

## A SEQUENTIAL EXPLORATORY STUDY ON VISITORS FOOD CHOICE BEHAVIOUR AND INTENTION TO REVISIT RAINFOREST WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL (RWMF)

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**Abstract:** Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) is a unique festival, which not only bring together many artists from various continents but also the indigenous musicians from the interiors of the legendary island of Borneo. This festival attracts high volume of international and local visitors in the Sarawak region of East Malaysia. One of the factors visitors looked into during or prior their visit to such festive event will be better food variety extending better food choice. Visitors neophobic attitude is well reported by researchers in relation to travel and tourism studies. Nevertheless, such results are in general, rather based on specific event like RWMF. A study was conducted with the support of Sequential Exploratory Design to analyze the visitor's food choice behavior integrating e-marketing tools or social media usage. In the first phase investigator followed qualitative research with board research questions exploring food choice categories of neophobic travelers, with a sample of 112. The research followed source, method, time and tool-based triangulation to analyze the qualitative data. The qualitative phase thus extended a thematic model leaving best of categories related to traveler's food choice behavior. Subsequently in the second phase, the study followed quantitative research methodology with a total sample of 384 travelers. The thematic model which has come out of the qualitative phase was tested empirically with the support of theory of planned behavior incorporating e-marketing tools (social media) as mediator. The research followed PLS SEM to analyze the quantitative data. Data collection and analysis of the two phases have given equal priority and the result of each, well integrated in the discussion. Practical, methodological and theoretical implications were also acknowledged in relation to the RWMF event success.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Hospitality, Food Choices, Attitude, Social Support, Self-Efficacy, Intention to Revisit, Theory of Planned Behavior, Social Media

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## **Introduction**

What make travelers participate in an international festival or an international event is determined by several contextual factors. Though aspects of consumer behavior and consumer decision-making were examined in diverse studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Al-Tarawneh, 2012; Schiffman et al., 2014), its association with music festivals and traveler's neophobic food choice attitude has seldom deliberated. A reluctance to try new food, termed as food neophobia, is varied in its influence (Pliner & Hobden, 1992), where some tourists experience it as a matter of joy while the others showing a strong aversion to them (Ritchey, Frank, Hurstic, & Tuorila, 2003).

When visitors of Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) look at a destination, they not only attracted to music alone but also the availability of safe food choices that will be interpreted as a rare familiarity during their prior visit or stay in a destination. Tourists are exposed to the vast amount of information that they have to analyze and consequently choose a destination they need (Crompton, 1992). Awareness generated through all means of marketing may have tremendous inspiration on the choice of destinations. To examine the intention to revisit attitude, a study was conducted among the travelers of Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF), in relation to neophobic attitude. To arrive at the conceptual framework, the study followed the experience of travelers with qualitative phenomenological and narrative interpretations. After thematic model development, the factors identified were integrated with theory of planned behavior to test its confirmation, generalization and prediction through quantitative approach. The findings of the study can be used for establishing the relationship between neophobic food choice attitude of RWMF visitors on intention to revisit with the mediated effect of e-marketing or social media role for better food choice information dissemination.

## **Literature review**

### ***Food as a Destination of Choice***

Similar to Murphy et al. (2000), Karim and Chi (2010) claim that the provision of food experiences is a central function of the tourism industry. Interestingly, most visitors experience the cuisine of the visited destination at some time, whether intentionally or not. Food consumption accounts for a substantial component of both domestic and international tourism expenditure (Du Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003; McKercher et al., 2008; Nield et al., 2000; Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2004). It is generally accepted that the typical visitor spends about a third of their travel expenses on food-related purchases (Chaney & Ryan, 2012). On this basis, culinary experience as investigated in this thesis is viewed from a broader perspective. Most visitors do not dine exclusively in hotels or restaurants when travelling, rather, they are eager to eat out at food precincts or hawker centers in the surrounding area. Acknowledging these facts, Pendergast (2006) emphasizes the critical role of food in stimulating visitor feelings of involvement and attachment with the destination, whether positive or negative. Food-related experiences can enhance the overall destination experience (Karim & Chi, 2010).

### ***Local Food and Malay Food***

Local food can be defined as food and beverages that is produced or grown in the local area local specialty food that has local identity (Nummedal & Hall, 2006). Malay food has been said to vary from state to state though they have similar names. Historically the traditional Malaysian culinary has been greatly influenced by the traders from neighboring countries such as India, Indonesia, the Middle east, China and others. Thus in offering visitors many different experiences, indeed the local cuisines should become apparent obvious and visible as a destinations intangible heritage; as experiencing the delectable taste allow tourist to gain an authentic cultural experience. Nevertheless, the question in this contest is whether the

international travelers visiting in Rain Forest World Festival will be aware about the food choices or will they show their willingness to experiment with the local Malaysian foods. International travelers' food-related attitudes vary, and they behave according to these variations. This study adds to tourism research by exploring the effect of food attitudes on behaviors related to neophobic food choices with specific reference to Rain Forest World Festival.

