Social Media Usage and Event Attendee's Satisfaction

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Abstract

The event industry has rapidly adopted social media as a key marketing tool, leveraging platforms with millions of users. Social media has become a crucial tool in event marketing and holds the power to greatly influence the decision-making processes of event attendees. The study's objectives include examining the relationships between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attendees' satisfaction concerning the use of social media. Data was collected through a descriptive survey methodology, with respondents consisting of undergraduate students in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Selangor, Puncak Alam Campus. The study findings revealed significant relationships between these variables and attendee satisfaction, underlining the importance of social media in enhancing event experiences. The majority of respondents learned about events through Instagram, emphasizing the platform's prominence in event promotion. This research suggests that event organizers should leverage social media to improve attendee satisfaction and engage with their audience effectively. Future research can explore the impact of emerging platforms like TikTok and extend the study to different age groups to provide broader insights into social media's role in event satisfaction.

1. Introduction

This study explores the connection between social media usage and attendee satisfaction in events. With social media becoming an integral part of daily life, individuals are using it not only for personal interactions but also for business

communication. The event industry has rapidly embraced social media over the past 15 years, evolving from basic blogs in the 1990s to corporate websites in the mid-1990s. Social media's growth has transformed it into a two-way communication tool, with platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok and YouTube growing millions of users. In this context, social media plays a critical role in marketing and the current landscape indicates that nearly every aspect of a consumer's decision-making process is susceptible to the impact of social media (Harb et al., 2019, Appel et.al., 2020). Attendees now engage with brands and events by sharing their experiences on social media platforms. Thus, studying how using social media can enhance event satisfaction is important especially for the event organizer. This study aims to investigate the dimension of the Theory of Planned Behavior which are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control and their relationship with attendee event satisfaction. In addition, this research aims to emphasize the importance of feedback in determining event attendee satisfaction through social media. In today's landscape, social media is a vital marketing platform, but its influence on emotions, brand attachment, and word-of-mouth remains relatively unexplored. Furthermore, academic literature on social media within the context of events is in its early stages, with only a limited number of studies delving into the correlation between social media and the event experience (Yin et al., 2023). Thus, the findings of this study are anticipated to make a valuable contribution to the existing literature on social media, particularly within the context of event experiences. This contribution holds significance not only for academic purposes but also for the event industry. According to Elbana et.al (2019), event practitioners face challenges in incorporating social media into their strategies. Moreover, social media's unique features, like disseminating information and fostering networking, can be challenging in managing attendee behavior. Therefore, this study seeks to provide clarity on the relationship between social media usage and event attendee satisfaction, benefiting event organizers striving to stand out in a competitive market.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between attitudes of using social media towards event attendees' satisfaction.
2. To examine the relationship between subjective norms of using social media towards event attendees' satisfaction.
3. To examine the relationship between perceived behavioral control of using social media towards event attendees' satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Attitudes

Marketers need to understand what influences attendees' feelings and reasons for attending events. This is crucial because attendees or consumers are now having more power in shaping and sharing content about brands in social media platforms (Prado-Gascó, 2017; Gutierrez et al., 2023,). Past studies have investigated the elements of social media platforms that influence the attitudes of event attendees. According to Maria et.al (2019), event organizers should understand how their social media posts and external messages can influence attendees' views and attitude towards the event's brand. For instance, it has become norm nowadays that event attendees use social media to showcase events, share experiences online, and connect with others. In sports events, social media serves as a dependable source for organizers to gather crucial fan information and opinions for effective social media marketing. Moreover, research demonstrates that higher attendee satisfaction correlates with increased discussions about the event on social media. (Anastasiei & Dospinescu, 2019). It is also claimed that the way information is shared on social media can directly impact what consumers decide to buy. This is supported in previous studies that found a notable connection between people's attitudes and their behaviors on social media (Mohammed & Ferraris, 2021). According to Bilal et.al., (2022), in today's digital world, people who like sharing opinions online are more likely to do so when they have a positive attitude. This highlights how attitude significantly influences what consumers do online. Thus, it is anticipated that the attitude of using social media can affect the event attendee's satisfaction.

