

Digital Content Marketing as an influencer in the travel planning process: na analysis from the extended Technology Acceptance Model¹

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ABSTRACT

Amid the constant changes in marketing to develop strategies that reach such a diverse consumer audience, digital content marketing (DCM) emerges, in the market and academic literature, as an innovative technique for the dissemination of goods and services, especially because traditional advertising no performs its role as before, and the consumer is often aware of the “intrusive role” it plays. This study aims to understand the perception of the tourist consumer when using Digital Content Marketing for the travel planning process. Then, an exploratory-descriptive study was developed, with quantitative results, from survey research with possible travelers to two Brazilian destinations: Morro de São Paulo and Ilha de Boipeba, in Bahia. Thus, an extended version of the Technology Acceptance Model – TAM, was used for the analysis. The hypotheses were tested through structural equation modeling in the AMOS 22 software. The main constructs that impact the attitude in using DCM are “perceived usefulness,” from the original model, and “perceived convenience,” from the proposed extension. The positive relationship between “attitude” and “intention” to use DCM was also verified, which are configured as the main dependent constructs of the model.

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Therefore, it can be inferred that the model proposed in this research considerably represents the factors that influence the attitude and intention of users to use DCM materials to plan trips to tourist destinations.

Keywords: digital content marketing, tourism, technology acceptance model, travel planning.

INTRODUCTION

Amid the constant transformations involving tourism activity and its consumer segment, promoting tourism destinations and products has become a challenging task. Traditional advertising no longer fulfills the role it used to since in recent years consumers have developed more autonomous characteristics, moving away from traditional means of communication (De Souza, Mendes Filho & Buhalis, 2020), and often becoming aware of the “intrusive” profile of marketing tools (Xie & Lou, 2020).

Over the years, several studies have identified the power of content. In the international literature, the term “content is king” has been promoted as the newest and most powerful way to promote goods and services, especially because content no longer originates from advertisers but also consumers themselves (Wang & McCarthy, 2020). In this way, brands no longer think and promote themselves alone, because users have become content producers capable of influencing the mass consumption of goods and services offered by them.

Thus, two specific terms have motivated several studies in recent years: user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC). UGC refers to all the data, information, and knowledge disseminated by the users themselves, able to influence the strategies and decisions of brands, and assist their peers (Mendes-Filho et al., 2018). This content can serve as the basis for FGC, which comprises the content generated by firms, that is, by companies/brands that have content as their newest ally to promote their goods and services.



The object of this article is digital content marketing (DCM), a tool that is part of FGC and has been promoted as one of the most innovative marketing strategies in recent years. Its primary characteristic is to provide valuable information to consumers to help them with the most diverse issues in their everyday lives.

As much as this has been a strategy used for decades, the digital environment has made content marketing one of the key techniques recently, by incorporating new features and sparking academic interest for the purposes of scientific research.

At the same time, DCM is a technological tool that helps users in their daily lives. In the case of tourism, for example, this tool can answer questions about destinations, travel preparation, and accessories purchases, among others (Souza, Silva & Marques Júnior, 2021).

Researchers have promoted this topic in recent years, especially because destinations and companies in the sector have relied on this technique. However, the number of studies is still not enough to fill the gaps identified.

Based on these assumptions, this study seeks to understand the perception of tourist consumers when using DCM in the scope of their travel planning process. To this end, we ground this study on one of the most present models in academic research, which aims to understand the role of technological phenomena in the lives of users: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

DIGITAL CONTENT MARKETING (DCM) AND ITS APPLICABILITY IN TOURISM

The infancy of content marketing was marked by the performance of some companies, such as The Furrow, Deere & Company, Michelin, and Jell-O, in the early twentieth century, when they produced guides and magazines that provided their consumer segments with information, to educate them about the characteristics of their products, let them know about new



technologies, disclose recipes, among others. These materials helped such brands remain in evidence in the minds of consumers, triggering a lasting relationship and, consequently, increasing their revenues (Pulizzi, 2016).

However, the literature has paid more attention to this theme in a much more recent period. This has happened especially because, with the advent of the internet and the new possibilities of reaching consumers through differentiated marketing techniques, content marketing has come to play a different role. Since strategies had been identified even before the emergence of the internet, some authors found it necessary to emphasize the term Digital Content Marketing, when referring to this type of strategy in the online environment.

Besides adopting the term “digital content marketing,” Rowley (2008) identified important antecedents of this topic, although the concept presented still does not reflect exactly the essence of its practice, since it is limited solely to the supply of digital products. Subsequently, the author coined a new definition in a new study with Holliman (Holliman & Rowley, 2014), which resembles all the other concepts released since then:

Digital content marketing involves “creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome” (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

In this sense, when conceptualizing content marketing, it is important to keep some keywords in mind, such as information (Wall & Spinuzzi, 2018), relevance (Holliman & Rowley, 2014), and value (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). This tool is a promotional strategy, as well as a tool to help consumers. Therefore, it is based on bringing information to the user, and relevance and value are some of the characteristics that make this information perform its promotional purpose.



