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The role of social media influencers with regard to enhancing revisit intention among spiritual tourists

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Abstract

The development of social media influencers marketing has been significantly impact on the variety of tourism, including spiritual tourism. This study aims to investigate the role of social media influencers in shaping the behavior and preferences of tourists in the context of spiritual tourism. Employing SMIs concept and source credibility theory, the research explores the antecedents of spiritual tourism, focusing on the interplay between social media marketing and tourism dynamics. Specifically, it examines how source credibility and content quality that are key characteristics of social media influencers, affect tourists' revisit intentions. Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected from a sample of 300 respondents who actively engage with social media content related to spiritual destinations. The findings reveal that both source credibility and content quality significantly influence tourists' cognitive and affective evaluations of spiritual destinations. The study provides valuable insights for destination marketers and tourism stakeholders, highlighting the importance of leveraging influencer partnerships to promote spiritual tourism effectively in a competitive digital landscape. This research contributes to the growing literature on social media marketing and tourism by addressing a unique and underexplored niche.

Keywords: revisit intention, social media influencer, source credibility, spiritual tourism

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1. Introduction

Spiritual tourism is a niche form of travel where individuals seek transformative experiences that connect them to a higher purpose, inner peace, or spiritual growth (Roof, 2001). This type of tourism often involves visiting sacred sites, participating in rituals, or engaging in practices like meditation, yoga, and mindfulness (Smith & Diekmann 2017). Destinations range from ancient temples and pilgrimage routes to wellness retreats and nature sanctuaries. Heintzman (2008) stated that spiritual tourism caters to the growing demand for meaningful and reflective travel, offering opportunities for personal renewal and cultural exploration. It plays a vital role in preserving heritage and fostering a deeper understanding of diverse spiritual and cultural traditions.

In light of the considerable transformations in the search for transcendence in human life, travel has become an important activity in the emerging spiritual market (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). Paul Brunton is acknowledged as a pivotal contributor to the Western understanding of Eastern spiritual practices. Through his travels, he closely studies the teachings of various gurus, mystics, and spiritual guides to shed light on their wisdom. Brunton's spiritual journey, first published in 1934, not only predicted the emergence of spirituality as a driving force for tourism but also greatly motivated and supported readers in expanding their spiritual views while traveling. Roof (2001) refers reflexive spirituality as which can be seen as a cultural trend or modern outlook on spirituality that promotes the use of reason in exploring different spiritual traditions. This thoughtful and evaluative approach to spiritual paths is seen as a key aspect of today's spiritual movement, with spiritual tourism being just one of its many forms (Besecke, 2014).

Social media influencers strive to impact various aspects of their audience's lives. Examples of this include endorsing particular brands or services, using their influence to change habits, perceptions, and behaviors related to diet, lifestyle choices, and even communication styles and vocabulary adopted by their followers (Ryan, 2014; Solomon, 2020). Recent studies increasingly show that digital influencers are crucial for young people, largely because teens spend a lot of time online, making them more receptive to the wide array of content shared by influencers. Additionally, teenagers are forming stronger bonds with social media influencers (SMIs), looking for not just entertainment, but also useful information, advice, connection, and comfort. As a result, there is a constant and evolving relationship between teens and SMIs, which is reinforced every day and integrated into the core activities of adolescents' lives. Earlier studies illustrate that entertainment plays a crucial role in attracting individuals to social media platforms. For instance, Shao (2009) suggests that the desire for entertainment is a powerful driving force behind how people engage with content on social media. Additionally, Park, Kee, and Valenzuela (2009) view entertainment as a key reason that draws people to regularly visit social media sites. In conclusion, Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) identify enjoyment, relaxation, and leisure as the main factors that enhance the engagement with brand content among users of social media.