### ***Neophobic Attitude***

Neophobia is strongly associated with both physiological and emotional states. As it is defined by Pliner and Hobden (1992, p. 105), neophobia is "a reluctance toward and/ or an avoidance of novel food". "Food neophobia, means 'fear of the new,' manifests in avoidance of new foods" (Birch, 1999, p. 49). It may be conceptualized as a personality trait, a continuum along which people are located in terms of their stable propensity to approach or avoid novel foods" (Pliner. & Hobden, 1992, p. 107). People with less neophobic characteristics will show the willingness to try both familiar and unfamiliar food. While the other show the reluctance to take up (Tuorila et al. (2001). The familiarity and unfamiliarity of foods have influence on consumer's decision to visit certain locations or attend certain festive event. When we look at the Rain Forest World Festival, this attitude may have similar choices. Thus the favorable or unfavorable attitude of visitors depends on the familiarity and unfamiliarity of foods available during the festive occasion. Thus, the concept of food neophobia in this study is examined with regard to its relationship to the intention to visit Rain Forest World Festival.

### ***Social Influence***

Subjective norms, also referred to as normative beliefs, have a significant effect on purchasing intention and are related to the probability that key individuals and groups support or condemn a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Generally, subjective norms are influenced by an individual's desire to act in accordance with the expectations of friends, family or social groups (McKnight, 2007). Family and friends provide a source of modeling and peer pressure for consuming particular foods, including higher-fat foods, and for trying new foods (Schucker, 1987, Alar, 1990).

### ***Social Media and Behavioral Performance***

The media are a principal source of information about food and nutrition for many. In addition, the media have the capacity to persuade has demonstrated the powerful influence of the media in our food choices. *Social media marketing*, or is a form of *e-marketing* that involves creating and sharing content on *social media networks* in order to achieve *marketing* and awareness goals. Social media have been widely adopted by traveler's to collaboratively search, organize, share, and annotate their travel stories and experiences through blogs, microblogs (e.g., Twitter), online communities (e.g., Facebook and TripAdvisor), media sharing sites (e.g., Flickr and YouTube), social bookmarking sites (e.g., Delicious), social knowledge sharing sites (e.g., Wikitravel), and other tools. The knowledge of food choices during festive occasions and tourist places are more or less available in electronic *media* and it seems to be growing due to technology advancement. These changes have some or the other way influence the *traveler's neophobic behavior* in their search for genuine, authentic and familiar foods available. Since the personal use of social media for work, is like most behaviors, under volitional control, behavioral intention is one of the best predictors for behavioral performance (e.g., Armitage & Conner, 2001; Rise, et al., 2010). Contextualizing the discussion to Rain Forest Music Festival, the organizers are making use of several social media channels for the dissemination of information. These findings extrapolate to the context of social media, as Pelling and White (2009) found that intentions to use social networking sites predicted actual use or at least search for right food in relation to their travel decision.

### **Visitor Satisfaction**

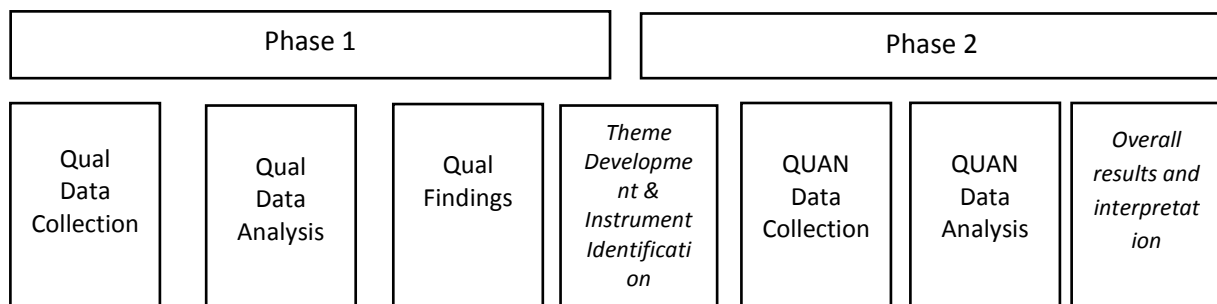
Tourism markets are becoming increasingly sophisticated, as some tourists migrate away from mass consumption and toward more authentic products and personal experiences, as they search for new meaning and self-actualization (Cooper & Hall 2008; LaSalle & Britton, 2003). Food is central to travelling and can be a vivid entryway into another culture. Experience via food leaves lasting impressions of a destination long after the visit ends (Hall & Mitchell, 2002; Hall, Sharples, & Smith, 2003; Henderson, 2009). Tourists seek a sense of comfort and safety while on their trips (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983). When it comes to experiencing food, food safety and health concerns are the motivators that most reliably predict tourists' decision making (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Kim et al., 2010). This indicates that the experience they have about the past visits, remarks about the destinations from various sources in relation to food choices have high influence on their satisfaction and decision to make a revisit, contextualizing the scenario, especially to Rain Forest World Festival.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Mix Method Research**

