070$ . In the study of Song(2008), the goodness of fit is satisfactory if the value of GFI is more than 0.8, AGFI is more than 0.8, NFI is more than 0.8, CFI is more than 0.8, RMSEA is less than 0.1.

<Table 7 > Evaluation of Measurement Model

Variables	Item	Factor Loading	Standardized Factor Loading	Standard Error	C.R	SMC
usefulness	V01	1.00*	0.78	-	-	0.614
usefulness	V02	1.07	0.86	0.07	15.356	0.736
usefulness	V03	0.97	0.80	0.67	14.447	0.644
convenience	V05	1.14	0.83	0.08	14.221	0.687
convenience	V06	1.06	0.81	0.07	13.963	0.658
convenience	V08	1.00*	0.76	-	-	0.560
interactivity	V09	1.05	0.77	0.09	11.309	0.586
interactivity	V10	1.11	0.79	0.09	11.603	0.631
interactivity	V12	0.91	0.64	0.09	9.734	0.407
interactivity	V13	1.00*	0.68	-	-	0.457
intimacy	V14	1.09	0.82	0.08	13.567	0.680
intimacy	V15	1.23	0.91	0.09	14.225	0.833
intimacy	V17	1.00*	0.71	-	-	0.510
diffusivity	V18	1.00*	0.74	-	-	0.550
diffusivity	V19	1.04	0.79	0.07	13.582	0.631
diffusivity	V20	1.08	0.74	0.08	12.577	0.543
diffusivity	V21	1.04	0.76	0.07	13.062	0.584

reliability	V22	0.92	0.65	0.08	10.729	0.420
reliability	V23	0.94	0.72	0.8	11.863	0.515
reliability	V24	1.07	0.77	0.08	12.781	0.600
reliability	V25	1.00*	0.75	0.08	12.394	0.563
reliability	V27	1.00*	0.72	-	-	0.519
preference	V28	1.00*	0.81	-	-	0.662
preference	V29	1.03	0.92	0.06	15743	0.673
preference	V30	0.97	0.73	0.07	13.650	0.534
preference	V31	1.05	0.77	0.07	14.459	0.586
The goodness of fit of measurement model	$\chi^2=704.914$ , DF=28, P=0.00, CMIN/DF=2.50, GFI=0.848, AGFI=0.81, NFI=0.86 IFI=0.91, CFI=0.91 RMSEA=0.07					

※\*The initial value of parameter estimate is 1

The results of hypotheses are like <Table 8>.Among them all were accepted except H1-2, H2-2, H2-4.

<Table 8> Results of Hypothesis Testing

Channel	Estimate	C.R.	P-Value	Result
H1-1: usefulness → diffusivity	0.381	5.861	***	Accept
H1-2: convenience → diffusivity	0.138	1.512	0.131	Reject
H1-3: interactivity → diffusivity	0.253	2.983	0.003	Accept
H1-4: intimacy → diffusivity	0.254	4.060	***	Accept
H2-1: usefulness → reliability	0.140	2.049	0.040	Accept
H2-2: convenience → reliability	0.069	0.815	0.415	Reject
H2-3: interactivity → reliability	0.198	2.419	0.016	Accept
H2-4: intimacy → reliability	0.423	0.317	0.751	Reject
H3: diffusivity → reliability	0.323	4.324	***	Accept
H4: diffusivity → preference	0.643	3.272	0.001	Accept
H5: diffusivity → preference	0.970	5.600	***	Accept
The goodness of fit of measurement model	$\chi^2=704.914$ , DF=282, P=0.00, CMIN/DF=2.50, GFI=0.85, AGFI=0.81, NFI=0.86, IFI=0.91, CFI=0.91, RMSEA=0.07			

※\*is path coefficient and Level of significance is p<0.05

#### 4.6. Results and Discussion

First, it proves that usefulness of SNS has a beneficial impact on diffusivity, supporting previous studies (Kim and Hwang,1995 Kim and Kim, 2010; Yi, 2011). It also verifies that usefulness has a positive impact on reliability, consistent with prior research (Choi, 2010; Hong, 2012 Kim, 2008; Park, 2011). Compared to ordinary websites that guarantee anonymity, SNS with real name system has better management of contacts and

communication. Therefore, the SNS tourist information plays a useful role and people will read it, believe it, and recommend it. Furthermore, correct information will make more people believe and recommend.

Second, convenience does not have positive effect on diffusivity, and the result is contrary to the prior studies (Rhie, 2010 Song, 2009). Convenience also has no positive effect on reliability, inconsistent with research of Park et al. (2005) and Lee (2007). This inconsistent result can be attributed to the fact that convenience has already been studied too many times in previous research. In other words, the original site is not subject to the constraints of time and space, and very easy access to information among users can also be very convenient to carry out communication, so now users have it as supposed to be. So there is no impact on proliferation and trust. There are the results of this investigation emphasis on the 20 generations of young people, it will use computers and smart phones, consumer trust formation stage is not important reasons for the decision, thus giving rise to such a result.