H1. Attitude of social media usage will positively affect event attendees' satisfaction.

2.2 Subjective Norms

Subjective norms relate to the perceived social influences or pressures to satisfy or not to satisfy in a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991; O'Neal, 2007; Ham et al., 2015; Patwary et al., 2022). This concept refers to individuals' beliefs regarding how their actions will be perceived by their reference groups such as family and friends, emphasizing the belief that an influential person or group will endorse and support a specific behavior (Izuagbe et al., 2019). In addition, someone could feel pressured by what others expect them to do, especially on social media, and how much they want to do what those people expect (Sun, 2020). In the realm of social media, studies have indicated that people's intentions to use social media platforms and post content about their experiences can be significantly influenced by the opinions and expectations of those in their social circles (Cheung & Lee, 2009, Onofrei et al., 2022). This is also supported by Vitak et al. (2011) and Asanprakit and Limna (2023) in their research findings, stated that social influence, especially when individuals observe their friends participating in online activities, significantly boosts motivation and shapes user's intentions to engage in a variety of behaviors, such as posting and reviewing issues. Kim et al. (2019) reported that addiction to social media usage can be also influenced by the opinions and expectations of others, as indicated by subjective norms. Therefore, it is anticipated that the satisfaction of event attendees can be also linked to social influences.

H2. Subjective norms of social media usage will positively affect event attendees' satisfaction.

2.3 Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived Control Behavior refers to how easy or hard an individual thinks it is to carry out a specific behavior and it is found to play a significant role in shaping a person's intention to keep doing that behavior (Ajzen, 2002). It concerns an individual's own judgment about their capabilities to engage in a specific behavior. It means that individuals are more likely to engage in behaviors they believe they have more control over versus behaviors that they have less control over (Hasen et al., 2018). Previous research found that the use of social media (Tariq et.al 2017) and behavior intention (Joo et al., 2020) was significantly influenced by perceived behavioral control. Meanwhile, Chen et,.al (2018) in their research found that perceived behavioral control was a significant factor in the determination of sharing information in the social media platform. According to Oh & Syn (2015), social media is not just about sharing daily activities but it has become a common platform for people to talk about their experiences in participating in various activities such as attending events. As a specific example, sports fans who grasp the games prefer using social media to stay connected and sharing information which makes their tournament experience more satisfying. This aligns with Du et al.'s (2020) suggestion that users actively use social media to share event experiences and express their point of view about the event. Hence, it is predicted that this behavior may positively impact the satisfaction of event attendees, providing organizers with a means to gauge attendee satisfaction through social media posts.

H3. Perceived Behavioral Control of social media usage will positively affect event attendees' satisfaction.

2.4. Attendees Satisfaction

Satisfaction level is influenced by individual cognitive comparison between the expectations formed before service consumption and their evaluation after the service consumption (Ho, Tiew & Adamu, 2022). In the context of events, satisfaction is viewed as an emotional response to the event experiences that is strongly linked to the visitor's behavioral intentions (Lee et al., 2008; Chang, Gibson, & Sisson, 2014; Selmi et.al., 2021). The satisfaction of the event attendees is also one of the features in measuring the event performance. Attendee's satisfaction with their event experience is possibly the most basic outcome that event organizers should hunt for to evaluate. When the event can accomplish the satisfaction of the attendees, it creates joy and motivation for attendees to come to future events, which is a pivotal factor influencing the economic sustainability of the events (Adesiji & Olajumoke, 2022). In order to increase the possibility of repeat attendance, it is key for event management to monitor and evaluate visitor satisfaction from past events. Understanding and identifying the needs of the attendees allow organizers to design and customize the event elements according to their needs for increasing satisfaction (Bahri-Ammari & Bilgihan, 2019; Selmi et.al., 2021; Ho, Tiew & Adamu, 2022). Adesiji and Olajumake (2022) highlighted the importance of recognizing satisfaction as it leads to increased competitiveness, improved financial performance, and business opportunities. As a result, high levels of satisfaction encourage positive word-of-mouth, which keeps visitors coming back and draws

