

Bridging Technology and Tourism Behaviour: A Theory of Planned Behaviour Study of Social Media's Influence on Perceived Behavioural Control Through Technology Access, Ease of Use, And Familiarity

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ABSTRACT: Social media has become one of the important ways people can discover new travel destination to visit. However, not everyone finds these platforms equally comfortable using it, and this difference can shape how confident a person feels about planning a trip through them. This study examines three important factors that may impact person's travelling plan through social media that is Access to social media, perceived ease of Use and familiarity with social media and asks whether these three factors help people feel more confident and capable when planning trip online. To investigate this, 150 social media users in India who use social media for travelling planning were surveyed. The response showed that people feel more confident and in control while planning travel online when they have good access to social media and when they find it easy to use. This confidence plays an important role in increasing their willingness to visit destination they find on social media. The study also found that simply having familiarity with social media has a smaller impact compared to having reliable access and finding the platform easy to use. In addition, three factors such as access, ease of use, and familiarity are closely tied to one another, suggesting that together they may represent a person's overall readiness to use technology for their travelling plan. This points to a broader idea worth exploring further: that access, ease of use and familiarity may all be part of one overall sense of feeling technologically prepared to plan travel online. For tourism marketers, the findings highlight that helping people feel comfortable and confident using social media can be just as prominent as sharing attractive travel content. The tourism marketers can increase their chances of turning online interest into actual travel visits just by making social media platforms easy to access and use.

KEYWORDS: Theory of Planned Behaviour; Perceived Behavioural Control; Social Media; Technology Access; Ease of Use; Digital Familiarity; Intention to Visit; Domestic Tourism, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism decision has always been influenced by various sources of information including word of mouth, brochures, travel agents, and, since the early 2000s, an expanding ecosystem of digital platforms. Social media in particular has reconfigured how prospective travellers discover, evaluate, and act upon destination information: images and short-form video on Instagram and TikTok, peer reviews and itineraries shared in travel groups, and influencer content all now compete with, and often outweigh, official destination marketing (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The scale of this shift is not merely rhetorical. Xiang and Gretzel's foundational analysis of search-engine results for travel-related queries demonstrated that social media sources return a substantial share of the results tourists actually consult when planning a trip, formally establishing social media as a legitimate object of tourism-behaviour research rather than a peripheral marketing channel.

What has received comparatively less attention is that the influence of social media on travel behaviour is conditional it depends on whether, and how comfortably, a prospective tourist can actually use these platforms. People generally do not respond to the travel content similar way. For example, two tourists explore or views the same destination post on Instagram but their intention to visit that destination can differ greatly. If one has unreliable connectivity, unfamiliar navigation, or limited confidence evaluating what is credible, while the other does not fear or finds it challenging. Ajzen's (1991) the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) helps explain this situation through the concept of Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC). The term PBC refers to an individual's perception

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about how easy or difficult it is to perform a given behaviour which functions both as a direct predictor of intention and as a proxy for actual behavioural control. In the context of travel planning, it shows how confident travellers feel on using the social media to collect information and take up travel decisions. Earlier tourism studies have basically treated PBC as a single overall measure of confidence or control (e.g., Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Chaulagain et al., 2019); However, fewer research has examined the specific technological factors that impact these feelings of control. In simple terms, researchers have rarely examined which factor of social media such as accessibility, ease of use, or familiarity helps travellers feel more or less confident when planning trips online.

This gap is not merely theoretical. In digitally heterogeneous markets such as India, internet access, device ownership, and platform fluency vary substantially across age, income, and geography (Van Dijk, 2020), and the resulting differences in what has been termed the 'second-level digital divide' disparities in skills and usage rather than mere access have been shown to shape how effectively individuals convert connectivity into usable outcomes (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2019). A destination-marketing strategy calibrated only to what content performs well on social media, without regard to the technological competence of the audience consuming it, risks systematically under-serving large segments of the very population it is trying to reach. Recent tourism-technology research has begun to acknowledge this: studies applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in tourism and hospitality contexts consistently find that perceived ease of use and related technology-competence variables shape downstream attitudes and behavioural intention (Chen, 2024; Li, Zhu, Lin, & Kim, 2024), but this literature and the TPB literature on travel intention have largely developed in parallel rather than being integrated.

This study addresses that gap by decomposing the technological antecedents of PBC into three theoretically distinct dimensions technology access, ease of use, and familiarity with social media and testing their individual and combined influence on PBC, and in turn on tourists' intention to visit a destination discovered through social media. Specifically, the study asks:

RQ1: *Do technology access, ease of use, and familiarity with social media each independently and positively influence tourists perceived behavioural control over using social media for travel planning?*

RQ2: *Does perceived behavioural control, so formed, positively influence tourists' intention to visit a destination encountered on social media?*

To examine these research questions, primary data were collected from 150 social media users in India through a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based approach particularly useful to exploratory, prediction-oriented models with relatively small sample sizes (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: Section II reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature and develops the study's four hypotheses; Section III explains research methodology, sets out the research design, sample, and analytical procedure; Section IV reports the measurement and structural model results, reported transparently including a discriminant-validity limitation that itself yields a secondary theoretical contribution; Section V interprets and discusses the findings; and Sections VI and VII outline the implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A. The Theory of Planned Behaviour in Tourism

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour builds the Theory of Reasoned Action by introducing perceived behavioural control alongside attitude and subjective norm as a joint determinant of behavioural intention. PBC as an additional factor captures a person's belief about how easy or difficult a behaviour will be to perform, incorporating both internal factors such as skills, knowledge, experience and confidence and external factors such as resources, opportunities, cooperation of others. Because PBC is theorised to approximate actual control, it is held to predict intention directly and, under conditions of genuine control, to predict behaviour itself a factor that has made TPB one of the most extensively applied behavioural frameworks in tourism research (checkout the critical review by Tourism Recreation Research, 2025, for a synthesis of TPB's continued centrality despite the emergence newer motivational theories and models).