What has been recorded is that, although research on this topic has yet to become robust, DCM is a technique extensively practiced in various industries.

According to Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2020), in 2018, more than 70% of brands in the United States claimed to have content marketing strategies in place, and more than half of all brands around the world expected to increase their budget following the adoption of this tool by 2020. Xie and Lou (2020) found that the global revenue from content marketing exceeded US\$ 30 billion in 2019.

Thus, by knowing the concept and the characteristics of DCM, it is easy to understand that this is a technique of considerable importance for the promotion of tourist destinations, in fact, already present in many cases.

Naseri and Noruzi (2018) proposed a framework for developing content marketing for businesses consisting of four steps: (1) planning, (2) production, (3) distribution and communication, and (4) measurement and optimization. The planning stage is the process of searching for subjects that lead to content production, that is, what the consumer usually wants to achieve when searching for a given topic on the Internet. It is at this stage that user-generated content can incorporate a leading role.

Based on this assumption, Souza, Silva and Marques Júnior (2021) conducted online monitoring in a virtual community of travelers to identify the travel decisions made by tourists during the planning stage. The two-month monitoring resulted in dozens of categories and subjects that can assist tourism content producers in the execution of effective content marketing strategies.

Thus, the results of the planning stage trigger the production, which concerns the creation of several types of content (texts, images, videos, audios, infographics) so that they spread organically, from the searches made by the users themselves on the Internet.



Consequently, the distribution and communication stage comprise choosing the channels where the produced content will be hosted, and how they will be fed, since the content must be constantly updated.

Finally, measurement and optimization correspond to the monitoring of how the audience receives and interacts with the content they seek so that innovative ideas for content, channels, and information updates can emerge.

Regarding tourism, Souza, Silva and Marques Júnior (2021) emphasize that this technique can “revive” various tourist destination portals that have become obsolete for not presenting a more personal language that would meet the consumers' needs.

In their research on influencer marketing, Barreiro, Dinis, and Breda (2019) address the constant reductions in public sector funding for marketing activities. Therefore, strategies present in digital marketing, such as DCM, have come to be tools to reach audiences in a context with limited resources.

Furthermore, the existence of a digital platform and its constant updating are characteristics of the consolidation of a company/brand in the scope of its communication strategy. It must take advantage of the connectivity and interaction present in this medium to create an increasingly personalized service to consumers (Burg & Mondo, 2020).

As for research on DCM and consumer behavior, we can mention the study by Bu, Parkinson, and Thaichon (2020), which relied on the Uses and Gratifications Theory to measure the (positive) impact of DCM in generating electronic word-of-mouth communication in gastronomic tourism. Correlatedly, Mathew and Soliman (2020) investigated the acceptance of DCM within the dissemination of the destinations of Egypt and Oman (in the Middle East and North African region) through TAM.

Based on this, we can conclude that the wide range of existing and consolidated theories can assist the understanding of DCM in the field of tourism. In addition, due to the small number of studies, exploratory surveys



may trigger the emergence of new constructs that can be coupled with existing theories/models and/or explain different consumer behaviors.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) seeks to understand an individual's intention to use a given technology. The model was created by Davis (1989) and hundreds of studies have been conducted ever since, aiming to look into consumer behavior as new technologies continuously emerge. Recent studies have employed TAM to check the acceptance of the use of digital currencies (Ullah et al., 2021), e-learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Cicha et al., 2021), augmented reality as a learning mechanism (Boboc, Chiriac & Antonya, 2021), and the use of digital banking (Borges et al., 2020), among many others.

In tourism, TAM has been used in research involving user-generated content (Assaker, 2020; Mendes-Filho et al., 2018), shared hosting platforms, and online community services (Wang & Jeong, 2018; Rodrigues, Medeiros, & Ramos, 2019; Jung et al., 2021), among others.

More recently, Mathew and Soliman (2020) employed the model above to test the acceptance of the use of DCM in the scope of two destinations in the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt and Oman), which will undergo a new validation herein, adopting two tourist destinations in Brazil as the research object, and a sample of Brazilian tourists.

Since it is a consolidated model and due to the emergence of other theories, models, and constructs that characterize consumer behavior in recent years, current research is typically based on extended versions of TAM, that is, constructs from other theories that can hold relations with the characteristics of the original model. This is the case with some of the research mentioned above as well as this study. However, before presenting the extended version proposed in this research, it is worth describing TAM's



original constructs. The model comprises the following constructs: perceived usefulness, ease of use, attitude, and intention to use.