Previous research lied in the use of just twelve primary sources to develop the key coding categories (Abdul Halim, Tatoglu, & Mohamad Hanefar, 2021). This study may include additional sources that cover a broader range of spiritual tourism topics. Moreover, there may be certain contexts where some of the established dimensions are not suitable. Nevertheless, this research aims to provide valuable insights to both the tourism and spirituality sectors, positively affecting everyone involved, whether directly or indirectly. While it's clear that social media influencers (SMIs) have greatly influenced the lives of young individuals, assessing the extent of this effect is challenging, and possibly even impossible, which complicates our understanding of its overall impact on society (Charles, Isobel, & Aiden, 2021). This research aims to shed light on the role of spiritual tourism within the marketing sector by examining how social media influencers shape the experiences of travelers, especially the younger demographic. It also explores how destination brands engage these influencers

to market their offerings and content (Webster & Watson, 2002). To build a foundation for expanding knowledge, presenting varying perspectives, and summarizing key findings, this study employs a literature review as a methodological approach to find out the list of antecedents of spiritual tourism in SMIs. To handle these research gaps, this study would conduct an empirical research to answer these questions:

- How do social media influencers impact the tourists' perceptions and behaviors on spiritual tourism destinations?
- How do source credibility and content quality of social media influencers' impact tourist revisit intentions in the context of spiritual tourism?
- What are the key antecedents of spiritual tourism behavior in the context of social media marketing?

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical background

Spiritual tourism - Several studies have highlighted the role of spirituality in managing downtime (Gosselink & Myllykangas 2007; Heintzman 2008). Research indicates that one's spiritual outlook influences their ability to navigate difficulties both during and after recreational or travel experiences. Certain elements appear linked to the capacity for spiritual coping: transformative spiritual experiences, overall spiritual health, healing, personal psychological growth, significant encounters, and self-reflection aimed at spiritual cleansing (Cheer, Belhassen, & Kujawa, 2017; Heintzman, 2013; Del Castillo & Alino, 2020; Morgan 2010; Smith & Diekmann 2017). These findings indicate that spiritual coping can occur both in the midst of and following leisure or travel events. Further affirmation of the ability to cope during leisure is provided by Heintzman's (2002) findings. Heintzman claims that both deliberate and accidental leisure and travel occurrences can offer chances for "grounding" or 'processing' challenges that enhance one's spirituality.

The difference between secular and religious influences is important, as highlighted by the emerging topics in the articles of this Special Issue and previously noted by Norman (2011). To begin with secular motivations, we find that underlying various specific factors are self-serving motives, with the most typical reasons being wellness, adventure, and leisure. Often, there's also an aim for some kind of spiritual gain, such as finding inner peace or experiencing a different state of consciousness. Furthermore, the commercialization of spiritual travel experiences whether as a vacation package or as expenses for specific services (like lodging and food) affects these chances. Secular incentives for spiritual tourism, which focus on the individual, are inherently about consumption and contribute favorable outcomes for the traveler.

In contrast, the key motivators associated with religious tourism stem from practices of religious observance, rituals, reinforcement of identity, and cultural expressions, mainly drawing on connections to faith (Cheer, Belhassen, & Kujawa, 2017). In this context, the reasons for engaging in spiritual tourism relate to honoring and feeling a bond with a higher power or deity, with the benefits of religious activities stemming from structured and genuine participation that brings advantages beyond the individual. The primary emphasis is on the formal or religious structures that guide travel for these purposes. This conceptual approach seeks to establish broad conclusions while recognizing that there will be some practical exceptions that either do not fit or just marginally fit within the outlined categories. It is believed that these structures are adaptive and will evolve in response to emerging trends in the field.

Social media influencers - As noted by (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011) p. 90, social media influencers are described as "a new category of independent third-party endorsers who influence audience perspectives through blogs, tweets, and other social platforms." Recognized as leaders in thought, they can effectively disseminate the information they both obtain and share (Jalilvand, 2017; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). Studies from areas outside of tourism, such as culture (Magno, 2017) and fashion (Halvorsen, Hoffmann,

Coste-Manière, & Stankeviciute, 2013), have highlighted the rising significance of digital influencers and their ability to influence the beliefs and decisions of their audiences. This research note aims to enhance awareness of this issue within the travel sector. Nevertheless, tourism research has largely overlooked how followers are influenced by content produced by the specific category of users known as social media or digital influencers (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Zhang, Moe, & Schweidel, 2017; Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Magno and Cassia (2018) assert that in this context, travel bloggers as social media influencers impact the travel intentions of their audience.