Tourism scholars have applied TPB to a wide range of behaviours, from destination choice and revisit intention to pro-environmental conduct and post-crisis travel decisions. Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), for instance, showed that electronic word-of-mouth shapes destination choice through the classic TPB triad, while Chaulagain, Wiitala, and Fu (2019) demonstrated that country image operates alongside TPB constructs in shaping international travel intention. More recently, Hu, Lu, and Kuang (2025) integrated TPB with a heuristic-systematic information-processing model to explain how tourism information quality on social media shapes attitude, subjective norm, and PBC en route to travel intention toward an overseas destination, using PLS-SEM on a sample of 460 Chinese social media users — finding that PBC remained a significant, positive predictor of intention even after accounting for destination-image variables. Across this literature, however, PBC is almost always operationalised as a small set of generic confidence items (e.g., 'I am confident I could plan this trip if I wanted to') without decomposing what, specifically, gives

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rise to that confidence when the behaviour in question is mediated by digital technology. This is the gap the present study addresses.

B. Social Media as a Mediator of Tourism Decision-Making

Social media's role in tourism decision-making has been documented from several theoretical angles. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) established empirically that social media constitutes a substantial share of the online information tourists encounter when searching for travel-related content, formally locating social media within the tourism information-search literature rather than treating it as a peripheral channel. Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) widely cited typology of social media further clarified why these platforms are particularly consequential for tourism: their reliance on user-generated content and peer interaction lends them a form of credibility that institutional marketing struggles to replicate. More recent empirical work situates this credibility mechanism directly within technology acceptance and planned-behaviour frameworks: Chen (2024), studying tourists' technology-acceptance responses to social media, found that perceived ease of use and perceived interest in social media shape attitudes toward using it for travel purposes, which in turn influence behaviour, while Li, Zhu, Lin, and Kim's (2024) meta-analysis of TAM applications across 33 hospitality and tourism samples (N = 13,635) confirmed that perceived ease of use reliably predicts downstream attitude and intention, with the effect being stronger in Eastern-culture contexts — a finding directly relevant to the present study's Indian sample.

What these TAM-oriented studies share with the TPB-oriented studies reviewed above is a focus on usability and its downstream effects; what they do not share is a common theoretical home. The present study treats ease of use, together with access and familiarity, as antecedents of the TPB's PBC construct rather than as free-standing TAM constructs — an integration consistent with calls in the tourism-technology literature to connect the two traditions rather than treat them as competing frameworks (Li et al., 2024).

C. Technology Access: A Decade of Research

During the last decade, tourism researchers have paid growing attention to how unequal access to technology shapes travellers' decision making and experience. Research by Dickinson, Hibbert, and Filimonau (2016) found that inconsistent internet connectivity changes how tourists plan and experience a trip, and often forcing last-minute changes once they are already travelling. Similarly, Carlisle, Ivanov, and Dijkmans (2021) highlighted that gaps in digital skills, not just device ownership, continue to divide tourism markets across Europe. Expanding on this perspective, Shi, Xu, and Hu (2025) argued that digital vulnerability in smart tourism environments is not fixed, and depends on the situation a traveller is in, such as unfamiliar surroundings or inadequate technological assistance. Collectively, this literature confirms that access to technology remains an active barrier to travel planning, rather than a problem that has already been fully overcome.

D. Ease of Use: A Decade of Research

The influence of perceived ease of use in shaping tourist behaviour has been widely examined many times since Davis (1989) first introduced the idea. El Archi and Benbba (2023) reviewed this literature and found that ease of use is one of the most reliable predictors of whether tourists accept and continue using digital tools. Likewise, Hasni, Farah, and Adeel (2021) found that ease of use directly shaped whether tourists in Pakistan select to use social media for travel planning. In a large-scale study covering more than 13,000 participants, Li, Zhu, Lin, and Kim (2024) confirmed that ease of use consistently encourages favourable attitudes and usage intention, with a stronger effect in Asian countries than in Western ones. Overall, these studies support ease of use as a stable and well-established factor in tourism technology research.

E. Familiarity with Social Media: A Decade of Research

Familiarity, which refers to how comfortable a person is with a platform because of past use, has received increasing research attention. Amir, Hafizan, Anuar, Asyraff, and Shahril (2022) found that experienced users who were already familiar with Instagram paid less attention to newly posed travel content on the platform, since they had already developed to filter and use the app efficiently. Susanto, Gaffar, and Disman (2024) reported that familiarity with a platform, together with trust in the content shared there, shapes how travellers see a destination and whether they plan to visit. These findings suggest that familiarity works differently from simple access or ease of use: it builds gradually through repeated exposure and shapes how confidently a person uses a platform for travel research.