Perceived usefulness refers to how users believe that a given technology will increase his/her performance, at work, in studies, in leisure, etc., and in positive cases, it will directly impact the users' attitude towards using that technology. Previous studies have identified positive correlations between such constructs in the intention to use online travel reviews to choose a means of accommodation (Silva & Mendes Filho, 2014), the perceived use of collective purchasing sites to purchase coupons for tourist services (Mendes Filho, Jorge & Sena Junior, 2016), and more recently, Mathew and Soliman (2020) found positive results in the use of DCM for travel planning, based on a sample of tourists from Egypt and Oman. Thus, the first hypothesis postulated in this research is:

H1: Perceived usefulness positively impacts tourism consumers' attitudes toward using digital content marketing to plan trips.

Ease of use seeks to measure the use of a given technology by an individual, relatively free of effort. Thus, the less someone needs an instructions manual to handle a particular technology, the easier it is for him or her to use it, which in turn will positively impact their attitude toward using it.

Previous research has confirmed positive correlations between such constructs in the adoption of using social media marketing (Matikiti, Mpinganjira & Roberts-Lombard, 2018), and the use of virtual reality hardware as a sales driver (Manis & Choi, 2019). Mathew and Soliman (2020) also found positive results between such constructs regarding the use of DCM for travel planning. That being said, the second hypothesis postulated herein is:

H2: Perceived ease of use positively impacts tourism consumers' attitude towards using digital content marketing to plan trips.



According to TAM, perceived ease of use has a positive influence over perceived usefulness in purchase behavior (Davis, 1989). This has been confirmed by Cho and Sagynov (2015), Elkaseh, Wong and Fung (2016), and Mathew and Soliman (2020). Thus, the third hypothesis states:

H3: Perceived ease of use positively impacts the perceived usefulness of using digital content marketing to plan trips.

The intention to use corresponds to the last construct of the original model proposed by Davis (1989) and is determined by attitude. Given that this study is based on an extended version of the TAM, we chose to address this construct in the next section.

An extended version of TAM

From Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1992) onwards, TAM began to indicate that people's attitudes towards using innovative technologies are influenced by their enjoyment of using them. Thus, "perceived enjoyment" constitutes the so-called Motivational Theory and refers to the users' perception that using technology may lead to enjoyment.

Subsequently, according to Liao, Tsou, and Shu (2008), perceived ease of use positively impacts perceived enjoyment when using multimedia services, since the greater the ease in using such technology, the more positive and hedonic emotions are triggered. The positive relationship between these constructs was also found in Mathew and Soliman's (2020) study on the use of DCM among North African and Middle Eastern tourists. Thus, the fourth hypothesis formulated here is:

H4: Perceived ease of use positively impacts the perceived enjoyment of using digital content marketing to plan trips.



The last construct proposed in this extended version of TAM is “perceived convenience.” It can be defined as the degree of convenience in terms of time, place, and utilization that individuals experience when using a given technology (Mathew & Soliman, 2020).

In this context, Yoon and Kim (2007) revealed that perceived convenience is significantly influenced by perceived ease of use in the adoption of information systems. This positive correlation was also found in Chang, Yan, and Tseng (2012) when analyzing mobile technology use, Velmurugan and Velmurugan (2014) regarding mobile digital content use, and Mathew and Soliman (2020) regarding DCM use. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is:

H5: Perceived ease of use positively impacts the perceived convenience of using digital content marketing to plan trips.

According to Lee, Xiong, and Hu (2012), users' emotions manifested on Facebook event pages (i.e., social media event marketing), directly impact the perceived enjoyment in users' attitudes towards using these pages on that social media platform. Yang, Asaad, and Dwivedi (2017) state that attitudes toward gamification are significantly influenced by the enjoyment of using this technology for various purposes. Ryu and Murdock (2013) revealed the significant relationship between perceived enjoyment and consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing communication, and Mathew and Soliman (2020) also found a positive correlation in the use of DCM to plan trips. Thus, the sixth hypothesis is:

H6: Tourism consumers' attitudes when planning trips are positively impacted by the perceived enjoyment of using digital content marketing.



Chang, Yan, and Tseng (2012) showed that individual attitudes are influenced by the perceived convenience among college students' using mobile technology for learning English. Furthermore, by extending the TAM model, Hsu and Chang (2013) revealed that consumers' attitudes are significantly impacted by the perceived convenience of technology use. More recently, Mathew and Soliman (2020) found positive evidence in the relationship between such variables and the use of DCM. Based on the previous studies, the next hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H7: Tourism consumers' attitudes when planning trips are positively affected by the perceived convenience of using digital content marketing.