2.2 Conceptual framework and hypothesis development

Spiritual tourism antecedents - Spiritual tourism involves a journey of discovery and self-exploration, providing an opportunity for calming reflection. As stated by Smith and Diekmann (2017), it has transformed into a means of achieving balance and unity among the mind, body, and spirit. Individuals may embark on a spiritual journey for numerous reasons, and the spiritual experience or sense of connection may manifest before, during, or after the journey or visit. Meanwhile, Heintzman (2002) proposed a conceptual model suggesting that leisure activities can lead to spiritual development. This approach helps individuals enhance their spiritual awareness and tackle spiritual obstacles. The framework allows travelers to recognize both their inner selves and the outside world, highlighting the strong correlation between leisure (external) and spiritual wellness (internal). Developing a theoretical structure for spiritual tourism follows academic standards by integrating complex, diverse, and evolving concepts to build essential insights that facilitate scholarly dialogue and future research (Cheer, Belhassen, & Kujawa, 2017). This study acknowledges the developing split between viewing spiritual tourism primarily through a social media lens and interpreting it as a SMIs marketing activity. From a conceptual view, this illustrates the progression of theories and guides the formulation of a framework for further exploration of spiritual tourism.

Infrastructure - Heintzman (2002) also noted that various factors of leisure, including activity type, motivation, surroundings, and timing, can differently affect spiritual wellness. Additionally, the specific type of leisure activity pursued can influence spiritual health. Mannell (2007) likewise argued that engaging in leisure activities positively affects one's spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. In a related study, Cutler and Carmichael (2010) explored one of the most important dimensions of spiritual tourism perspectives of infrastructure. These are based on tourists' experiences before, during, and after a particular journey or tour, with external factors encompassing physical and social elements as well as products and services.

Spiritual transformation - This part will explore the different facets of spirituality related to travel, such as self-discovery, spiritual change, rejuvenating surroundings, reasons for travel, individual development, health, and recovery, among many other factors. For instance, Heintzman (2013) along with Ponder and Holladay (2013) discovered that participating in travel experiences offers meaningful spiritual benefits and results, such as a sense of happiness (eudaimonia), personal spiritual growth (an improved self), transcendence (a bond with a higher power), and plenty of additional advantages.

Natural Environment - As noted by Johnson (2000), feeling a sense of re-engagement or connection with the environment can be seen as a spiritual experience. He identifies four key areas personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental in which building harmonious relationships is vital for achieving spiritual wellness. This highlights that engaging with a higher power or the natural world can bring about spiritual satisfaction. Similar research by Steiner and Reisinger (2006) showed that tourism encourages a close bond between the earth, sky, humanity, and the divine (integrity and authenticity). Ultimately, reaching transcendental aspirations can be possible through our ability to connect with various entities and beings. This growth will lead to improved job prospects, enhanced travel experiences for tourists, respect for local communities, environmental conservation, and numerous other benefits.

Self-awareness - A research conducted by Little and Schmidt (2006) identifies four essential aspects of spiritual tourism: powerful experiences, feelings of connection, awareness of oneself, and awareness of others. The

authors state that tourists and travelers felt a deeper bond with a higher power and gained greater insight into themselves, God, or the "other." They also suggested that tourists had significant spiritual leisure experiences, recognizing a range of emotions including awe, amazement, fear, and liberation. It is a common belief that engaging in religious practices allows for self-reflection and spiritual cleansing. Conversely, various studies have shown that non-religious activities, such as those tied to tourism, can also promote self-reflection and spiritual renewal in an indirect way (Cheer, Belhassen, & Kujawa 2017; Coghlan 2015; Cutler & Carmichael 2010; Heintzman, 2013; Little and Schmidt 2006; Morgan 2010; Ponde &Holladay 2013; Smith & Diekmann 2017). These authors explore themes of self-awareness. Based on the authors' examination, tourists and travelers felt a deeper bond with a higher power or a greater existence, along with an enhanced self-awareness, including awareness of God or the "other."

Sense of connections - Additionally, they asserted that those on journeys and adventures enjoyed enriching spiritual leisure moments and experienced a range of emotions like amazement, curiosity, anxiety, and liberation. This research indicated that spiritual experiences can emerge from leisure travel, even though they may not be actively pursued or anticipated by society. Walsh (1999) noted that there exists a "sense of meaning, inner wholeness, harmony and connection with others, a unity with all nature and the universe." Likewise, Jarrat and Sharpley (2017) observed that travel experiences, particularly coastal ones, have the potential to provide emotional and spiritual significance. The findings highlight various themes, including connection, awe, timelessness, and emptiness, which imply a spiritual aspect to experiences by the sea. Fisher, Francis, and Johnson (2000) suggested that feelings of reconnection or connection to the surrounding environment can also be viewed as spiritual, supporting the conclusions of Jarrat and Sharpley.