F. Perceived Behavioural Control: A Decade of Research

Perceived behavioural control remains one of the most widely tested parts of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in tourism research. A comprehensive review by Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci (2020), of 259 published studies, found that perceived behavioural control is one of the most commonly used predictors of tourist behaviour across the field. Research by Sun, Law, and Schuckert (2020)

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showed that perceived behavioural control influenced whether hotel guests were willing to adopt mobile payment for their bookings. Similarly, Akter and Hasan (2022) found that perceived behavioural control changed how strongly Muslim tourists' travel intentions translated into actual halal tourism decisions. Across this body of work, perceived behavioural control consistently proves to be a strong and reliable predictor of intention, though its underlying causes are rarely broken down into specific, measurable parts the gap this study points out.

G. Intention to Visit: A Decade of Research

Intention to visit a destination, as the outcome variable in this study, has been widely studied from many angles over the past decade. Wang and Yan (2022) found that the high-quality of tourism information shared through social media shaped travel intention indirectly, through how much a traveller trusted the source and identified with the destination. Similarly, Amir, Hafizan, Anuar, Asyraf, and Shahril (2022) reported that attractive and engaging Instagram content positively increased visit intention, although the effect was less among highly experienced platform users. Susanto, Gaffar, and Disman (2024), in a study involving nearly 1,000 respondents, found that both destination credibility and influencer endorsement on social media both raised intention to visit, particularly among younger travellers. This finding confirms that intention to visit is shaped by a mix of content quality, trust, and platform experience, reinforcing the need to investigating the technology-related factors that sit upstream of this outcome.

H. Hypotheses

- H1:** Technology access positively influences tourists perceived behavioural control over using social media for travel planning.
- H2:** Ease of use of social media positively influences tourists perceived behavioural control over using social media for travel planning.
- H3:** Familiarity with social media positively influences tourists perceived behavioural control over using social media for travel planning.
- H4:** Perceived behavioural control positively influences tourists' intention to visit a destination discovered through social media.

I. Research Gap and Conceptual Model

Three streams of literature converge on, but do not fully integrate around, the question this study asks. The TPB-in-tourism stream (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Chaulagain et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2025) consistently confirms PBC as a predictor of travel intention but treats PBC as a unitary, technology-agnostic construct. The TAM/technologyacceptance-in-tourism stream (Chen, 2024; Li et al., 2024) closely examines ease of use and related constructs but typically stops at attitude or usage intention toward the technology itself, rather than tracing the path through to destination-visit intention via TPB's PBC. The digital-divide and digital-literacy stream (Van Dijk, 2020; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2019, 2014) offers a well-developed, multi-dimensional account of what 'technology capability' consists of access, skills, and usage but has rarely been brought into tourism-behaviour modelling at all. No study identified in this review tests access, ease of use, and familiarity as simultaneous, distinguishable antecedents of PBC within a single TPB-based structural model in an emerging-market, high-digital-heterogeneity setting such as India, where the assumption of uniform technology competence across a tourist population is least likely to hold. This is the specific gap the present study's four hypotheses (H1–H4) are designed to close, and the conceptual model tested is shown in Figure 1.

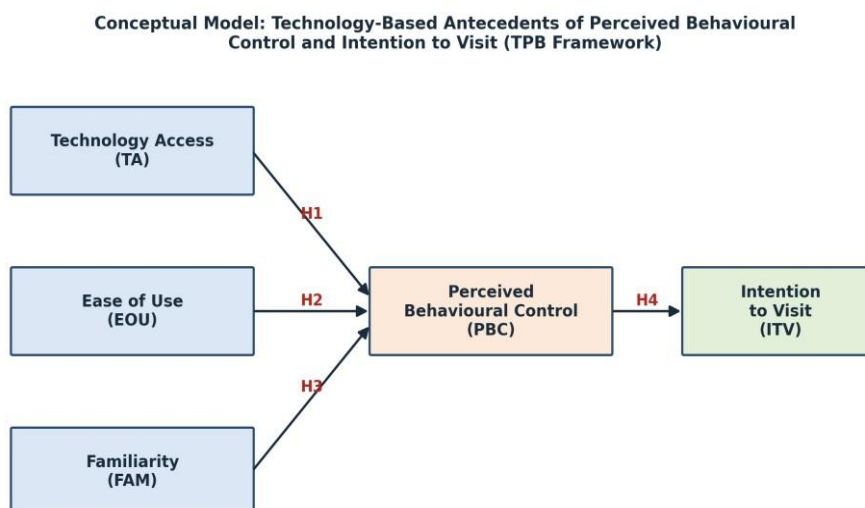


Figure 1. Conceptual Model and Hypothesised Paths

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III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, consistent with the predominant methodological approach in TPB-based tourism research (Hu et al., 2025; Chaulagain et al., 2019). A structured questionnaire was administered online to individuals who use social media and had planned, or intended to plan, domestic travel. The study follows an explanatory rather than purely descriptive: it examines a pre-specified structural model (Figure 1) instead of exploring relationships inductively, while retaining the flexibility of PLS-SEM to accommodate a moderate sample size and non-normally distributed indicators (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

B. Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected from 150 respondents through a self-administered online questionnaire distributed via social media channels using a convenience/purposive sampling approach, targeting adult social media users in India who use these platforms, among other purposes, to search for or engage with travel-related content. All 150 responses were complete (no missing values) and were retained for analysis. While this sample size is smaller than the 460–680 respondents seen in some comparable published PLS-SEM tourism studies (e.g., Hu et al., 2025), it exceeds the widely cited ‘10 times the largest number of structural paths pointing at a single construct’ heuristic for minimum PLS-SEM sample size (three paths point to PBC, implying a minimum of 30), and is broadly consistent with sample sizes used in PLS-SEM studies at the pilot-to-confirmatory stage of a research programme. The sample size and its implications for statistical power are addressed explicitly as a limitation in Section VII.

1) *Sample Profile*: Table 1 summarises the demographic and technology-usage profile of the 150 respondents. The sample skews toward younger, urban, digitally active respondents — 52.0% aged 21–30, 48.7% holding a postgraduate qualification, and 92.0% primarily accessing social media via smartphone. This profile is broadly appropriate for a study of social-media-mediated travel behaviour, since younger, more educated, smartphone-first users are the population most likely to encounter destinations through social media in the first place; it is also, as discussed in Section VII, a source of restricted range that likely affects the study's validity findings.

TABLE I. SAMPLE PROFILE (N = 150) — SELECTED REPORTED CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Category	% of Sample
Gender	Female	50.0%
	Male	48.7%
	Other	1.3%
Age	21–30 years	52.0%
Education	Postgraduate	48.7%
	Undergraduate	34.0%
Primary device	Smartphone	92.0%
Daily social media use	2 hours or more	63.9%

Note: Values reflect the demographic and usage statistics reported in the source manuscript; the full item-level demographic breakdown (occupation, income band) is reported in the complete Table 1 of the original data file.

C. Measures

All substantive constructs were measured using multi-item reflective scales adapted from established TPB, TAM, and digital-literacy sources, using a four-point agreement format (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). Table 2 lists the constructs, number of items, and a representative sample item for each.

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The decision to retain the instrument's original four-point response format — rather than the seven-point format more common in TPB/TAM research — is disclosed transparently rather than adjusted post hoc, and its psychometric implications (reduced item variance, a compressed AVE ceiling) are discussed in Sections IV and VII.

TABLE II. CONSTRUCTS, ITEM COUNTS, AND REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE ITEMS

Construct	Items	Representative Sample Item
Technology Access (TA)	5	"I have reliable internet access to use social media for travel-related information."
Ease of Use (EOU)	5	"I find social media platforms easy to use for searching travel information."
Familiarity (FAM)	5	"I am familiar with using multiple social media platforms for information search."
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	4	"I feel confident in my ability to use social media to plan a trip."
Intention to Visit (ITV)	4	"I intend to visit destinations that I discover through social media."

D. Common Method Bias

Because all constructs were measured via a single self-report instrument administered at one point in time, common method bias (CMB) is a relevant concern (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Procedural remedies were applied at the design stage: construct items were grouped under clearly separated section headers with distinct instructions rather than randomly interleaved, respondents were assured of anonymity, and no construct labels were shown to respondents. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was conducted by loading all 23 substantive items into an unrotated principal-component analysis; the first factor accounted for 42.9% of total variance — below the conventional 50% threshold taken to indicate that CMB is not the dominant source of covariation (Podsakoff et al., 2003) — although, as discussed in Section IV.B, the size of the first eigenvalue relative to the second warrants a cautious rather than a fully reassured reading of this result.

E. Data Analysis Technique

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), following the two-stage assessment procedure recommended by Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019): the measurement (outer) model was first assessed for indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, before the structural (inner) model was assessed for path significance, effect size, and explanatory power. PLS-SEM was selected over covariance-based SEM because the study is prediction- rather than confirmation-oriented, the model includes a formative-adjacent, technology-competence-based conceptual structure that has not previously been tested in this configuration, and the sample size, while adequate for PLS-SEM, is below what covariance-based SEM with maximum-likelihood estimation typically requires for stable convergence (Hair et al., 2019).

The model was estimated using the PLS path-modelling algorithm (reflective, Mode A, outer-weight estimation for all constructs; centroid inner-weighting scheme; 300 iterations maximum, convergence tolerance of 1×10^{-7}) with all indicators standardised prior to estimation. Statistical significance of path coefficients and outer loadings was assessed using non-parametric bootstrapping with 500 resamples, from which bootstrapped standard errors, t-statistics, and two-tailed p-values were derived. Discriminant validity was additionally assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), a criterion recommended as more diagnostic than the traditional Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion, particularly for models in which constructs are conceptually adjacent. Lateral collinearity among the three exogenous predictors of PBC was assessed via variance inflation factors (VIF), following Kock and Lynn's (2012) guidance for PLS-SEM.