To explore and explain the factors correlates to neophobia and food choice of visitors visiting in the Rainforest World Festival the study followed mix method research (MMR) design. Mixed methods research indicates, *where* the researchers interact with different types of data to explore the truth related to the phenomenon under study. Mixed methods support the investigator by extending rich text data through qualitative research and quantification of those data with quantitative methods (Kumar, 2014). Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2018) clearly indicates that mixed-methods can provide an investigator with many design choices, which involve differential designs in the form of sequential and concurrent research strategies. The philosophy followed thus integrate pragmatic philosophy which allows the investigators to have an exploration and explanation of the phenomenon under study.

#### **Sequential Exploratory Study design**



**Figure 1. Graphical representation of mixed methods research processes adopted by Myers and Oetzel (2003) (Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)**

#### **Phase 1**

Phase 1 is considered as the stage where an “exploration for preliminary identification of potential variables” will be made (McNabb, 2004). This particular research started with qualitative research with an interpretive paradigm posing qualitative research questions (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991; Silverman & Seale, 2005) related to the issues identified viz., food choice attitude of neophobic travelers. With this research design the investigators tried to answer “what” and “How” factors related to food choice attitude. It is suggested by Creswell (1998)

that in order to get rich text data there should be multi - methodological and tool based triangulations which corroborate each other's result.

### **Research Question – Qualitative**

1. What are the factors closely related to the neophobic food choice attitude of travelers visiting RWMF?
2. How the neophobic food choice attitude of travelers closely related to intention to revisit the RWMF?

### **Research Objective – Qualitative Research**

1. To identify the Neophobic Food Choice attitudinal categories of travelers, visiting RWMF?
2. To understand factors associated with traveler's intention to revisit RWMF?

### **Research Method**

The first phase of this research involved a qualitative methodology with triangulated approach of data collection. With the some unstructured and structured questions, the investigator tries to explore the relevant categories, with the support of coding. In first phase the investigator expected to obtain the dependent variables and ability to select an appropriate tool to measure achievement of these variables. The triangulation (tools and methods) in this research consists of;

1. *gathering of all documents related to neophobic behavior of travelers of RWMF;*
2. *conducting 112 interviews with travelers;*
3. *conducting interviews with school Professors/lecturers of tourism*
4. *conducting interviews with tour agents and tour operators and seeking their completion of questionnaires and*
5. *following case studies, and phenomenology with narration as triangulated methods of research.*

The objective of first phase there by to identify the categories linked to the factor 'food choice attitude of neophobic travelers' of RWMF and come up with a thematic model, for examining its possible measurement through quantitative research. Research hypotheses was constructed at the conclusion of Phase 1.