Third, interactivity has a positive impact on diffusivity. It is consistent with the prior studies (Lee, 2008; Reingen and Kernan, 1986). They also had checked the influence of interactivity on reliability, which were consistent with the prior study (Choi, 2004 Mun, 2007). For offline relationships, the closer social relations are, the more powerful the influence of oral intelligence and the diffusion of intelligence become. Similar effects are observed in online relationships as well. Strong online relationships among members lead to strong subordinate feelings will be. It also has positive influences on diffusion of intelligence and reliability. Through SNS users can share their own ideas actively. By various communicating between each other, many problems will be solved and views can be exchanged, it can exert an influence to the diffusivity and reliability of sightseeing intelligence.

Fourth, intimacy has a positive impact on diffusivity (Kim and Chung, 2009 Rhie, 2010). But intimacy does not have a positive influence on reliability, inconsistent with past research conducted by Han et al. (2011) and Kim et al. (2009). The relationships on SNS are often developed based on offline relationships, and online contents are passed in communications and interactions within the relationships. However, the friendship formed online is different from offline friendship. If there is no enough time, it cannot accumulate deep friendship, and consequently intimacy cannot influence reliability.

Fifth, diffusivity has a positive impact on reliability, supporting the previous research (Kim and Prabhakar, 2000 Lee, 2003). It means that intention to recommend tourist information can influence reliability.

Lastly, diffusivity and reliability have positive impacts on preference of tourist attractions, consistent with past studies (Kim, 2005; Kim et al., 2009 Suh, 2008). It means that higher diffusivity and reliability can influence the preference of tourism places shared by SNS users.



## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusions

The findings of the research draw conclusion of the research and several implications. First, this research verifies that certain characteristics of SNS, which are usability, interactivity, and intimacy, play beneficial parts in spreading tourist information through SNS. When people perceive tourist information obtained via SNS valuable and useful, they will be intend to share and recommend the information with other users and friends. Fast, accurate and valid tourist information achieve trust by more users. The more intense bind among the members of the online communities encourages the stronger sense of group identity. The sense of belonging will facilitate the spread of tourist information. One-way communication and information do not build a relationship. An influential and meaningful social relationship can be established through multiple interactive communications, which has an impact on spreading information among SNS users. Second, this research verifies that usefulness and interactivity of SNS have positive impacts on the reliance of SNS sightseeing information. Better communication among users of SNS can enhance the reliance of the sightseeing information as long as it is valuable. If the comments of the sightseeing information help users in one way or another, these comments will be shared and recommended. It can be inferred that the communication of the users will influence the reliance of sightseeing destination.

Lastly, this research verifies the influence of spreading sightseeing information on its reliance. Extension and reliance can have positive effects on the preference on sightseeing destination. The more spreading and reliance of the sightseeing information among users of SNS there are, the greater benefit on the choices of these users will have.

### 5.2. Implications

This research offers enlightenment to tourist companies, sightseeing destinations, and touring agencies, regarding seeking to market and promoting their tourist services. It usually requires high cost for them to promote their services in international markets. SNS serve as the best media by reducing the budget for overseas marketing. SNS help share common concerns and interests and develop sound relationships among users. This will create more effective marketing result compared to the traditional marketing methods and media.

The analysis of the survey results shares the following insights.

First, the results provide some implications on strategies to improve the quality of SNS tourist information. The research demonstrates that usability of SNS has a positive effect on diffusivity and reliance of SNS tourist information. Actual and live information of tourists is more effective than any other promotional tools in marketing perspective. Tour companies should take these tourist information into consideration, examine the

contents, and take advantages of those diverse information.

Second, the research results reveal that interactivity and intimacy of SNS positively influence diffusion and reliance of tourist information. Companies should take measures the level of diffusion and the process to maximize the marketing effect. They can be benefited from information sharing among customers. The tourist information shared through SNS will be helpful to attract new clients, spreading news about their special promotions. Customer management department can take a charge of it.

Lastly, according to the survey, 87.7% of tourist information is obtained on renren.com or weibo (micro-blog). It will be more effective if the tour promotional tourist products and services are offered through these two websites.

### 5.3. The limitation of this research and future trend

The results show that certain characteristics of SNS can influence on preference of tourists attractions among tourists. However, the research contains several limitations that need to be addressed in future research, and also has room to be developed further.

First, most of the research participants are in 20s, and there is a possibility that the results and conclusions of this study is partially true.

Second, the background research is not sufficient. The analysis only includes four characteristics, and future research should explore other characteristics of SNS and conduct in-depth analysis.

Lastly, it is necessary to include renren.com and weibo (micro-blog) in further studies, and to examine cultural differences of different countries as well. Those studies will lay solid foundation for researchers who study Chinese tourism as well as practitioners like Chinese tour companies.

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