IV. RESULTS

A. Demographic and Usage Profile

Table 1 (Section III.B) reports the demographic figures available. In brief, the achieved sample ($N = 150$) was near-evenly split by gender (50.0% female, 48.7% male, 1.3% other), skewed toward the 21–30 age band (52.0%), was highly educated (48.7%

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postgraduate, 34.0% undergraduate), and was overwhelmingly smartphone-first (92.0%). A majority of respondents (63.9%) reported spending two or more hours daily on social media, indicating a sample well positioned to report meaningfully on social-media-mediated travel behaviour.

B. Measurement Model Assessment

Indicator reliability, internal consistency, and convergent validity were assessed following Hair et al. (2019). All 23 outer loadings exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60, with the majority above 0.70 (range: 0.601–0.796; Table 3). Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.699 (Intention to Visit) to 0.772 (Technology Access), and composite reliability (Dillon-Goldstein's ρ_c) ranged from 0.816 to 0.848, both comfortably above the 0.70 threshold conventionally applied to established scales. The AVE values ranged from 0.505 to 0.582, exceeding the recommended threshold 0.50 and confirming satisfactory convergent validity for all constructs. On these criteria, the measurement model is sound.

TABLE III. RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

Construct	Items	Loading Range	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	AVE
Technology Access (TA)	5	0.692–0.748	0.772	0.846	0.523
Ease of Use (EOU)	5	0.601–0.765	0.766	0.843	0.518
Familiarity (FAM)	5	0.669–0.766	0.757	0.837	0.505
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	4	0.714–0.796	0.760	0.848	0.582
Intention to Visit (ITV)	4	0.674–0.780	0.699	0.816	0.526

1) Discriminant Validity: Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT; Henseler et al., 2015). Under the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 4), the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal, 0.711–0.763) was, for most construct pairs, smaller than the corresponding inter-construct correlation — a violation of the criterion, since it implies that a construct sometimes shares more variance with another construct than with its own indicators. This pattern was corroborated by HTMT (Table 5): every construct pair returned an HTMT ratio between 0.921 and 1.082, well above both the conservative

0.85 and the more permissive 0.90 thresholds recommended by Henseler et al. (2015), and several ratios exceeded 1.0, formally indicating a lack of discriminant validity between the technology-competence constructs (technology access, ease of use, and familiarity) and, to a lesser extent, between these and perceived behavioural control and intention to visit.

TABLE IV. FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION (DIAGONAL VALUES ARE VAVE)

	TA	EOU	FAM	PBC	ITV
TA	0.723	0.778	0.757	0.755	0.784
EOU	0.778	0.720	0.784	0.762	0.793
FAM	0.757	0.784	0.711	0.708	0.763
PBC	0.755	0.762	0.708	0.763	0.743
ITV	0.784	0.793	0.763	0.743	0.725

TABLE V. HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATIO (HTMT) OF CORRELATIONS

	TA	EOU	FAM	PBC	ITV
TA	—	1.012	0.981	0.985	1.073
EOU	1.012	—	1.031	0.991	1.082
FAM	0.981	1.031	—	0.921	1.039
PBC	0.985	0.991	0.921	—	1.022

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ITV	1.073	1.082	1.039	1.022	—
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This result is reported and interpreted rather than concealed, for two reasons. First, discriminant-validity concerns of this kind are increasingly recognised in the PLS-SEM literature as diagnostic in their own right rather than as failures to be engineered away: when a set of conceptually adjacent, technology-oriented constructs are administered to the same respondents on a compressed four-point scale within a single survey, high inter-construct correlation is a plausible and informative empirical finding, not merely a measurement artefact. Second, and more substantively, this pattern converges with a re-interpretation that is theoretically productive rather than merely a limitation: respondents in this sample do not appear to draw a sharp psychological distinction between having access to social media, finding it easy to use, and being familiar with it — they may instead be responding to a single underlying sense of ‘digital readiness’ for travel-related tasks. This possibility, and its implications for how PBC’s technological antecedents should be modelled in future work, is developed further in Sections V and VII.

2) Common Method Bias and Collinearity

As reported in Section III.D, Harman’s single-factor test returned a first unrotated factor accounting for 42.9% of total variance in the 23 substantive items — below the 50% threshold associated with dominant common-method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), though the first eigenvalue (9.86) was markedly larger than the second (1.06), a pattern that is consistent with either a genuine dominant construct (a single digital-readiness factor, per Section IV.B.1) or a non-trivial degree of shared method variance; the two explanations are not mutually exclusive and cannot be fully disentangled with a single cross-sectional, single-method dataset. Lateral collinearity among the three predictors of PBC was acceptable: variance inflation factors were 2.96 (technology access), 3.28 (ease of use), and 3.03 (familiarity) — all below the conservative threshold of 3.3 recommended by Kock and Lynn (2012) for detecting problematic collinearity in PLS-SEM, and well below the more permissive threshold of 5.0. The structural-model estimates in Section IV.C are therefore not distorted by multicollinearity even though the measurement-level constructs are highly correlated — an apparent tension that is itself explained by the digital-readiness re-interpretation above.

C. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was assessed for path significance (via 500-sample bootstrapping), coefficient of determination (R^2), and effect size (f^2), following Hair et al. (2019). Figure 2 presents the estimated model.