## Thematic model development

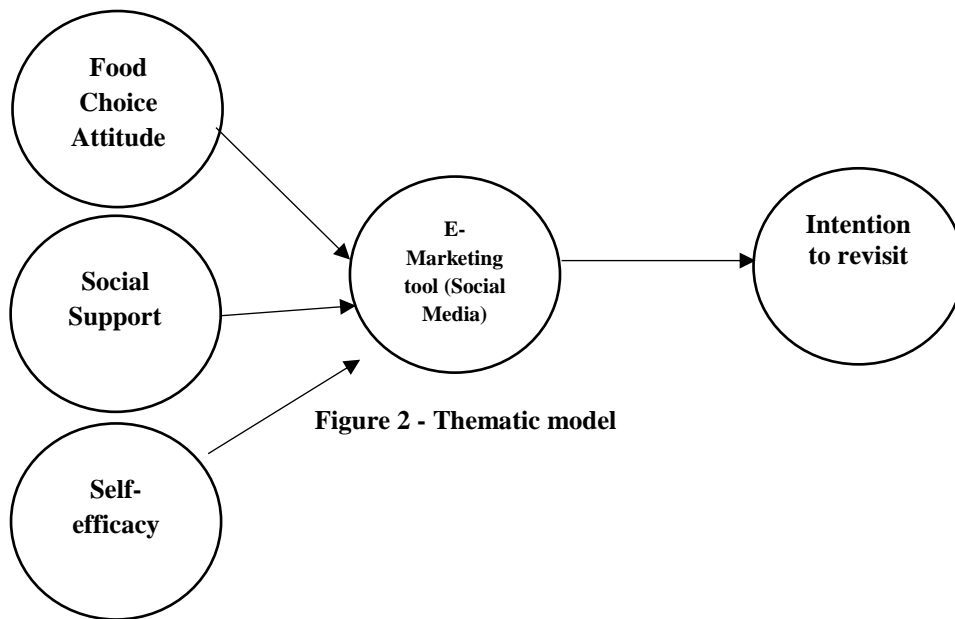


Figure 2 - Thematic model

## Phase 2

The second phase of the research was conducted with the support of quantitative methodology. A literature search identified the measurement of TPB variables as a reliable indicator of intention to revisit and integrating e-marketing tool or social media as mediator. The second stage of investigation required quantitative data collection from different respondents who are determined by the original theory and thus theoretical sampling is carried out.

## Research Questions – Quantitative

1. Does traveler's intention to revisit RWMF, is related to their neophobic food choice attitude, social support and self-efficacy?
2. Does traveler's exposure to e-marketing tool (Social media) is related to their Intention to revisit RWMF?
3. Does RWMF traveler's neophobic food choice attitude, social support and self-efficacy is related to e-marketing tools (social media)?
4. Does traveler's intention to revisit RMWF is mediated by e marketing tools (Social media), in its relation with neophobic food choice attitude, social support and self-efficacy?

## Research Hypothesis – Quantitative

- H1: There is direct and positive relationship between neophobic attitudes of travelers and intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF).
- H2: There is direct and positive relationship between social support received and traveler's intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF).
- H3: There is direct and positive relationship between self-efficacy and traveler's intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF).
- H4: There is direct and positive relationship between exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) and travelers' intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF).
- H5: There is direct and positive relationship between neophobic attitude of travelers and exposure to e marketing tools (Social media).
- H6: There is direct and positive relationship between social support received by the travelers and exposure to e-marketing tools (Social media).

- H7: There is direct and positive relationship between self-efficacy of travelers and e-marketing tools (Social media).
- H8: Exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) are positively mediates the relationship between attitude of travelers and their intention revisit RWMF.
- H9: Exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) are positively mediates the relationship between social support received and their intention revisit RWMF among of travelers.
- H10: Exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) are positively mediates the relationship between self-efficacy of travelers and their intention revisit RWMF.

## **Methodology**

### **Population – Qualitative and Quantitative**

This particular study is aimed at investigating the attitude, social support and self-efficacy on intention to revisit on traveler's intention to visit Rainforest World Music festival. The population of this study consisted of the travelers of RWMF during a period of two years (2016 and 2017). The study ensured representation from different age groups, different country of origin, and gender to arrive at a controlled target population.