in more through a positive word-of-mouth effect (Bahri-Ammari & Bilgihan, 2019). Based on previous investigations, this study developed the following conceptual framework:
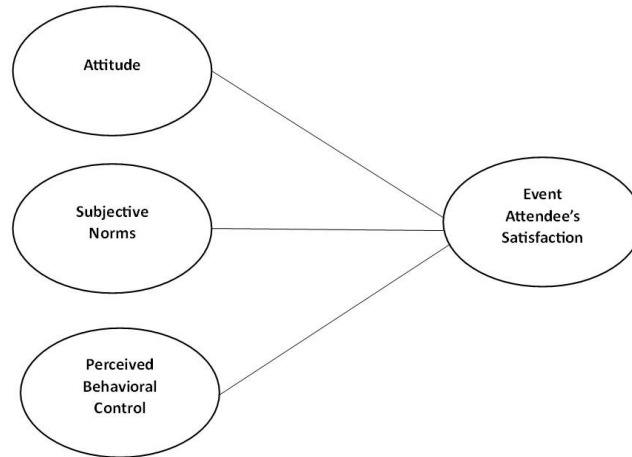

Figure 1: Research Model Source : (Harb et.al, 2019) and (ÖZDEMIR & Çulha, 2009)

3. Methodology

The variables in this study were measured using a descriptive survey methodology. Students from the Marketing Program, UiTM Puncak Alam Marketing represent the study's population and the samples were drawn using a convenience sampling technique. 182 individuals responded to the online questionnaires. Using a standardized questionnaire and a five-point Likert scale with a range of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree), the association between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attendees' satisfaction was evaluated. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 26).

4. Findings

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Variables	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	52	28.6
	Female	130	71.4
Age	19-25	172	94.5
	26-30	10	5.5
Race	Malay	182	100
Marital Status	Single	175	96.2

	Married	7	3.8
How did you know about any events that you attended?	Facebook	8	4.4
	Instagram	89	48.9
	Twitter	14	7.7
	Website	9	4.9
	Friends	61	33.5
	Others	1	0.5

Result from Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondent. As stated in the table, it shows that 71.4% (130) were female while males comprised 28.6% (52) of the total number of respondents. The majority age range of respondents 94.5% (172) fell between 19-25 years old while only 5.5 % (10) were in the 26-30 age range. Regarding marital status, the data from the table reveal that 96.2% (175) of respondents were single, making single individuals the majority in this study. Only 3.8% (7) of the total respondents were married. The survey also gathered information regarding how they learned about the event they attended. The majority of respondents, 89 (48%), learned about the event from Instagram. The second-highest percentage of respondents 61 (33.5%) indicated that friends were the second most common source of event information. 7.7% (14 people) of event awareness was attributed to Twitter, while 4.9% (9 people) said they learned about events from websites like Eventbrite and Newsevents. Among those who learned about events, 4.4% (8 people) or less did so via Facebook, with only 0.5% (1 person) attributing their knowledge to other sources. As a result, Instagram became the most popular site used by respondents to learn about the events they attended.

Table 2: Normality Result

	Skewness	**Kurtosis**
Attitude	-.491	-.217
Subjective Norms	-.098	-.781
Perceived Behavioral Control	-.302	-.567
Attendees Satisfaction	-.390	-.397

The values of skewness and kurtosis for the variables used to assess the normality of the data distribution are shown in Table 2. The result shows the negative skewness values and kurtosis values close to 0 suggesting that the data for all these variables is approximately normally distributed (Tabanick, Fidell & Ulman, 2013. This indicates that the questionnaires were distributed fairly among attendees with various demographic backgrounds, and these variables appear to meet the requirements for normality.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach's alpha
Attitude	3.8286	0.89299	0.925
Subjective Norms	3.6795	0.96306	0.975
Perceived Behavioral Control	3.8663	0.88368	0.904
Attendees' satisfaction	4.0164	0.82092	0.968

