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THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE TRAVEL COMMUNITIES ON TOURISM DESTINATIONS CHOICE

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AGENDA



- Purpose and focus
- Literature review
- Public online travel community (OTC) vs Community hosted by company
- Research methodology
- Results & discussion
- Conclusions & implications
- Limitations & future research

Purpose: to identify the impact of OTCs on tourism destinations choice

Focus: Russian travellers' behaviour

Gaps to be filled:

- Limited studies on the role of OTCs in the tourism destination choice on emerging markets
- The role of company hosted OTCs appeared to be underestimated

SMM impact on
the consumer
decision process

• Parra-López Sidali et al., 2012; Hudson & Thal, 2013; Ha & Janda, 2014; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Olga Lo & Razaq, 2014; Barhemmati & Ahmad, 2015; Mellinas et al., 2016; Mariani & Borghi, 2018

tourism
destinations
development

• Buhalis, 2000; Ritchie, & Crouch, 2003; Vanhove, 2005; Baggio et al., 2010; Haugland et al., 2011; Parra-López et al., 2011; Wang & Pizam, 2011; Hays et al., 2013; Leung et al., 2013; Morrison, 2013

consumer
behavior, trust
and satisfaction in
tourism

• Huang et al., 2006; Loureiro & González, 2008; Amaro & Duarte, 2015; Bonson, 2015; Cantallops & Salvi, 2014; Casaló et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2011; Horner et al., 2016; Han & Hyun, 2015; Lee & Hyun, 2015



online travel
communities

• Yoon et al., 2006; Ohme et al., 2009; Casaló et al., 2010; Vecchiato et al., 2010; Khushaba et al., 2013; Venkatraman et al., 2015; Barnett & Cerf, 2017; Koç et al., 2017; Blasco-Lopez et al., 2018



ONLINE COMMUNITIES



Ownership	Public owned	Company owned
Goal	Promote and get feedback	Develop long-lasting relationship with customers
Advantages	Coverage, word-of-mouth, product support, website traffic, customer focus, feedback from customers	Engagement, less costly support, managing customers journey, integration with IT tools, loyalty, analytics
Drawbacks	Passive behavior, analytics, invasion of privacy	Coverage, costs
Examples		

METHODOLOGY



- Online questionnaire (Google Forms)
- 59 questions with Likert scale from 1 to 7
- 161 respondents
- EFA, SFA, SEM with MPlus 6.12