### **Sampling - Qualitative and Quantitative**

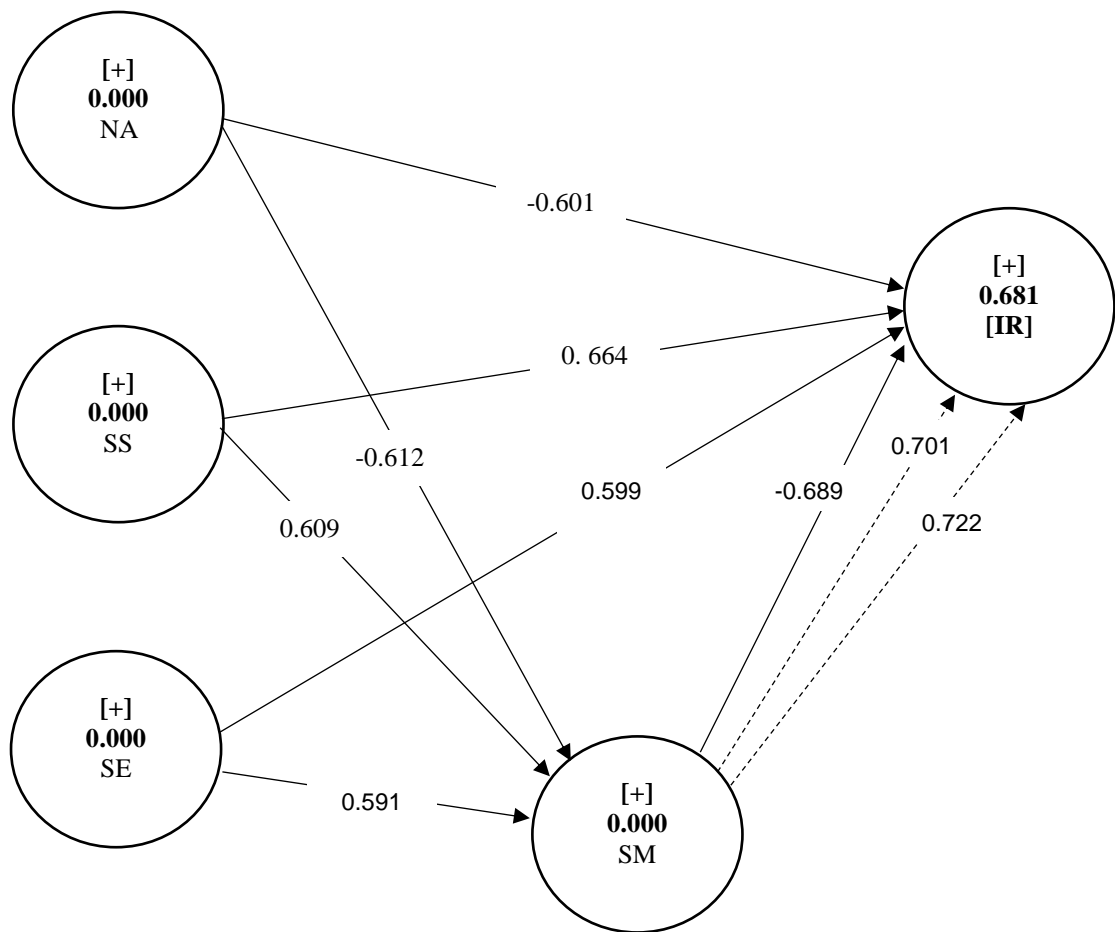
While, the sampling concerns the determination of the study's population, sample frame, and sample size. In the first phase investigator followed qualitative research with board research questions exploring food choice categories of neophobic travelers, with a sample of 112. The study followed convenient sampling. Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling) is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members, based on the situation, ensuring the researchers privacy as well as investigators requirement to get authentic data. In the second phase, since the researcher placed great emphasis on the participants' commitment and suitability for the research topic, purposive sampling is used according to the characteristics utilized for selection in this study.

The purpose of the study and consideration of the population knowledge are the important criteria in selecting the research participants for a purposive sampling (Crossman & Noma, 2013). The first phase consisted of 112 travelers of 2016. Out of these 112 travelers approached in 2016, only 87 people had shown their willingness to participate in the quantitative phase of this research, through email and telephone. These 87 people qualitative research phase retained in the sample, and integrated with the second phase for quantitative analysis. An appropriate sample size for the research is between 100-500, for a non-probability sampling method (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006; Sekaran, 2003). Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table a population below 100,000 needs to have a sample size of 384. In the second phase of 2017 research, with structured questionnaire, researchers approached 481 travelers, during their stay in hotels, in the event, and their passage in airports of Kuching and Kuala Lumpur. Eliminating all the standard errors the study finally considered 297 travelers of RMWF in 2017 - during their stay in hotels, during the event, during their passage in airport in Kuching and Kuala Lumpur.

**Table no 1. Tools selected for the study**

No.	Factors	Items	Scale	Reliability	Authors
1	Attitude (Neophobic Food choice)	3-items,	7 point scale	.77	Pliner and Bobden 91992)
2	Social Support	4-items,	7 point scale	.79	Bearden et al. (1989, 1990).
3	Self-efficacy	4-items,	7 point scale	.94	Taylor and Todd (1995a).
4	Social media	4-items,	7 point scale	.78	Kinard's (2016)
5	Intention to revisit	4-items,	7 point scale	0.95	Oliver (1997); Kozak & Rimmington (2000)

**Analysis and Results**



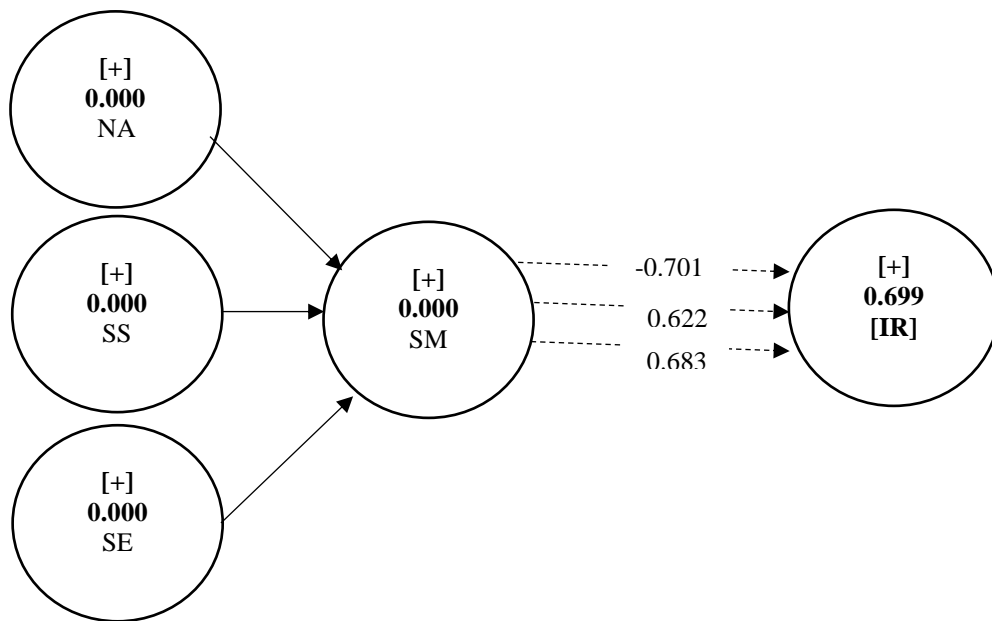
**Figure 3. Structural model – Full effect**