According to Cho and Sagynov (2015), there is a significant correlation between perceived convenience and perceived usefulness in an online environment among consumers. Subsequently, Ozturk et al. (2016) revealed that perceived convenience positively impacts the perceived usefulness among users booking hotel daily rates on mobile devices, and Mathew and Soliman (2020) attested to the impact of perceived convenience on perceived usefulness by analyzing tourist consumers in Egypt and Oman who used DCM to plan their trips. Thus, the eighth hypothesis is:

H8: Perceived convenience positively impacts the perceived usefulness of using digital content marketing to plan trips.

Therefore, according to Sinthamrong and Rompho (2015), customers' attitudes affect their purchase intentions toward branded content in Webisode format. Previous research has indicated that attitude has a significant influence on the intention to use new technology (Lederer et al., 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001), and Mathew and Soliman (2020) found a positive correlation between the attitude to use DCM for travel planning and the intention to use. Thus, the ninth and final hypothesis proposed in this study is:



H9: Tourist consumers' attitudes positively impact their intention to use digital content marketing to plan trips.

The nine proposed hypotheses are followed by Figure 1 below, which presents the proposed model for a better understanding of the described relationships.

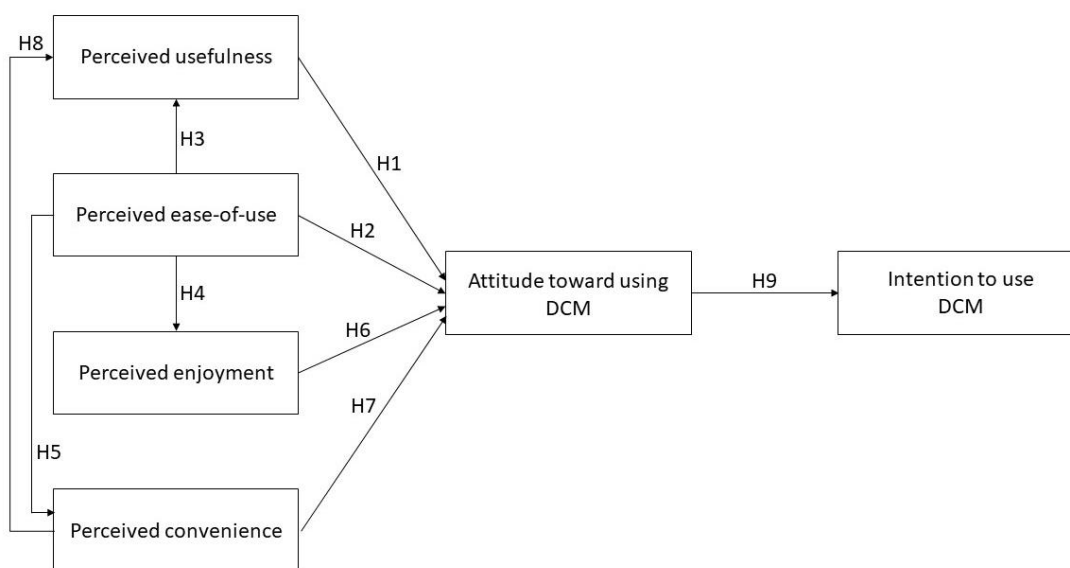


Figure 1. Extended TAM (proposed model)
Source: Adapted from Mathew and Soliman (2020)

METHODOLOGY

This is exploratory-descriptive research with a quantitative approach. The exploratory component involves a bibliographic survey conducted for understanding the phenomenon studied, whereas the descriptive research aims to describe the characteristics of a population/phenomenon, in addition to establishing relationships between variables (Gil, 2007).

The approach adopted was quantitative, since the information received was translated into numbers (from a structured questionnaire) to be later classified and analyzed (Volpato, 2015).

For this study, two Brazilian tourist destinations were chosen: Morro de São Paulo and Boipeba Island. Both destinations are located in the Tinharé Archipelago, in the city of Cairu, Bahia State, and can be visited in a single trip, just as the tourist can choose one or another based on its characteristics.

These destinations were chosen due to their relevance in the state of Bahia and the Northeast region. Bahia has been consolidated as the most visited tourist destination in the region and its capital Salvador ranks third in domestic tourism. Morro de São Paulo and Boipeba Island are two of the most popular destinations in the state, with high hotel occupancy rates in the summer and during school vacations (Setur-BA, 2019).

Data collection consisted of three stages. In the first stage, respondents were recruited through social media and email databases to participate in this research, in which each phase would provide content related to Morro de São Paulo and Boipeba. Thus, when participating in the first phase, the respondents read the first part of the material produced and checked the option regarding their awareness of the questionnaire content, and filled out the email field so that they could be contacted in the two subsequent phases.

In the second phase, besides reading the content, a questionnaire containing sociodemographic questions was applied. Finally, only in phase three, the users answered the specific TAM questions (Table 1), after they had read all the programmed content. Three phases were necessary because since the content was extensive, it could potentially discourage respondents if it were disclosed in a single step.