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

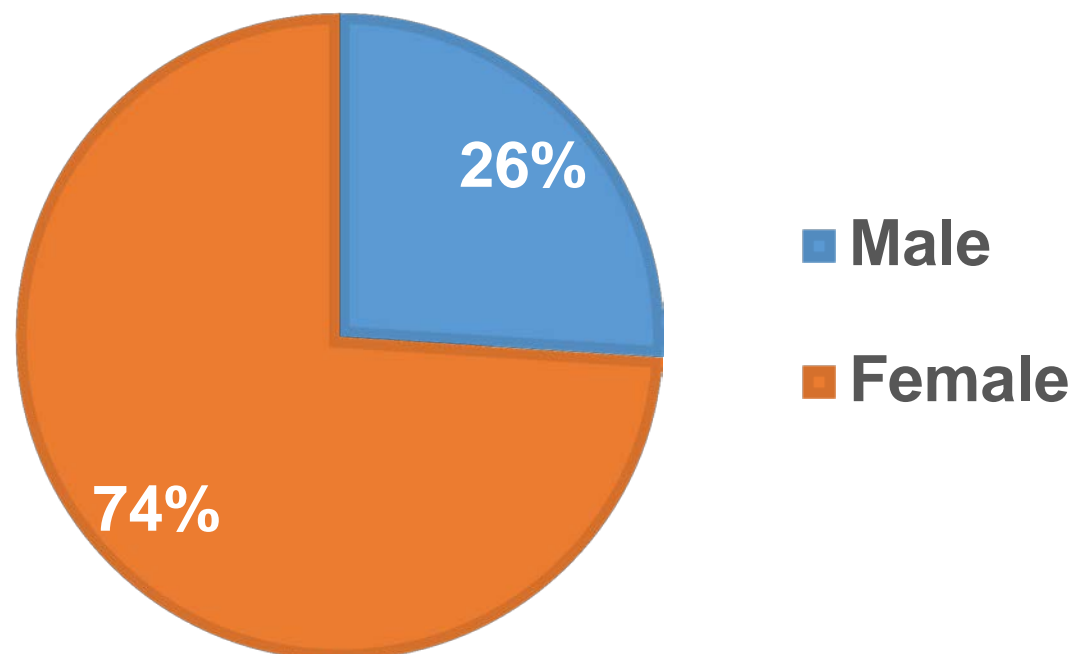


1	First two questions aim to detach people who don't travel and don't ever participated in online travel community
2	Respondent demographic identity, age, occupation, education, participation in social media, sites, devices
3	Participation in online travel communities
4	The level of trust to OTC hosted by tourism company / tour operator
5	Trust to the information published in the community
6	Perceived value and benefits of OTC membership
7	Personal activity in online travel community
8	The relations to other community members, peer communications
9	Satisfaction derived from the community participation
10	Intention to follow the advice given in the community
11	Factors that influence destination choice