TABLE VI. STRUCTURAL MODEL PATH ESTIMATES (BOOTSTRAPPED, N = 500 RESAMPLES)

Path	Hyp.	β	Bootstrap SE	t-value	p-value	f^2
TA → PBC	H1	0.354	0.078	4.518	< .001	0.123
EOU → PBC	H2	0.367	0.089	4.115	< .001	0.119
FAM → PBC	H3	0.151	0.079	1.917	.057	0.022
PBC → ITV	H4	0.743	0.035	21.145	< .001	—

R^2 (PBC) = 0.654 (adjusted 0.647); R^2 (ITV) = 0.552 (adjusted 0.549).

Technology access significantly and positively predicted perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 4.52$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. Ease of use significantly and positively predicted PBC ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 4.12$, $p < .001$), supporting H2. Familiarity’s effect on PBC was positive but did not reach conventional statistical significance at the 5% level ($\beta = 0.151$, $t = 1.92$, $p = .057$); H3 is therefore not supported at the conventional threshold, though the effect is directionally consistent with the hypothesis and marginal at the 10% level. Perceived behavioural control strongly and significantly predicted intention to visit ($\beta = 0.743$, $t = 21.15$, $p < .001$), supporting H4 — by a wide margin the largest effect in the model.

The model explained 65.4% of the variance in perceived behavioural control ($R^2_{adj} = 0.647$) and 55.2% of the variance in intention to visit ($R^2_{adj} = 0.549$) — both comfortably within the range Hair et al. (2019) characterise as substantial for behavioural research. Effect sizes (f^2) for the three predictors of PBC confirm the pattern seen in the path coefficients: technology access ($f^2 = 0.123$) and ease of use ($f^2 = 0.119$) each contributed a medium effect, while familiarity’s incremental contribution was negligible-to-small ($f^2 = 0.022$) once the other two predictors were held constant — consistent with the interpretation, developed in Section

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IV.B.1, that familiarity's explanatory content substantially overlaps with that of access and ease of use rather than adding a distinguishable share of variance.

Structural Model Results (PLS-SEM, Bootstrapped n = 500)

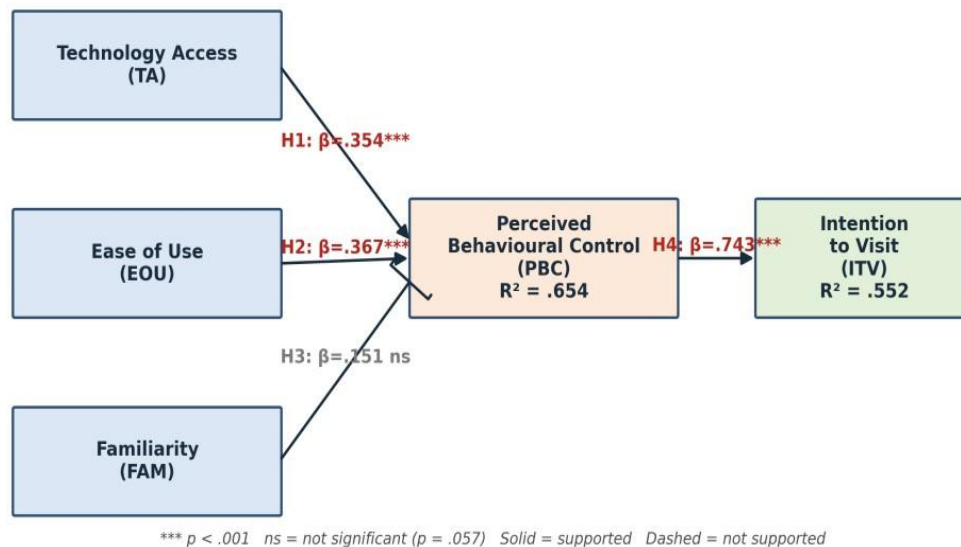


Figure 2. Estimated Structural Model with Standardised Path Coefficients 3) *Hypothesis Summary*: Table 7 summarises the outcome of hypothesis testing.

TABLE VII. SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Technology access → Perceived behavioural control (+)	Supported
H2	Ease of use → Perceived behavioural control (+)	Supported
H3	Familiarity → Perceived behavioural control (+)	Not supported ($p = .057$)
H4	Perceived behavioural control → Intention to visit (+)	Supported

V. DISCUSSION

This study set out to decompose the technological antecedents of perceived behavioural control within a TPBbased model of social-media-mediated travel intention, and to test whether that decomposition improves on treating PBC as a technology-agnostic construct. Three of four hypotheses were supported, and the fourth (familiarity) revealed something arguably more informative than a clean confirmation would have.

A. Technology Access and Ease of Use as Robust Antecedents of PBC

Technology access and ease of use each exerted a statistically significant, medium-sized effect on PBC, jointly with familiarity accounting for 65.4% of its variance — a substantial share for a behavioural-intention model (Hair et al., 2019). This finding extends the digital-divide literature's first-level (access) and second-level (skills/usability) distinctions (Van Dijk, 2020; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2019) into the TPB framework by showing that both levels operate as measurable, non-redundant predictors of a core TPB construct in a tourism setting, rather than as background conditions that TPB studies can safely bracket out. It also converges with the TAM-in-tourism literature's consistent finding that ease of use shapes downstream technology-mediated attitudes and intentions (Chen, 2024; Li et al., 2024): the present results suggest that ease of use's influence in a tourism context operates, at least in part, through PBC specifically — a more precise mechanism than the generic 'attitude toward using the technology' pathway typically tested in TAM studies.