Result in table 3 shows descriptive statistics of the four variables involved which are attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attendee's satisfaction. The highest mean score was attendees' satisfaction at 4.0164. Next, the Attitude mean score was 3.8286, and the Perceived Behavioral Control mean score was 3.8663. These results showed that the respondent's level of agreement with the items in these variables was moderate. Subjective norms had the lowest mean score for the variables, 3.6795. In this research, Cronbach's Alpha is used to determine the reliability of this test. It specifies the stability and consistency of the instruments. Cronbach's Alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the item is set and how positive the items correlate to one another (Sekaran, 2013). Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the consistency of each of the items that were measured. The Cronbach alpha value of all the items was in the range of 0.904 to 0.975 which indicates the instruments used were reliable (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013).

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

	Attitude	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioral Control	Attendees Satisfaction
Attitude	1			
Subjective Norms	.731**	1		
Perceived Behavioral Control	.751**	.788**	1	
Attendee's Satisfaction	.771**	.778**	.813**	1

Pearson's correlation analysis was used to measure the relationships between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and attendees' satisfaction. The result in Table 4 shows that all correlation scores fall between 0.813 to 0.771 which implies a strong relationship with the attendees' satisfaction. Perceived behavioral control had the highest score of relationship (r=0.813, p < 0.01) followed by Subjective norms (r=0.778, p < 0.01). Attitude had the lowest correlation score of (r=0.771, p < 0.01). Based on the findings, there is a significant relationship between attitude of social media usage and event attendees' satisfaction. Therefore, H1 is supported. This finding is consistent with previous study by Talantis, Shin & Severt (2020) that highlighted attitude toward mobile event apps as a significant predictor of conference satisfaction. Next, subjective norms were also found to have a significant relationship with attendees' satisfaction. Hence, H2 is supported. The result of this study found that event attendees were influenced by their subjective norms of using social media to share the experiences to family and friends. The strong endorsement from family and friends on using social media to share opinion, experiences and participate in the event activities shaping the attendee's intention and behavior towards the event's social media presence (Moorthy et al., 2021). Furthermore, a significant relationship was identified between perceived behavioral control and attendees' satisfaction, thus implying that H3 is supported. The event's social media pages facilitate relationship building for the event attendees which is indicative of perceived behavioral control in engaging with the event. In general, engaging with the event's social media presence in an interactive and evaluative manner highlights the perceived behavioral control. The findings for these hypotheses are similar to previous research by Harb et al. (2019) that indicate that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have significant impact on intentions to participate in social networking pages and consequently affecting actual behavior.

Table 5: Result of Research Hypotheses

Items	Hypotheses	Result
H1	Attitude of social media usage will positively affect event attendees' satisfaction.	Supported
H2	Subjective norms of social media usage will positively affect event attendees' satisfaction.	Supported
H3	Perceived Behavioral Control of social media usage will positively affect event attendees' satisfaction.	Supported

5. Conclusions

The study conducted to find out the dimension of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control that contributes to attendee's satisfaction among marketing students in UiTM Selangor, Puncak Alam Campus. The result of this study shows that all the variables have a significant relationship with attendee's satisfaction, therefore it can be concluded that all the hypotheses are supported. The findings indicated that respondent attitude towards the use of social media in getting information, interaction and sharing their experiences and opinion has affected the satisfaction in attending events. Besides, the use of social media at events has become a common norm especially among younger generations. As the respondents are students taking the same programs, it can be implied that the anticipation or influence from peers to engage with the social media has influenced the relationship between subjective norms and the attendee's satisfaction. Event organizers and planners should consider using social media platforms to improve attendee satisfaction and the overall event experience as social media networking offers a great opportunity to interact with event organizers, marketers and attendees. The respondents are depending on social media to keep up with the events activities. This study only focuses on the respondent within the same age range, therefore future research can be expanded to include other event attendees with different ranges of generation to provide further comparison and generalization. Furthermore, future research can incorporate TikTok as one of the social media platforms to investigate as it was not considered in this study. The emergence of TikTok has gained attention recently and its utilization at events and its potential impacts at event attendees' satisfaction could provide valuable insights.

6. About the author

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