Thus, in the first phase, the participants were informed that in all three phases they would be presented with information about trips to Morro de São Paulo and Boipeba and that they should imagine they were planning a trip to these destinations.



The content was mostly textual, with some illustrations, and went through the sieve of two content marketing professionals to attest to its relevance. It featured information on how to get to the destinations, what to do, the best time to visit, where to stay, estimated spending, and itinerary tips, i.e., the most relevant information for planning a trip to a given destination, as pointed out by Souza, Silva and Marques Junior (2021).

The survey started with 156 internet users but after the evasion of respondents, 102 of them remained. Each phase lasted two weeks, between December 2020 and January 2021.

Table 1
Description of the constructs and variables of the proposed model

Construct	Questions/Variables
Perceived Usefulness	U1 - Using DCM helps improve my travel experience; U2 - Using DCM saves me time when I'm choosing a destination; U3 - DCM helps me to select a tourist destination faster;
Perceived Ease of Use	EOU1 - Using DCM does not require a great deal of mental effort on my part; EOU2 - I find DCM content more flexible to interact with; EOU3 - Overall, I find it easy to use DCM to plan a trip;
Perceived Enjoyment	E1 - The process of using DCM to plan a trip is enjoyable; E2 - It is more interesting to use DCM to plan a trip; E3 - I have fun using DCM to plan a trip;
Perceived Convenience	C1 - I can make decisions about travel and tourism at any time using DCM; C2 - I can make travel and tourism decisions anywhere using DCM; C3 - Using DCM for traveling is convenient for me;
Attitude	A1 - I believe it is a good idea to use DCM to plan trips; A2 - Using DCM is important for my travel decisions; A3 - Making travel decisions based on DCM is a smart idea;
Behavioral Intention	I1 - I intend to use DCM to choose a destination the next time I go traveling; I2 - I intend to be a heavy DCM user to choose a destination the next time I go traveling; I3 - I will recommend my colleagues to read DCM content to choose their travel destinations.

Source: adapted from Mathew & Soliman (2020)

The questionnaire was created and sent in Google Forms, and all questions in the model (Table 1), were formulated according to an 11-level Likert scale (0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to “Strongly disagree” and 10 to “Strongly agree”).



The data were analyzed through (1) descriptive statistics for the socio-demographic description of the sample, (2) evaluation of the measurement model, and (3) structural equation modeling, following the model presented in Figure 1. The software used for descriptive and factor analyses was SPSS 22, and AMOS 22 was employed for structural equation modeling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 describes the sociodemographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Regarding gender, most were women (74.5%), with a per capita monthly income of up to R\$1,045.00 (34.3%), followed by the range between R\$1,045.00 to R\$2.090.00 (24.5%); 55.9% of the participants were aged between 25 and 34 years old, followed by the 18 to 24 years age group (28.4%); as for education, most respondents had an incomplete graduate degree (30.4%), incomplete higher education (25.5%), or a college degree (24.5%).

Table 2
Respondents' sociodemographic profile

Variable	%	Variable	%
Gender		Age	
Female	74.5	18 to 24 years old	28.4
Male	25.5	25 to 34 years old	55.9
Didn't answer	0	35 to 44 years old	9.8
Monthly Income per Capita		45 to 54 years old	3.9
<R\$1.045.00	34.3	55 to 64 years old	2
R\$1,045.00 – R\$2,090.00	24.5	65 or older	0
R\$2,091,00 – R\$4,181,00	15.7	Level of education	
R\$4,82,00 – R\$6,272,00	8.8	Some schooling	0
R\$6,273,00 – R\$8,363,00	6.9	Elementary school	1
R\$8,364,00 – R\$10,454,00	6.9	Some high school	0
R\$10,455,00 – R\$12,545,00	1	High school	2
R\$12,545,00 – R\$14,636,00	0	Some college	25.5
≥ 14,636.00	2	College degree	24.5
		Incomplete graduate degree	30.4
		Graduate degree	16.7

Source: Research data.



Table 3 shows the mean values of each variable referring to the constructs analyzed. On a scale of 0 to 10, all variables obtained values between 8 and 9, and among them were the variables "improved experience"(relative to the "Perceived Usefulness" antecedent) with 9.10, and "fun use" (relative to "Perceived Pleasure") stood out with the lowest average, 8.02.

Table 3
Descriptive analysis of the variables of the extended version of TAM

Construct	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Perceived Usefulness	U1	9.10	1.15
	U2	8.76	1.15
	U3	8.83	1.15
Perceived Ease of Use	EOU1	8.11	1.91
	EOU2	8.63	1.27
	EOU3	8.58	1.46
Perceived Enjoyment	P1	8.70	1.39
	P2	8.59	1.25
	P3	8.02	1.76
Perceived Convenience	C1	8.28	1.61
	C2	8.42	1.57
	C3	8.72	1.30
Attitude	A1	8.90	1.17
	A2	8.62	1.37
	A3	8.56	1.36
Behavioral Intention	I1	8.55	1.33
	I2	8.25	1.55
	I3	8.65	1.31

Source: Research data.