Positive emotion - Coghlan (2015) examined the ways in which travel experiences encourage uplifting feelings, involvement, and significance, which in turn enhance the well-being of individuals, reinforcing these results. Collectively, these studies clearly indicate that tourism has been recognized for quite some time for its ability to promote recovery, pleasure, and overall well-being effects, significantly contributing to personal spirituality and inner psychological growth (Morgan, 2010).

2.3 SMIs attributions

Source credibility - To enhance their purchasing choices, buyers in the digital era are increasingly looking online for details about products and services (Alalwan, 2018; Dwivedi, Kapoor, & Chen, 2015; Lee, Park, & Han, 2008; Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana, & Islam, 2017; Shiau, Dwivedi, & Lai, 2018). During their internet searches for product and service information, consumers often come across a multitude of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) messages. To help navigate these eWOM messages, individuals can evaluate the credibility of the source (Dou, Walden, Lee, & Lee 2012; Metzger, Flanagin, & Medders, 2010). Earlier studies in this area have mostly focused on how the credibility of a source impacts the individual receiving the information (Luo, Wu, Shi, & Xu, 2015). The effectiveness and persuasive nature of eWOM messages can be affected by the traits of the information source. When the information is trustworthy, the recipient tends to regard the source as reliable (Chaiken, 1980). Thus, the hypotheses are suggested:

H1a: Infrastructure has positive impact on source credibility of SMIs

H2a: Natural environment has positive impact on source credibility of SMIs

H3a: Spiritual transformation has positive impact on source credibility of SMIs

H4a: Self-awareness has positive impact on source credibility of SMIs

H5a: Sense of connections has positive impact on source credibility of SMIs

H6a: Positive emotion has positive impact on source credibility of SMIs

Content quality - As noted by Carlson, Rahman, Voola, and De Vries (2018), the quality of content refers to the extent to which consumers perceive the information regarding a brand on its social media platforms as trustworthy, thorough, pertinent, and up-to-date. Prior research indicates that consumers tend to be more interested in and attracted to brands when they encounter innovative and visually appealing content (Berger & Milkman, 2012). Moreover, scholars have proposed that content quality serves as an environmental signal that significantly impacts the actions of online shoppers (O'cass & Carlson, 2012; Nambisan & Baron, 2009). This was illustrated by Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, and Okumus (2015), who explored the travel industry and found that the quality of content shared by companies on social media affects individuals' awareness of the brand over time, helping them recognize and recall the brand. Thus, the hypotheses are suggested:

H1b: Infrastructure has positive impact on content quality of SMIs

H2b: Natural environment has positive impact on content quality of SMIs

H3b: Spiritual transformation has positive impact on content quality of SMIs

H4b: Self-awareness has positive impact on content quality of SMIs

H5b: Sense of connections has positive impact on content quality of SMIs

H6b: Positive emotion has positive impact on content quality of SMIs

2.4 Revisit intention

Nekmat and Gower (2012) and Zhang, Zhao, Cheung, and Lee (2014) explore the relationships between the expertise of the source and the effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (González-Rodríguez, Martínez-Torres, & Toral, 2016; Jamil & Hadnu, 2013; Lee, Law, & Murphy, 2011), the likelihood of making a purchase (Park and Kim, 2008; Saleem & Ellahi, 2017; Zainal et al., 2017), the acceptance of information (Wang, Wei, & Teo, 2007), and the credibility of the source (Fang, 2014). The effectiveness of online reviews is heavily influenced by how trustworthy the source is perceived to be (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009). Lis (2013) uses theories related to plan behavior and reasoned action, which suggest that a positive emotion can lead to intentions, to argue that trust can be viewed as the readiness or intention to depend on someone else. This implies that having confidence in the source may lead to a greater intention to purchase (Saleem & Ellahi, 2017). Purchase intention refers to a customer's likelihood of buying a specific product or brand as well as their interest level in that item. As stated by Lloyd and Luk (2010), it is closely associated with a person's attitude and preferences regarding a certain product or brand. The intention to buy is considered an essential indicator that predicts actual purchasing behavior (de Magistris & Gracia, 2008) since it reflects the cognitive factors that guide how a consumer is likely to buy a specific brand (Huang & Su, 2011). Based on the analysis, we propose the following hypotheses:

H7: Source credibility has positive impact on revisit intention

H8: Content quality has positive impact on revisit intention

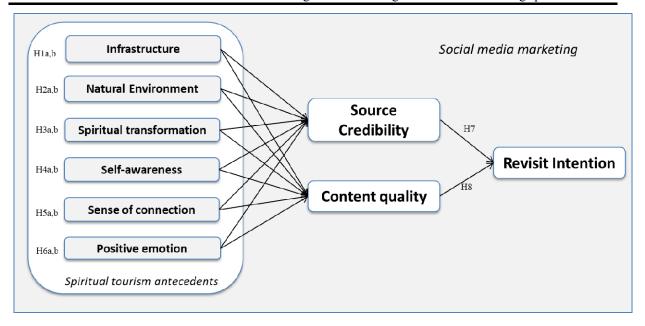


Figure 1. Proposed research model (Source: the authors)

3. Methodology

Sampling method - The study focuses on exploring the revisit intentions of tourists to spiritual destinations in Ho Chi Minh City. The target population comprises residents and visitors in Ho Chi Minh City who have experience visiting or showing interest in spiritual destinations, such as temples, pagodas, and other culturally significant religious sites. An inconvenience sampling method was employed due to the challenges of accessing a structured sampling frame for this specific group. This non-probability sampling approach allowed the researchers to collect data efficiently by targeting individuals available and willing to participate at the time of the survey. Despite its limitations in generalizability, this method was suitable given the context and resource constraints of the study.

Measurement scale - The measurement scales utilized in the research were primarily based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scale was chosen to measure respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward spiritual destinations in a structured and easily interpretable manner. Key constructs measured include cognitive image, affective image, overall destination image, satisfaction, revisit intention, and religiosity. Items for each construct were adapted from validated scales in prior research to ensure content validity while being contextually tailored to spiritual tourism in Ho Chi Minh City. For example, items measuring cognitive image included aspects such as the natural environment, infrastructure, and spiritual ambiance, reflecting the unique characteristics of these destinations. The study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the data. This technique was chosen for its robustness in handling complex models with multiple latent variables and its ability to accommodate smaller sample sizes. PLS-SEM is particularly effective in exploratory research where the goal is to maximize the explained variance of the dependent constructs and assess the predictive relevance of the model. Before analysis, the dataset was screened to ensure data quality, with missing values, outliers, and reliability issues addressed. Constructs were tested for reliability and validity, including internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted - AVE), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

4. Data analysis and results

Measurement model evaluation - Initially, the study utilized the outer loadings to test the internal reliability

of measurement items. Table 1 indicates that all the outer loadings are higher than 0.708 (Hair, Anderson, Black, & Babin, 2016) that means satisfying the threshold of internal reliability with the range of [0.740, 0.950]. Thus all the items would be kept for further analyses. Next, this study moves to evaluate the reliability and validity of measurement scale.

 Table 1

 Loading, reliability and convergent validity testing

		<u> </u>	Composite	Average Variance	Extracted
Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability	(AVE)	
CONQUA1	0.777				
CONQUA2	0.906				
CONQUA3	0.809				
CONQUA4	0.853	0.859	0.904	0.702	
INFRA1	0.854				
INFRA2	0.866				
INFRA3	0.938	0.869	0.917	0.787	
NATUR1	0.891				
NATUR2	0.905				
NATUR3	0.891	0.876	0.924	0.802	
POSEM1	0.812				
POSEM2	0.740				
POSEM3	0.792				
POSEM4	0.809	0.803	0.868	0.622	
REVIS1	0.822				
REVIS2	0.821				
REVIS3	0.923				
REVIS4	0.891	0.887	0.922	0.749	
SECON1	0.874				
SECON2	0.924				
SECON3	0.919				
SECON4	0.950	0.938	0.955	0.841	
SELF1	0.802				
SELF2	0.791				
SELF3	0.860				
SELF4	0.884	0.855	0.902	0.698	
SOUCRE1	0.818				
SOUCRE2	0.781				
SOUCRE4	0.780				
SOUCRE5	0.808	0.808	0.874	0.635	
SPIRI1	0.788				
SPIRI2	0.873				
SPIRI3	0.942	0.862	0.903	0.757	