It is clear from the above figure that the direct path coefficients are very strong in the direct relation to model 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 based on the hypothesis (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7) of the study. Most of the path coefficients were significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The result indicates that there is direct and positive relationship between attitude, social influence, self-efficacy and e-marketing tools (social media) on traveler’s intention to visit Rainforest World Music festival. The direct relationship showed that the predictor has significant and positive impact on



predicting variable ( $p < 0.01$ ) shown in figure 2. In addition, the overall validity of this structural model is evident as Q-Square values (0.589, 0.566, 0.531, 0.603, 0.599, 0.525 & 0.498) are well above zero, providing the support that the attitude, social support, self-efficacy, and social media, are well related to the traveler's intention to attend RMWF. In other words, R2 showed that attitude, social support, self-efficacy, and social media, explains traveler's intention to visit Rainforest World Music festival at 69.1%, 59.9%, 68.0%, 63.4%, 68.22%, 60.1%, and 58.29% (0.691, 0.599, 0.680, 0.634%, 0.682, 0.601, 0.582) having stronger statistical power in parameter estimation (Hair et al., 2013). To sum it up, the entire hypotheses are empirically supported.

### Mediation Effect



**Figure 4. Structural model - Indirect effect**

After including the mediating construct of e-marketing tools (Social Media) between the attitude, social influence and self-efficacy and traveler's intention to visit Rainforest World Music festival (Model 7, 8, 9), it was found that of e-marketing tools (Social Media) factor have a positive and significant impact on intention to revisit among RMWF travelers. Subsequently, after introducing mediator, the relationship between attitude, social support and self-efficacy on intention to revisit RMWF was vividly increased and remained with significant path coefficient of 0.701, 0.622, and 0.683,  $p < 0.01$ ), which is significantly higher when e-marketing tools (Social Media) was asserted in the relationship.

Essential criterion for assessing the structural model in PLS-SEM is the R-squared value, which is also known as the coefficient of determination (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2012; Henseler & Fassott, 2010). The R squared value represents the proportion of variation in the dependent variable(s) that can be explained by one or more predictor variable (Elliott & Woodward, 2007; Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2006). Although the acceptable level of R2 value (0.699) turned to be high in comparison between the direct relationship, revealing the role of e-marketing tools (Social Media) as the mediator in between attitude, social influence and self-efficacy with traveler's intention to visit Rainforest World Music festival. Chin (1998) suggests that the R squared values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 in PLS-SEM can be considered as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The table 1 clearly indicates the predictive relevance of the model

generated in this research. This particular study has posed 10 hypotheses involving the direct and indirect analysis. The direct analysis was related to 7 hypotheses, based on 3 research questions and the indirect analysis was based on 1 research question lead to 3 hypotheses. The composite model which has come out of the overall analysis indicates that the direct and indirect hypothesis considered for the study is well accepted. Further social media or the e marketing tools have strong mediation effect in determining traveler’s intention to revisit as well as food choice behavior.

**Table 1. Summary of the analysis**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Decision</b>
H1: There is direct and positive relationship between neophobic attitudes of travelers and intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF)	Supported
H2: There is direct and positive relationship between social support received and traveler’s intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF).	Supported
H3: There is direct and positive relationship between self-efficacy and traveler’s intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF)	Supported
H4: There is direct and positive relationship between exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) and travelers’ intention to revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF),	Supported
H5: There is direct and positive relationship between neophobic attitude of travelers and exposure to e marketing tools (Social media)	Supported
H6: There is direct and positive relationship between social support received by the travelers and exposure to e-marketing tools (Social media)	Supported
H7: There is direct and positive relationship between self-efficacy of travelers and e-marketing tools (Social media)	Supported
H8: Exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) are positively mediates the relationship between attitude of travelers and their intention revisit RWMF	Supported
H9: Exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) are positively mediates the relationship between social support and their intention revisit RWMF among of travelers	Supported
H10: Exposure to e marketing tools (Social media) are positively mediates the relationship between self-efficacy of travelers and their intention revisit RWMF.	Supported