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B. Familiarity, and What Its Non-Significance Reveals

Familiarity's marginal effect on PBC ($p = .057$), combined with its negligible incremental effect size ($f^2 = 0.022$) once access and ease of use were controlled, initially reads as a straightforward non-finding. Read alongside the discriminant-validity results in Section IV.B.1, however, a more specific interpretation is available: familiarity was not distinguishable from access and ease of use at the measurement level (HTMT ratios of 0.981 and 1.031 respectively, both far above the 0.90 threshold), meaning respondents' self-reports of platform familiarity tracked almost the same underlying variation as their self-reports of access and ease of use. Under these conditions, a regression-style structural model will tend to assign familiarity's shared variance to whichever correlated predictor enters the equation with a marginally stronger raw association — in this case, ease of use — leaving familiarity's unique path looking weak even if the underlying construct is not, in fact, unimportant to PBC. The more defensible conclusion is therefore not that familiarity is irrelevant to perceived control, but that this study's three-construct decomposition does not, in this sample, achieve the empirical separation it was designed to test. This is consistent with a broader observation increasingly made in the technology-acceptance literature: constructs meant to capture distinct facets of 'how comfortable a person is with a technology' often collapse toward a single latent dimension when measured with brief, face-valid Likert items in a single sitting.

C. A Reconsidered Model: Digital Readiness as a Higher-Order Construct

Taken together, the strong path coefficients for access and ease of use, familiarity's redundant measurement profile, and the uniformly high HTMT ratios among all three technology constructs point toward a specific, testable theoretical refinement: technology access, ease of use, and familiarity may be better modelled not as three parallel first-order antecedents of PBC, but as three reflective indicators-of-indicators — lower-order components — of a single second-order construct that might be termed digital readiness for travel-related social media use, with that higher-order construct, rather than its three components individually, feeding into PBC. Such a reflective-reflective higher-order specification is well established in the PLS-SEM literature for exactly this situation, where a set of conceptually related first-order constructs share too much common variance to be treated as empirically distinct while each retaining face validity as a meaningful sub-dimension of a broader competence. This reframing does not discard the present study's findings; it re-organises them into a more parsimonious, and arguably more theoretically honest, structure, and is proposed here as a specific, falsifiable direction for the follow-up study outlined in Section VII.C, rather than as a post hoc rescue of a null result.

D. Perceived Behavioural Control as the Dominant Predictor of Intention to Visit

PBC's effect on intention to visit ($\beta = 0.743$) was, by a substantial margin, the strongest relationship in the model, and the model's R^2 for intention to visit (55.2%) compares favourably with R^2 values reported for full TPB or TPB-extension models of travel intention in the literature (e.g., Hu et al., 2025, reporting $R^2 = 0.393$ for travel intention in a four-predictor model). Because the present model tests only PBC as a predictor of intention — omitting attitude and subjective norm, which the classical TPB triad would also include — this result should be read as evidence that the technology-grounded route to PBC tested here is a strong and sufficient pathway to intention on its own, not as a claim that attitude and subjective norm are unimportant; a fuller TPB specification including all three antecedents is a natural extension, discussed in Section VII.C. Substantively, the finding reinforces the practical logic explored in Section VI: destinations and platforms that make tourists feel technologically capable are not simply improving a peripheral user-experience metric — they are moving the single strongest lever this study identifies for converting social media exposure into visit intention.

VI. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

A. Theoretical Contributions

- The study extends TPB by empirically decomposing the technological antecedents of PBC — access, ease of use, and familiarity — within a single structural model, addressing a gap left open by TPB-in-tourism studies that treat PBC as a unitary construct (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Chaulagain et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2025).
- It bridges the TAM/technology-acceptance-in-tourism literature (Chen, 2024; Li et al., 2024) and the TPB-intourism literature by showing that ease of use's downstream influence operates, at least partly, through PBC specifically, rather than only through a generic technology-attitude pathway.
- It brings the digital-divide literature's first-level/second-level distinction (Van Dijk, 2020; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2019) into tourism-behaviour modelling, demonstrating that both levels are independently measurable, non-trivial predictors of a TPB construct in an emerging-market setting.

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- It proposes and motivates — rather than merely encounters as a limitation — a higher-order 'digital readiness' reconceptualisation of PBC's technological antecedents (Section V.C), offering a specific, falsifiable structural alternative for future research.

B. Practical Implications for Destination Marketers

- Segment by digital readiness, not only demographics: because access, ease of use, and familiarity moved together in this sample, a single composite 'digital readiness' indicator (e.g., a short three-to-five-item screening battery) may be a more actionable segmentation tool for destination marketing organisations than age or income alone.
- Prioritising user-friendly and easily accessible content formats can be an excellent strategy for tourism marketers because ease of use showed a strong positive influence on PBC. Destination-related content that need minimal effort to navigate and understand such as shorts form of videos with location information, one- tap itinerary saving, and direct booking features within the platform is likely to convert exposure into visit intention more reliably than content that assumes high platform fluency.
- Do not assume access is solved: technology access remained a significant, medium-effect predictor even in a sample that was 92% smartphone-first and skewed toward younger, more educated respondents; marketers targeting broader, more digitally heterogeneous domestic-tourism audiences should expect access effects to be at least as strong, and should not rely on high-bandwidth-only content formats (e.g., long-form 4K video) as a primary channel.
- Prioritise the PBC-to-intention link operationally: because PBC's effect on intention was the model's dominant pathway, tactics that visibly reduce the perceived effort or risk of acting on destination content — clear nextstep calls to action, integrated booking, visible social proof of ease (e.g., 'planned in 3 taps' messaging) — are a higher-leverage investment than further increasing raw content volume or reach.