The data show that most respondents ticked the "Agree" columns (located between "I somewhat agree" and "I totally agree") and that even with the standard deviation above 1 in all variables, the data show intensity towards the positive edge. Therefore, such results are similar to those found by Mathew and Soliman (2020), in which the results for all constructs fit the adequate parameters.

Evaluation of the measurement model



To evaluate the measurement model, exploratory factor analysis was performed, and the data can be seen in Table 4. According to Chin (2010), for the results to be considered good, factorial loadings should be greater than 0.7. The analysis showed that they ranged from 0.739 to 0.938, thus meeting the parameters recommended by the author.

Therefore, Hair et al. (2009) inferred that to meet a specified percentage of explained variance, the factors should reach a minimum value of 60%. The results show that the percentage of variance ranged between 68.71% and 86.18%.

Regarding the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test, the same authors argue that values between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered good, and values higher than 0.8 and 0.9 are considered optimal. The data show that five of the six variables reached satisfactory results, and even though the antecedent "Perceived Usefulness" failed to obtain a good result, Hair et al. (2009) consider that values between 0.5 and 0.7 are still acceptable.

Subsequently, in Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Hair et al. (2009), state that to be statistically significant, the result must be <0.05 . The analysis identified that all constructs comprised a significance of <0.0001 , indicating the existence of sufficient correlations between the variables to proceed with the analysis.

The authors also specify the adequate value for Cronbach's alpha, which is a measure of the reliability of the collection instrument requiring a minimum value of 0.60. The values found for this study are above 0.767, which demonstrates that the survey items can measure the same skill/characteristic. Finally, the average variance extracted (AVE) values are above the adequate indices, which are recommended to be equal to or higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2009).

Table 4
Exploratory factor analysis results

Construct	Variable	Factorial Loads	% Variance	KMO	Bartlett	Cronbach's alpha	AVE
Perceived	U1	0.739					



Usefulness	U2	0.928	68.71%	0.546	Significant	0.767	0.687
	U3	0.809					
Ease of Use	EOU1	0.892	74.41%	0.706	Significant	0.816	0.744
	EOU2	0.830					
	EOU3	0.865					
Perceived Enjoyment	P1	0.885	74.47%	0.706	Significant	0.812	0.744
	P2	0.880					
	P3	0.822					
Perceived Convenience	C1	0.915	82.14%	0.736	Significant	0.889	0.821
	C2	0.923					
	C3	0.880					
Attitude	A1	0.919	86.18%	0.759	Significant	0.918	0.861
	A2	0.928					
	A3	0.938					
Intention	I1	0.905	81.24%	0.733	Significant	0.882	0.812
	I2	0.921					
	I3	0.878					

Source: Research data.

Table 5 describes the results of the indices corresponding to the goodness of fit of the proposed model. The indices adopted were: CMIN/DF (χ^2 /degrees of freedom ratio), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), GFI (Goodness of Fit Index), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), PGFI (Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index), and PCFI (Parsimony Comparative Fit Index).

Table 5
Model's goodness of fit

Indices	Results
CMIN/DF	1.902
CFI	0.930
GFI	0.815
TLI	0.913
RMSEA	0.094
PCFI	0.752
PGFI	0.586

Source: Research data.

The CMIN/DF value fits the parameter inferred by Lemke (2005), which should be ≤ 5 . Following the standards recommended by Marôco (2010), it can be stated that the CFI has a good fit (good = 0.9 to 0.95), the GFI has a reasonable fit (reasonable = 0.8 to 0.9), the TLI has a good fit (good = 0.9 to 0.95), RMSEA has a good fit (good = 0.05 to 0.10), PCFI also has a good fit



(good = 0.6 to 0.8), and finally, PGFI has a value a little below what would be considered “good” (good = 0.6 to 0.8).

The PGFI value of 0.586 is within the maladjustment parameter ($mal \leq 0.6$). However, according to Aguiar and Bastos (2013), the PGFI tends to be considerably lower than the other indices, and a minor decrease in its result is already expected since the insertion of parameters inevitably leads to a reduction in the model's parsimony.

Structural Equation Modeling

Out of a total of nine proposed hypotheses, six were confirmed (H1, H3, H4, H5, H7, and H9) and three were rejected (H2, H6, and H8). The confirmed hypotheses showed statistically significant path coefficients (β) across variables, according to Figure 2 and the discussion below.