To measure the reliability, this study employs Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) indexes (Table 1). First, the Cronbach's Alpha of all constructs range from 0.803 to 0.938 which exceed the standard of 0.7 (Chin, 1998). Second, the CR values of all constructs also are higher than 0.7 with the range of [0.868, 0.955]. From the results of Cronbach's alpha and CR, this study proved that the measurement scale guarantees the reliability. According to the validity test, this study clarifies into convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016). To test convergent validity, Average variance extracted (AVE) index is consumed to compare with the threshold of 0.5 (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013). Table 1 illustrates that all construct's AVE are greater than 0.5, hence the convergent validity is assured.

Next, this study examines the discriminant validity of measurement scale by Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker criterion tends to compares the square root of the variance extracted AVE with the correlation coefficient of two latent variables (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). To prove the validity, the square root of the AVE of a factor must be greater than the largest correlation coefficient between that factor and the other factors. Table 2 shows the entire square root of the AVE of a factor in bold number which higher than all correlation coefficient between that factor and the other factors.

Table 2

Fornell-Larcker criterion.									
	CONQUA	INFRA	NATUR	POSEM	REVIS	SECON	SELF	SOURCRE	SPIRI
CONQUA	0.838								
INFRA	0.194	0.887							
NATUR	0.251	0.302	0.895						
POSEM	0.113	-0.079	0.019	0.789					
REVIS	0.406	0.025	0.236	0.274	0.865				
SECON	-0.015	-0.048	-0.017	0.066	0.005	0.917			
SELF	0.155	0.02	0.358	-0.046	0.354	-0.127	0.835		
SOURCRE	0.342	0.127	0.236	0.357	0.552	0.047	0.262	0.797	
SPIRI	0.118	0.062	0.315	-0.153	0.13	0.022	0.347	0.272	0.87

Table 3

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

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	CONQUA	INFRA	NATUR	POSEM	REVIS	SECON	SELF	SOURCRE	SPIRI
CONQUA									
INFRA	0.211								
NATUR	0.274	0.346							
POSEM	0.137	0.141	0.102						
REVIS	0.461	0.044	0.266	0.317					
SECON	0.055	0.067	0.026	0.071	0.047				
SELF	0.173	0.108	0.405	0.168	0.403	0.139			
SOURCRE	0.407	0.14	0.279	0.425	0.65	0.05	0.312		
SPIRI	0.121	0.082	0.304	0.233	0.113	0.057	0.379	0.277	

To enhance the discriminant validity, HTMT ratio is employed. Table 3 indicates that HTMT coefficient between the indicators of both latent variables are lower than 0.85 (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2013). Thus all pairs of variables of measurement model are guaranteed the discriminant validity. From the analysis, the discriminant and convergent validity of measurement scales are assured to transfer the structural model evaluation.

Structural model evaluation - Before hypotheses testing, this study diagnoses the collinearity phenomenon that might occur in the internal relationship among independent variables. Inner VIF values for each pair of variables were employed to test the collinearity. Following that, all VIF values also are lower than 2.0 that satisfy the threshold of there no occurrence of collinearity in this model.

Table 4
Inner VIF

	CONQUA	INFRA	NATUR	POSEM	REVIS	SECON	SELF	SOURCRE	SPIRI
CONQUA					1.132				_
INFRA	1.125							1.125	
NATUR	1.347							1.347	
POSEM	1.044							1.044	
REVIS									
SECON	1.030							1.030	
SELF	1.272							1.272	
SOURCRE					1.132				
SPIRI	1.232							1.232	

By bootstrapping method, hypotheses are tested based on P-values, 97.5% confident interval bias corrected, and original sample (Table 5). Results indicated that the paths of NATUR -> SOURCRE, SECON -> CONQUA, SECON -> SOURCRE, SELF -> CONQUA, and SPIRI -> CONQUA are not supported because of p-values higher than 0.05 with 0.341, 0.953, 0.391, 0.136, and 0.472, respectively. By contrast, the rest of nine paths (CONQUA -> REVIS, INFRA -> CONQUA, INFRA -> SOURCRE, NATUR -> CONQUA, POSEM -> CONQUA, POSEM -> SOURCRE, SELF -> SOURCRE, SOURCRE -> REVIS, and SPIRI -> SOURCRE) are significant with the all P-values lower than 0.05. Moreover, there is no zero number that falls in the 97.5% confident interval bias corrected (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks, & Ray, 2021).