VII. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A. Measurement and Design Limitations

- **Discriminant validity:** as reported transparently in Section IV.B.1, the three technology-competence constructs did not achieve discriminant validity by either the Fornell-Larcker or HTMT criteria. This is the study's most consequential limitation, and it means H1–H3's individual path estimates should be interpreted as indicative of a shared technology-competence effect rather than as cleanly separable causal contributions; Section V.C proposes a specific higher-order remodelling to address this directly in follow-up work.
- **Response scale:** the instrument used a four-point (rather than five- or seven-point) agreement scale, which compresses item variance, likely constrains the achievable ceiling for AVE and discriminant separation, and limits comparability with prior studies using wider scales. This study has been reported as a design characteristic of the instrument as fielded, not adjusted after the fact.
- **Sample size and composition:** the study was conducted with N = 150 participants, while adequate for PLS-SEM estimation, is modest relative to some comparable published studies (N = 460–680) and constrains statistical power for identifying smaller effects such as familiarity's path (H3); furthermore the sample also skews predominantly toward younger, well- educated, smartphone-first respondents, restricting the range of technology-access variation actually observed and likely attenuating, rather than inflating, the estimated effect of access.
- **Common method variance:** although Harman's single-factor test and procedural remedies were, all constructs were measured via a single self-administered questionnaire at one time point; the possibility that shared method variance contributes to the high inter-construct correlations documented in Section IV.B.1 cannot be completely ruled out with the present design.
- **Cross-sectional design:** the study takes into consideration perceptions and stated intention at a single point in time and limits its ability to establish temporal precedence or rule out reverse or reciprocal causal pathways (e.g., a stronger intention to visit might itself inflate retrospective reports of technological confidence).
- **Sampling method and generalisability:** convenience/purposive online sampling via social media channels likely over-represents individuals already comfortable with those platforms, which may attenuate rather than inflate the very access and familiarity effects the study seeks to measure, and limits generalisability to less digitally active populations.

B. Geographic and Behavioural Scope

The study measures intention to visit rather than actual visitation or booking behaviour, consistent with the great majority of TPB-tourism studies but subject to the well-documented intention-behaviour gap. The sample was not restricted to, or explicitly identified with, a single destination region; a natural extension is to field the instrument among tourists specifically evaluating a

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defined destination (for example, a coastal or regional tourism circuit), which would allow destination-specific managerial recommendations and enable comparison with actual visitation data where available.

C. Directions for Future Research

- Re-specify and test the higher-order 'digital readiness' model proposed in Section V.C, using a larger sample and a wider (e.g., seven-point) response scale to allow the measurement model the range needed to establish, or definitively rule out, discriminant separation between access, ease of use, and familiarity.
- Extend the structural model to include attitude and subjective norm alongside the technology-grounded PBC pathway tested here, producing a full TPB specification that can partition the relative contribution of technological competence versus classical TPB antecedents.
- Test the model longitudinally or quasi-experimentally (e.g., before/after a platform-usability intervention) to establish temporal precedence and address the intention-behaviour gap by linking stated intention to subsequent actual booking or visitation.
- Replicate across a more digitally heterogeneous sample — including lower-bandwidth, rural, or older respondents — to test whether the access effect strengthens, as the digital-divide literature would predict, once the full range of technology access is represented.
- Test destination- and platform-specific moderators (e.g., short-form video vs. static image content, or a defined tourism circuit) to assess whether the technology-competence-to-PBC pathway generalises across content formats and destination contexts.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study examined whether three technology-related antecedents — access, ease of use, and familiarity — shape tourists perceived behavioural control over using social media for travel planning, and whether that control, in turn, predicts intention to visit a destination. Using PLS-SEM on primary data from 150 Indian domestic social media users, the study found that technology access and ease of use significantly and substantially predict PBC, that PBC is a powerful predictor of intention to visit, and that familiarity's contribution, while directionally positive, could not be empirically separated from the other two constructs in this sample — a finding that, rather than being a simple non-result, points toward a more parsimonious 'digital readiness' reconceptualization of PBC's technological antecedents for future testing. By reporting its measurement limitations as findings in their own right rather than smoothing over them, the study aims to offer both a substantively useful extension of TPB into the technology-mediated tourism context and a methodologically transparent template for the discriminant-validity challenges that are likely to recur whenever closely related technology-competence constructs are tested together. For destination marketers, the central practical implication is that technological friction — in access and in interface usability specifically — is not a peripheral concern but a primary lever on the pathway from social media exposure to visit intention, and is likely to matter at least as much as the persuasiveness of the content itself.

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