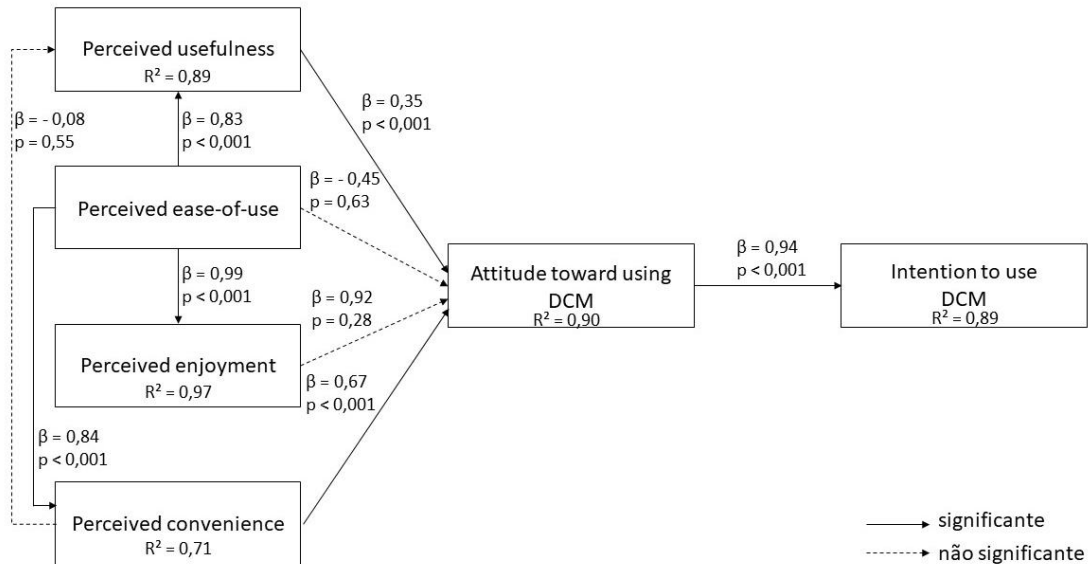


Figure 2. Structural model
Source: Research data.

The positive correlation between perceived usefulness and attitude towards using DCM (H1) corroborates Chung, Han, and Joun (2015) when identifying the same relationship with the tourists' intention to visit a



destination through augmented reality (path coefficient= 0.657, $p < 0.001$), and also Wu and Chen (2017) when addressing the adoption of Massive Open Online Courses (path coefficient = 0.507, $p < 0.001$). This result demonstrates that users perceive DCM as a useful tool to assist the planning of a trip to a given destination, and this usefulness directly impacts their attitude toward using it.

Despite the non-confirmation, the negative result of H2 corroborates Mendes Filho, Jorge and Sena Junior (2016), when verifying the impact of perceived ease of use in the attitude towards using collective buying sites to acquire coupons for tourism services, and also with Wu and Chen (2017) on the adoption of Massive Open Online Courses. Thus, survey respondents identify the use of DCM to plan trips as easy; however, this ease is not a key factor to trigger their attitude to use it.

In contrast, regarding H3, a positive correlation between ease of use and perceived usefulness was verified, and led to findings similar to previous studies, such as Rauniar et al. (2014), when addressing the motivators of Facebook usage behavior (path coefficient = 0.25, $p < 0.001$) and Gangwar, Date and Ramaswamy (2015) when analyzing the adoption of cloud computing (path coefficient = 0.434, $p < 0.001$). Thus, as users identify the use of DCM to plan trips as easy, their perceived usefulness increases, and, consequently, so does their attitude toward use.

The positive relationship between ease of use and perceived pleasure (H4) can also be found in other studies, such as Liao, Tsou and Shu (2008), who analyzed the factors affecting the adoption of multimedia-on-demand services (path coefficient = 0.42, $p < 0.001$), and Treiblmaier, Neale and Chong (2011), who aimed to measure the antecedents of online and website loyalty (path coefficient = 0.50, $p < 0.001$). In this context, it is inferred that the process associated with the ease of using DCM results in pleasant feelings such as enjoyment, fun, and identification of this tool as an interesting one.

Subsequently, H5 (relationship between ease of use and perceived convenience) was also confirmed, similarly to the findings of Hsu and Chang



(2013) regarding the adoption of e-learning systems in universities (path coefficient = 0.575, $p < 0.001$) and Ozturk et al. (2016), who analyzed user loyalty when booking hotels via mobile devices.

Thus, perceived ease of use directly impacts the perception that users can rely on DCM to plan trips anywhere or at any time, as long as they have access to the content.

In turn, the non-confirmation of H6 is in line with Silva and Mendes Filho (2014), who found that perceived enjoyment did not influence respondents positively in their attitude to count on online travel reviews to choose a means of accommodation. The result of this hypothesis implies that although using DCM is fun, enjoyable, and interesting, a direct correlation between these feelings and the intention to use this tool to plan a trip has not been established.