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Table 5 *Hypotheses testing results*

						CIBC		
Hypotheses	0	m	d	t	p	2.50%	97.50%	Mark up
H8:CONQUA -> REVIS	0.246	0.247	0.052	4.747	0.000	0.140	0.345	Significant
INFRA -> CONQUA	0.152	0.151	0.057	2.673	0.008	0.037	0.259	Significant
INFRA -> SOURCRE	0.129	0.13	0.05	2.591	0.010	0.028	0.223	Significant
NATUR -> CONQUA	0.157	0.156	0.071	2.196	0.028	0.015	0.295	Significant
NATUR -> SOURCRE	0.047	0.046	0.049	0.952	0.341	-0.046	0.146	Not Significant
POSEM -> CONQUA	0.135	0.136	0.064	2.117	0.034	0.003	0.251	Significant
POSEM -> SOURCRE	0.41	0.411	0.044	9.389	0.000	0.318	0.489	Significant
SECON -> CONQUA	-0.004	-0.001	0.075	0.058	0.953	-0.132	0.145	Not Significant
SECON -> SOURCRE	0.045	0.046	0.052	0.857	0.391	-0.065	0.136	Not Significant
SELF -> CONQUA	0.084	0.087	0.06	1.394	0.163	-0.045	0.196	Not Significant
SELF -> SOURCRE	0.182	0.184	0.058	3.112	0.002	0.058	0.286	Significant
SOURCRE -> REVIS	0.468	0.469	0.043	10.776	0.000	0.377	0.548	Significant
SPIRI -> CONQUA	0.051	0.054	0.071	0.719	0.472	-0.13	0.167	Not Significant
SPIRI -> SOURCRE	0.248	0.249	0.058	4.26	0.000	0.141	0.351	Significant

Note: o: original sample; m: sample mean; d: standard deviation (STDEV); t: t-statistics (|O/STDEV|); p: p-values; CIBC: 97.5% confident interval bias corrected.

Lastly, to test the quality of structural model, R-square, Q-square, and f-square are employed to show the explanation, prediction, and impact power, respectively (Hair et al., 2016; Henseler et al., 2016). Following that, all six factors of INFRA, NATUR, POSEM, SECON, SELF, and SPIRI can explain 10.3% the variation of CONQUA (Table 6). Likewise, INFRA, NATUR, POSEM, SECON, SELF, and SPIRI can explain 29.1% the variation of SOURCRE. REVIS is explained by CONQUA and SOURCRE of 35.9%. According to out-of-sample predictive power, results show the model has predictive correctness with all Q² values higher than zero; however those powers are quite fragile. According to impact power, INFRA has the strongest impact on CONQUA following by NATUR and POSEM. Similarly, POSEM has the highest impact on SOURCRE following by SPIRI, SELF, and INFRA.

Table 6 *The quality of structural model*

Endogenous constructs	Q ²	\mathbb{R}^2	Exogenous constructs	f^2
CONQUA	0.063	0.103	INFRA	0.023
			NATUR	0.02
			POSEM	0.019
			SECON	0.00
			SELF	0.006
			SPIRI	0.002
SOURCRE	0.174	0.291	INFRA	0.021
			NATUR	0.002
			POSEM	0.227
			SECON	0.003
			SELF	0.037
			SPIRI	0.071
REVIS	0.261	0.359	CONQUA	0.083
			SOURCRE	0.302

5. Discussion and implication

5.1 Discussion

From the results of data analysis (Figure 2), this study conclude that 5 hypotheses are rejected (H2a, H5a, H5b, H4b, H3b) and 9 hypothesis are supported (H1a-b, H2b, H3a, H4a, H6a-b, H7, H8). Thus, sense of connection does not have significance in the model of SMIs in spiritual tourism. Spiritual transformation has highest impact on source credibility, although has no impact on content quality. Infrastructure, Natural Environment, Self-awareness, and Positive emotion also have significant on SMIs attributions. Source credibility and content quality, under impacting of spiritual tourism antecedences, influence positively on revisit intention.