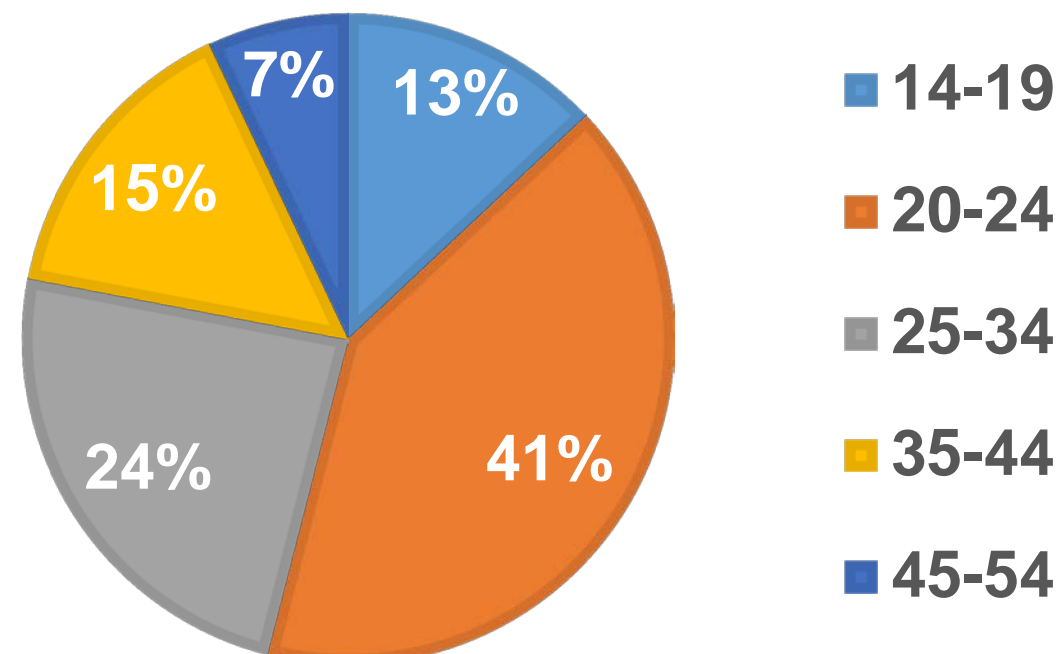
RESPONDENTS' PROFILE



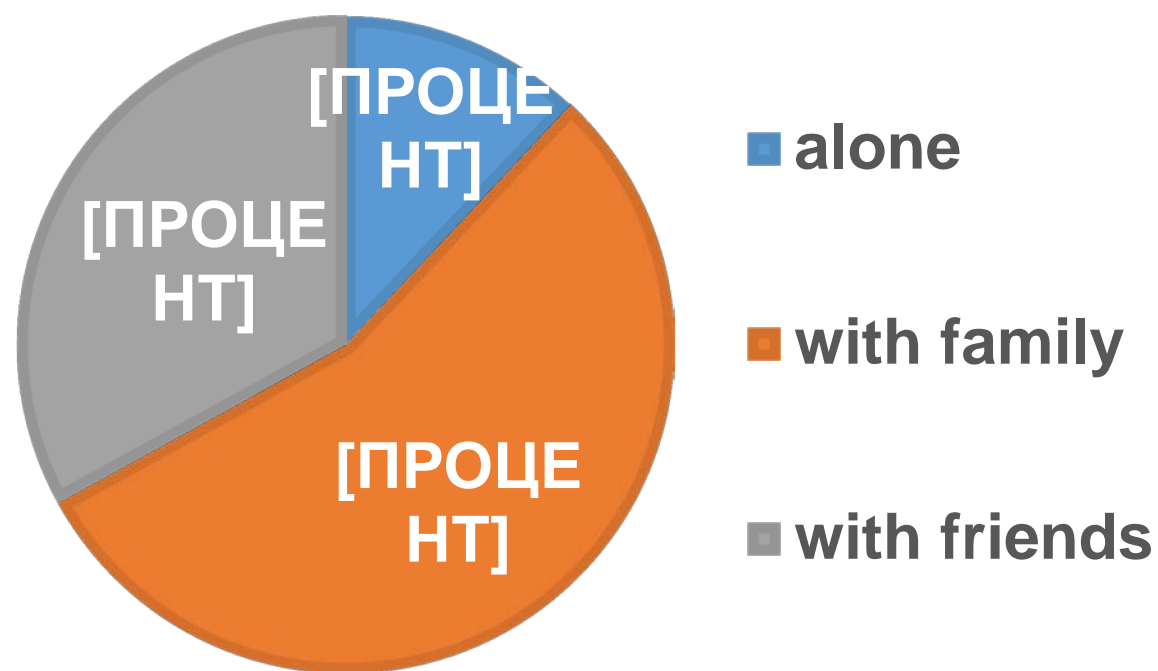
SEX



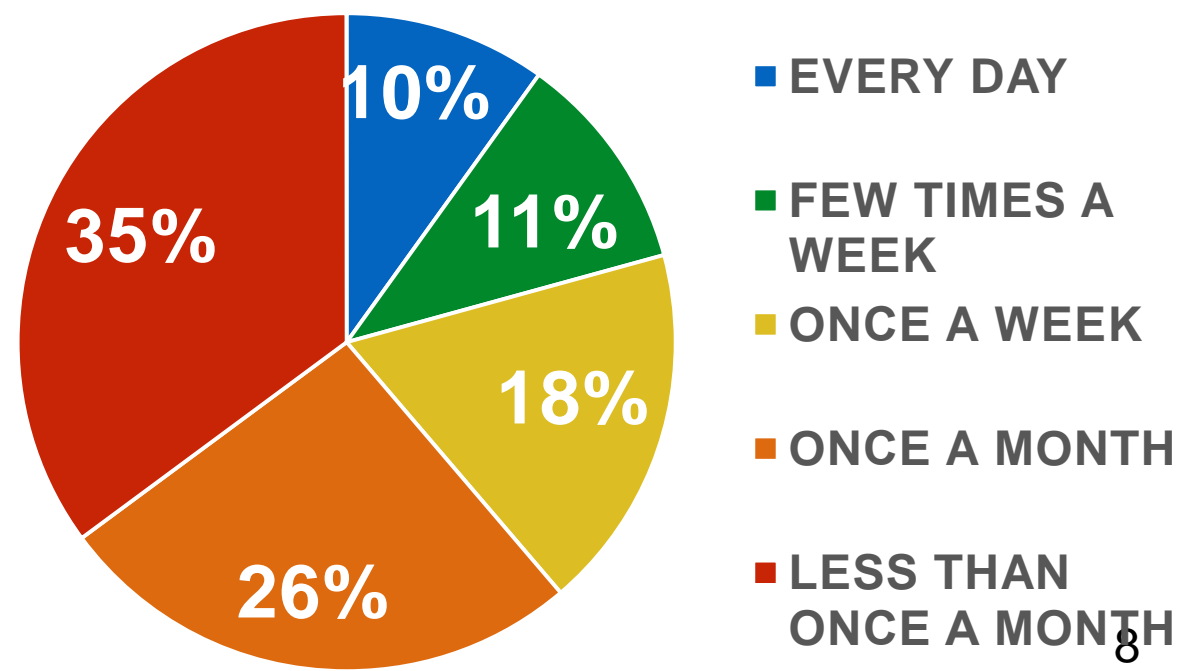
AGE



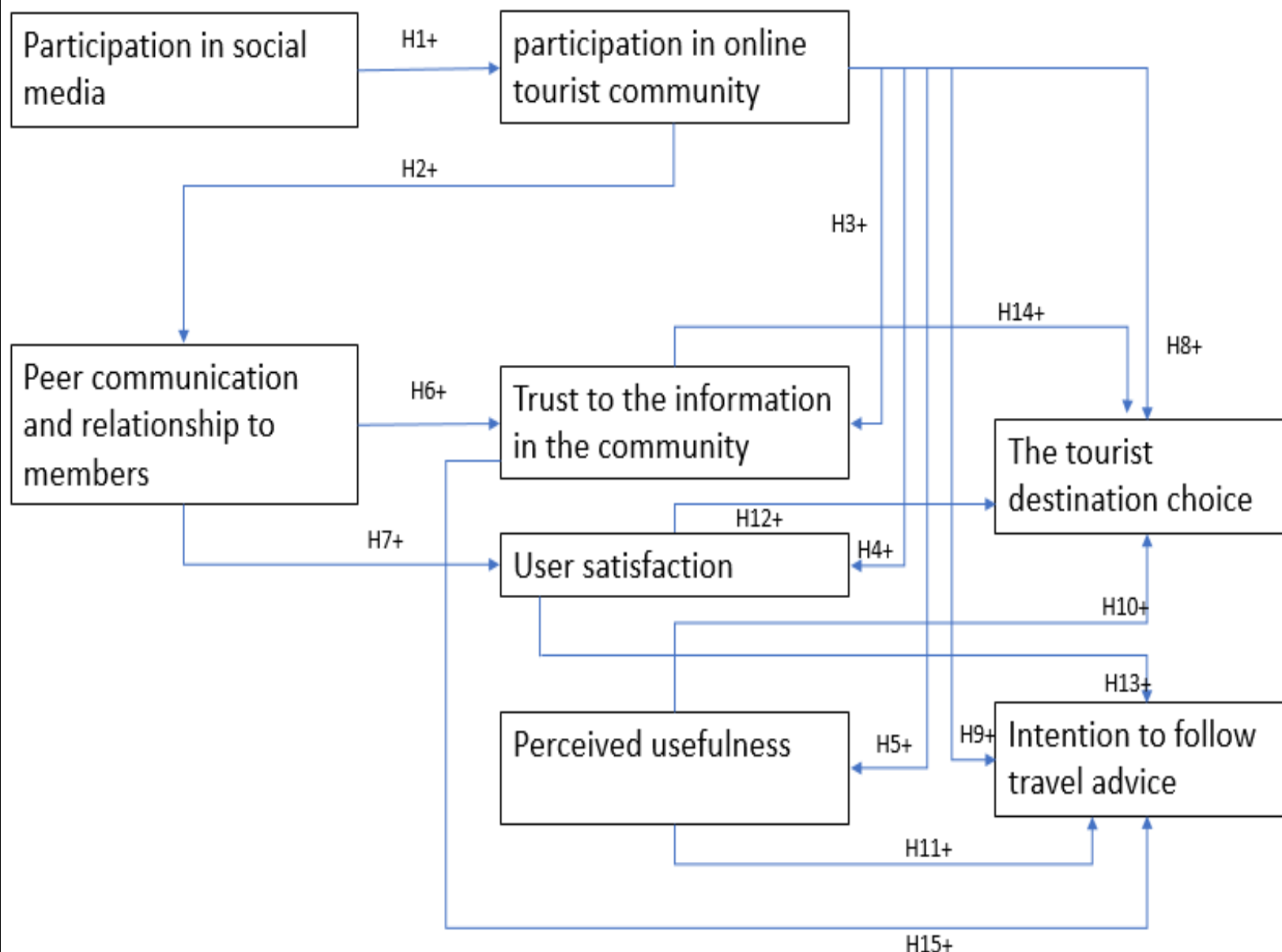