The positive correlation between perceived convenience and attitude towards using DCM (H7) corroborates studies such as Chang, Yan e Tseng (2012), who analyzed students' adoption of mobile technology in English learning (path coefficient = 0.23, $p < 0.05$), and Hsu and Chang's (2013), who analyzed the adoption of e-learning system in universities (path coefficient = 0.31, $p < 0.01$). This finding shows that one's perception that DCM can be used anywhere and anytime fosters users' attitudes towards using it.

Regarding H8, no statistically significant evidence was found that perceived convenience positively impacts the perceived usefulness of DCM for travel planning; that is, although it is possible to resort to DCM at various times and places, this does not impact its usefulness directly. This can be explained by the fact that the participants in the sample have yet to achieve a full understanding of what DCM is and/or the multiple ways it can influence travel planning. Since this is a novel research object, it is advisable to conduct new tests, with other samples and possibly new indicators, to reach a more accurate result.

In turn, regarding H9, the positive relationship between attitude and intention to use DCM is in line with the results of previous studies, such as



Sinthamrong and Rompho (2015), when analyzing the factors affecting attitudes and purchase intentions toward branded content in the webisode format (path coefficient = 0.376, $p < 0.01$), and Dwivedi et al. (2019) when formalizing an alternative theoretical model to explain the acceptance and use of information systems (path coefficient = 0.10, $p < 0.001$). This positive correlation is of foremost importance to the present study as it addresses the key constructs of the model. Thus, when users develop attitudes towards using DCM to plan trips, this directly impacts their intention to use it.

Finally, the R^2 values of the dependent constructs of the proposed model proved adequate to explain the variance. According to Cohen et al. (2003), 26% is a high percentage of variance explained in the field of behavior studies. It is worth mentioning that four of the constructs were close to and/or above 90%, especially attitude (90%) and intention to use (89%), whereas perceived convenience reached 71%.

Therefore, it can be inferred that the model proposed in this research considerably represents the factors that influence the attitude and intention of users to use DCM materials to plan trips to tourist destinations. The results of the empirical test could be compared with other representative studies in the literature, and the model's goodness of fit indices, as well as the percentages of variance, proved satisfactory.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that digital content marketing has received considerable attention from several brands, as a technique to replace or complement traditional advertising. For its part, the academic literature, in recent years, has perceived this topic as an important field of research.

Online content has become the primary source for planning a trip, whether for agents designing an itinerary for their clients, or travelers planning their own. Thus, combining content with a marketing strategy can benefit



companies and destinations, as they can act as reliable sources of travel content and trigger positive consumer sentiment.

Studies involving DCM and tourism are still scarce in the leading research platforms, and due to the growing use of this technique in the tourism market, whether for the promotion of destinations, services, or tourism products in general, incorporating this topic into consumer behavior studies has become a relevant task.

Therefore, firstly, this paper's literature review and empirical data contribute to the growth of research on DCM in tourism. Secondly, the analysis model adopted herein (TAM) contributes to the relevance of this research, and the data function as a comparison parameter for Mathew and Soliman's (2020), and as support for research on the DCM effects on tourism consumers.

Of the nine hypotheses tested, six were confirmed and nine were rejected. This, however, does not imply essentially that the analysis model cannot be employed in research on this topic, since specific factors may have contributed to this outcome. Firstly, unlike Mathew and Soliman (2020), who used PLS software, the data collection software used in this study was AMOS 22. Moreover, since the sample of this study consisted of 102 respondents, it was necessary to decrease the variables of the constructs compared to the previous study, to obtain more accurate results.

Thus, such factors may have contributed to the disagreement between results. We suggest that future research adopt a larger sample of respondents to verify whether AMOS 22 requires a larger number of responses to confirm all the hypotheses tested, or whether such results, in fact, can only be found when using PLS software.

Therefore, it is noteworthy that this study used only one method of working with DCM, namely the textual method. Perhaps there will be different findings if DCM is used in other forms, such as videos, infographics, and podcasts, among others. Another limitation regards data collection, which was considerably aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. An in-person



survey would ensure greater confidence in the study, by certifying whether the respondents were actually reading and understanding the content presented.

Finally, we suggest that future research examines DCM in tourism as an object through the lenses of other theories, because besides being a technological tool, this technique corresponds to a promotional strategy. Therefore, the theories of communication, psychology, and other sciences can assist in the perception of the impact of this tool on the behavior of tourism consumers.

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Table 6 presents the names of the authors and their contributions to this article.

Table 6.
Authors'

Contributions

Author	Contribution
Jackson de Souza	Defined the research problem and objectives, collected, and analyzed data, and wrote the manuscript.
Luiz Mendes Filho	Defined the research objectives, analyzed the data, and wrote the manuscript.
Sérgio Marques Júnior	Data analysis.