Therefore, spiritual tourism dimensions in SMIs can be defined as five factors: Spiritual transformation Infrastructure, Natural Environment, Self-awareness, and Positive emotion.

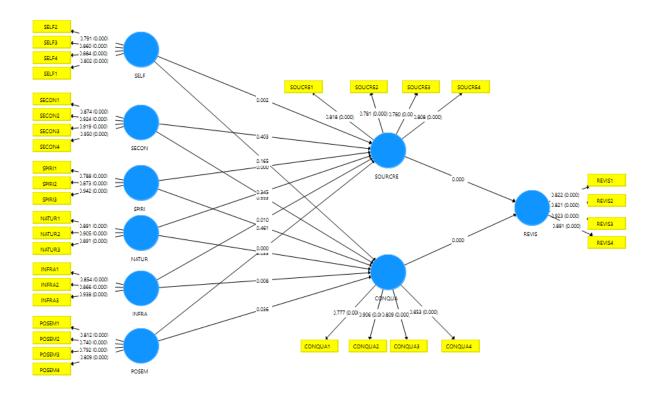


Figure 2. Bootstrapping outcome

5.2 Implications

Theoretical contributions - This study expands the application of the Source Credibility Model within the domain of spiritual tourism. It demonstrates how trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of SMIs influence revisit intentions, contributing to the growing literature on influencer marketing. The research provides insights into the psychological and emotional factors driving revisit intentions among spiritual tourists. This adds depth to existing theories on consumer behavior in niche tourism markets. Second, by focusing on the underexplored context of spiritual tourism, the study bridges gaps in influencer marketing literature. It establishes a foundation for further academic inquiry into the impact of SMIs on specialized tourism sectors. The research sheds light on how young travelers engage with influencer-driven content in the spiritual tourism context. This contributes to theoretical frameworks examining generational differences in tourism marketing effectiveness. Lastly, the study proposed a framework of spiritual tourism with five dimensions for analyzing the interplay between influencer characteristics, destination branding, and consumer behavior. It encourages scholars to expand on these findings by incorporating diverse dimensions of spirituality and testing the applicability of built dimensions across various cultural contexts.

Managerial contributions - Tourism firms and marketers can gain several practical implications from this study. First, this research highlights how social media influencers (SMIs) can be effectively integrated into marketing strategies for spiritual tourism. By leveraging influencers who resonate with the target demographic, such as young travelers, destination brands can foster deeper engagement and enhance their appeal. This enables tourism operators to craft more authentic and personalized promotional campaigns, leading to increased revisit intentions. Second, this study emphasizes the importance of aligning influencers' values and online personas with the spiritual dimensions of the destination. Selecting SMIs whose content reflects themes of spirituality, tranquility,

or cultural authenticity can bolster the credibility of marketing efforts and attract travelers with a genuine interest in such experiences. Third, tourism marketers can optimize budgets by collaborating with niche influencers who have a loyal follower base rather than solely focusing on high-profile celebrities. This targeted approach enhances efficiency while ensuring impactful outreach to the intended audience.

Limitations - The study on spiritual tourism combined with SMIs has variety of both theoretical and practical contribution. Researchers and managers in the field of tourism marketing can based from this research to develop their scholar outcomes as well as outstanding business. However, there are some limitations that need to consider and resolve in the future. First, several dimensions identified in the study might not be universally applicable to all cultural or regional contexts. Spiritual tourism is inherently tied to local beliefs and practices, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across different markets. Further research should explore in a diversity of culture and regional areas to define a comprehensive framework. Second, the perception of influencers' credibility, attractiveness, and trustworthiness can vary significantly among individuals and demographics. This subjectivity poses challenges in standardizing conclusions about their impact on revisit intentions. In the future, researcher should analyze the impact of respondents' demographic on the influencers' credibility, attractiveness, and trustworthiness for higher source credibility.

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