

Facebook Advertising Value and Destination Visit Intention: The Mediating Effect of Place Attachment in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka

K.K.M. Sandamali^{1,*}, H.M.U.K. Iroshana², and N.H.K. Cooray³

*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka^{1,2,3}*

*Corresponding author: msandamali55@gmail.com

Abstract

With the increased penetration of social media, its use as a promotional tool has become a notable trend. This shift is particularly evident in advertising, where social media platforms have emerged as a more cost-effective mode of promotion. However, the effectiveness and usability of these tools vary across industries, making this an interesting area for further research. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of Facebook advertising value on destination visit intention, with place attachment as a mediating factor, focusing on Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka's Western Province. A cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted with 252 Facebook users aged 18–35, and the data were analysed using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Advertising value was measured through four dimensions, namely, informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and irritation. All the constructs, including place attachment (mediating variable) and visit intention (dependent variable), were measured using 5-point Likert scales. The findings of the study revealed that informativeness, entertainment, and credibility positively influenced destination visit intention, whereas irritation had a negative effect, and overall advertising value as a construct demonstrated a significant positive impact on destination visit intention. Furthermore, findings also demonstrated that place attachment significantly mediated the relationship between advertising value and visit intention (indirect $\beta = 0.723$; 95% CI [0.612, 0.842]). The model demonstrated strong explanatory power, accounting for 72% of the variance in visit intention ($R^2 = 0.72$). The results highlight that emotionally engaging Facebook advertisements strengthen cognitive and affective attachment to destinations, enhancing travellers' intention to visit. The study contributes to digital tourism literature by validating place attachment as a mediating mechanism and demonstrating the utility of SEM in tourism studies. Practically, travel marketers should design credible, informative, and entertaining advertising content to foster emotional connections and encourage travel.

Keywords: advertising value, destination, Facebook advertising, place attachment, visit intention