## **Discussion**

The objective of this research was to understand the neophobic travelers planned behavior in attending the RWMF. The study also looked into the mediation effects of e-marketing tools, to analyze whether the social media tools make any impact on the neophobic traveler’s intention to attend/revisit the RWMF. It is clear from the findings that traveler’s attitude, social support and self-efficacy have direct and positive relation with intent to visit or revisit to RWMF. The result provides better understanding on neophobic traveler’s attitude towards food choices and their decision to revisit, RWMF. The travelers make a choice to revisit with due consideration to the favorable and unfavorable attitude towards the food products available in the RMWF event. As it is evident from the research finding and the established relationship there is direct and positive relationship between neophobic attitude of the travelers and their intention to revisit. This result thus giving a clear message to the event organizer that if they can focus on the food choice factors viz., food authenticity, food familiarity, food variety, food safety, food nutrition, food service style etc. they would be able to develop better perception among the traveler’s in making their choice to revisit the event. Different types of foods availability by ensuring better safety and quality, can promote better destination marketing.

The current findings on traveler’s attitude clearly support the argument that there is strong relationship between social support extended by the reference groups in attending RWMF. The information sharing with the family members as well as peer groups, act as the reference group, in relation to the food authenticity, food familiarity, food variety, food safety, food nutrition, food service style etc., thus influence the travelers revisit to RWMF. The support, a traveler

will be getting from social network, have considerable influence on the decision making process of the neophobic travelers, whether they should go to RWMF or not.

The evidence derived from the study in relation to self-efficacy and intention to visit or revisit, also support the fact that there is strong relationship between traveler's intention to revisit with the self-efficacy. The confidence of any traveler depends on the availability of the information that they get from all sources regarding all aspect of the event. Here, food choice viz., food authenticity, food familiarity, food variety, food safety, food nutrition, food service style etc. turned to be the factor neophobic traveler's searched into. Meeting the expected food choice of travelers will enhance their confidence to attend the event. To ensure better flow of international travelers, event organizers should enhance the confidence level of traveler's meeting the expectations on varied food choices ensuring quality standards.

Subsequently, the result of the study also indicates that there is strong relationship between e-marketing tools (social media) exposure have a keen role on traveler's decision to attend the RMWF. Traveler's make use of the social media to know about the desired events that they would like to join. It is clearly pointed out in the context that social media inevitably has transformed how consumers (travelers) and marketers (event managers) communicate (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Nambisan & Baron, 2007) each other. Social media gives consumers a voice, and allows them to interact and share their experiences with anyone in the world (Kozinets et al., 2010). It is thus deliberated in this context that the traveler's decision to join RMWF depends on how the event managers have communicated the food choices through social media and how met their food familiarity. It is argued that the social media, lay open to the e-marketing efforts, influences the user's attitude, personality and character. A better the exposure of travelers on facebook, twitter, whatsapp, blogs, organizers websites or supplementary social media platforms, where the travelers are well connected to friends, family members, past travelers, event managers, tour operators, travel agents, blogs etc., there they do gather information regarding the food choices. The markets can better focus on the marketing strategies that support travelers to get maximum information on the food choices, which enable them to make decision to visit RWMF.

Due to social media apps and networks, travelers are well connected with family members, friends, peer groups and other social support groups. Opinions and the feedback from them have very strong effect on traveler's perception towards the food choices leading to their decision whether to visit a place or not. The finding of the research supports the positive and direct relationship between social support system and social network role in developing traveler's understanding on food choices and related decision to visit the RWMF.

Social media has gained immense popularity in the last decade and its power has left certain long-lasting effects on people. It has a very strong impact on the self-esteem of individuals. Traveler's use the social networking sites for information, communication and building awareness about the food choices provide better food familiarity regarding its authenticity, variety, safety, nutrition, service style etc. This indicates that better the exposure to social media or the e-marketing tools, better will be the understanding about the food choices. Heatherton and Polivy (1991) rightly pointed out in this context that the negative feedback lowers the self-esteem of individuals, positive feedback increases the self-esteem to a very high degree (Valkenburg et al., 2006). The finding of the research supports the direct relationship between food choice attitude and traveler intention to search for information from the social media.

In addition to establish the direct effect of TPB factors on intention to visit RWMF the study also hypothesized the mediation effect of social media on TPB factors in its relationship with intention to visit RWMF among travelers. The study shows that the social media or the e-

marketing tools have high mediation effect on attitude social support and self-esteem. All the direct hypothesis formulated in the study obtained positive and direct relationship with traveler's intention to visit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF). This indicates that the social media can enhance or decrease the level of neophobic attitude towards good choices. The psychological motivator for tourism is normally connected to some kind of need – for instance, to feel strong or comfortable – that cannot be fulfilled in daily life (Fields, 2002). As has already been mentioned, food is primarily a physiological need that is situated at the basic survival level of any individual's life. Though the survival issue does not fully apply to tourists, it is inescapable that food is a necessity that destinations need to provide. Furthermore, visual images of local food – whether presented as an object or as part of a process of cookery involving local people – may play a key motivational role in promising sensory pleasure to tourists (Batra, 2008; Kim, Goh, & Yuan, 2010; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Travellers seek a sense of comfort and safety while on their trips (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983). When it comes to experiencing food, food safety and health concerns are the motivators that most reliably predict traveler's decision making (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Kim et al., 2010). If the travelers do get better food choices in the form of variety by ensuring better safety and quality of food during the event, they will be more satisfied with the visit. In this context, the RWMF marketers may be looked into all possible means of social medial application or e-marketing tools to extend better visibility of the food choices to the travelers, especially those who are phobic towards available foods. A better familiarity with the food choices develop better motivation among the travelers to attend the RWMF.

### **Practical Implications**

The significant practical implications of tourist food choices, which influence their decision, whether to visit a destination or not have received a growing research interest recently. Several research report indicates in general that traveler's interests and preferences for food in a destination can play a significant role in affecting their destination choice (Bessiere, 1998; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall & Mitchell, 2001; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004). As it is evident from the current research, the traveler's perception towards the food choices especially on food ingredients, food variety, food poison, food safety, food nutrition, food availability, food service style etc. have high impact on their decision to visit or not in festive destination. Particularly, neophobia is a cause which has its practical implications on destination choice among travelers who will be visiting any tourist destinations or events in particular. Food consumption and the food choices are factors need to be considered by the event managers as well as organizers to extend proper details to the travelers. Travelers have several phobias associated with visiting an alien destination, though being well attracted into. Tourists' food choice and preferences are recognized as important forces driving the tourism demand for food, which have an immediate influence on the offerings of tourist-oriented hospitality businesses and it has significant impact on local food supply. For instance, with regard to the amount of food imported for tourists, the linkage between local agriculture production and tourism, and the use of provenance as a distinctive attribute of local food products etc, to attract tourists' attention (Morgan, Marsden, & Murdoch, 2006; Telfer & Wall, 2000; Torres, 2002, 2003).

The mediation effects of e-marketing tools or the social media, has shown strong effect on the determinants of intention to revisit among the travelers in this research. This indicates clearly the role of social media, which have been widely adopted by travelers to collaboratively search, organize, share, and annotate their travel stories and experiences through blogs, microblogs (e.g., Twitter), online communities (e.g., Facebook and TripAdvisor), media sharing sites (e.g., Flickr and YouTube), social bookmarking sites (e.g., Delicious), social knowledge sharing sites (e.g., Wikitravel), and other tools have high impact on traveler's awareness of preferred food

choices and their intention to visit or revisit among the RWMF. It is necessary that the organizers of RWMF, should take into consideration the food choices of the travelers who have visited and will be visiting in future by disseminating best of information, making use of better e-marketing platforms, which has better marketing reachability.

### **Theoretical implications**

The study followed theory of planned behavior to test the variables selected for the study. The result clearly indicates that there is high relation between traveler's attitude, social support and self-efficacy in its relationship with intention to revisit RWMF. The supportive information about the food choice that a traveler receives from the reference group, whether through social media or from the family or peers have greater influence on the attitude and self-efficacy in relation to food choices as well as intention to revisit RWMF.

### **Conclusion**

The objectives of this research tried to establish the relationship between attitude of the travelers and their intention to visit or revisit, RWMF. The study posed 4 research questions and 10 hypotheses to explore the relationship between the independent variables (attitude, social support and self-efficacy) the dependent variables (intention to revisit) selected for the study with the application of theory of planned behavior. The study considered e-marketing tool as an intervening variable to analyses the mediation effects of social media on intention to revisit. Integration of the qualitative research support the right identification of the independent, moderating and dependent variables, in this research. The thematic model generated with qualitative research was tested with the appropriate tools to establish the relationship of determinants of intention to revisit relating food choice behavior of travelers. The study result established strong direct and positive relationship between the causative and predictor variable by establishing the role of e-marketing tools (social media). It is thus inferred from the deliberations that a better social media platform with the support of effective e-marketing tools can enhance the visitor flow of RWMF by looking to the food choices.

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