PREFERENCE TO TRAVEL



FREQUENCY TO VISIT OTC



Preliminary model

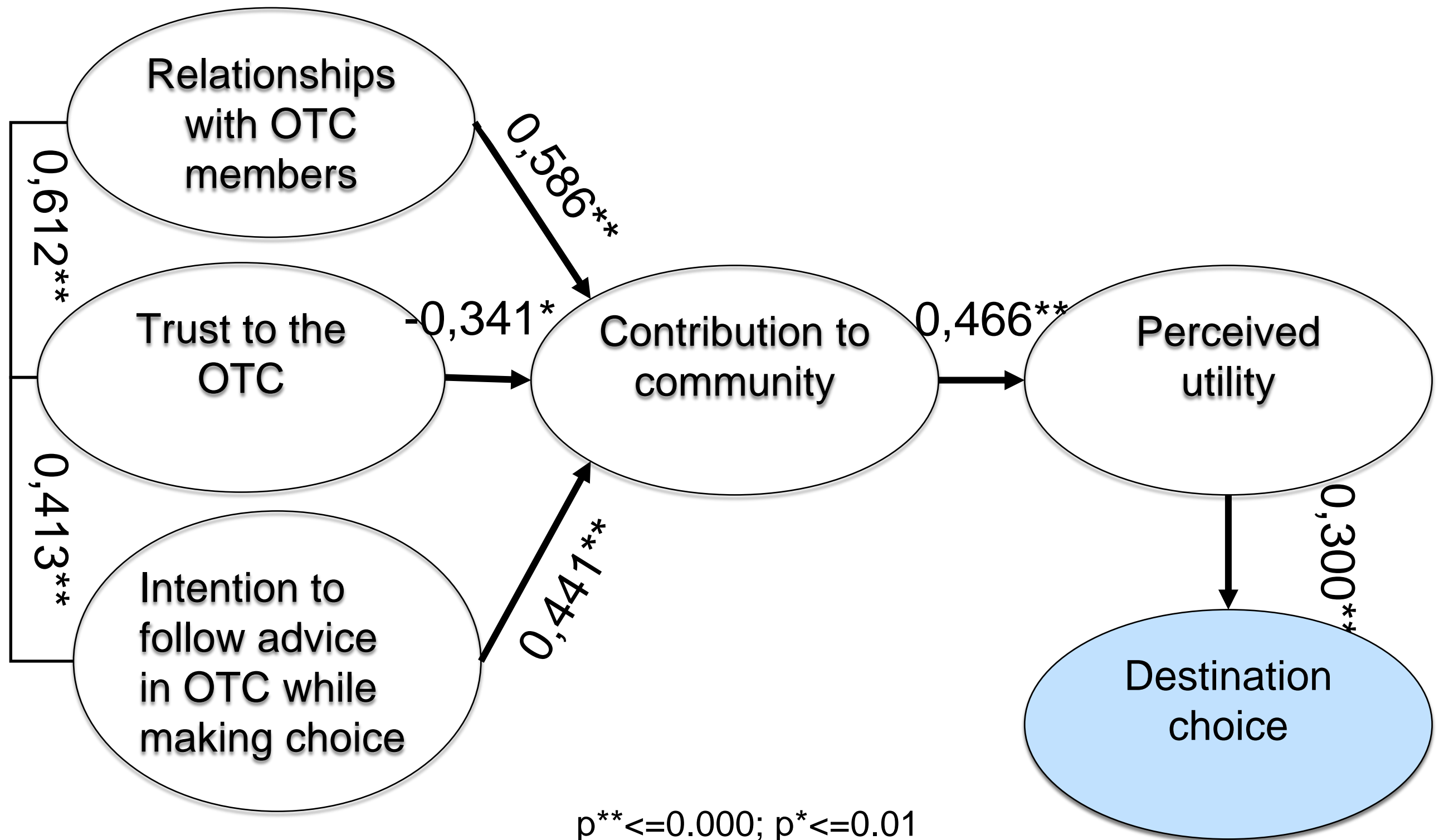


CFA

- F1. Relationships with OTC members
- F2. Trust to the OTC
- F3. Contribution to OTC
- F4. Perceived utility
- F5. Intention to follow advice in OTC while making choice
- F7. Destination choice

Cronbach's α of all the factors > 0,8

STRUCTURAL MODEL



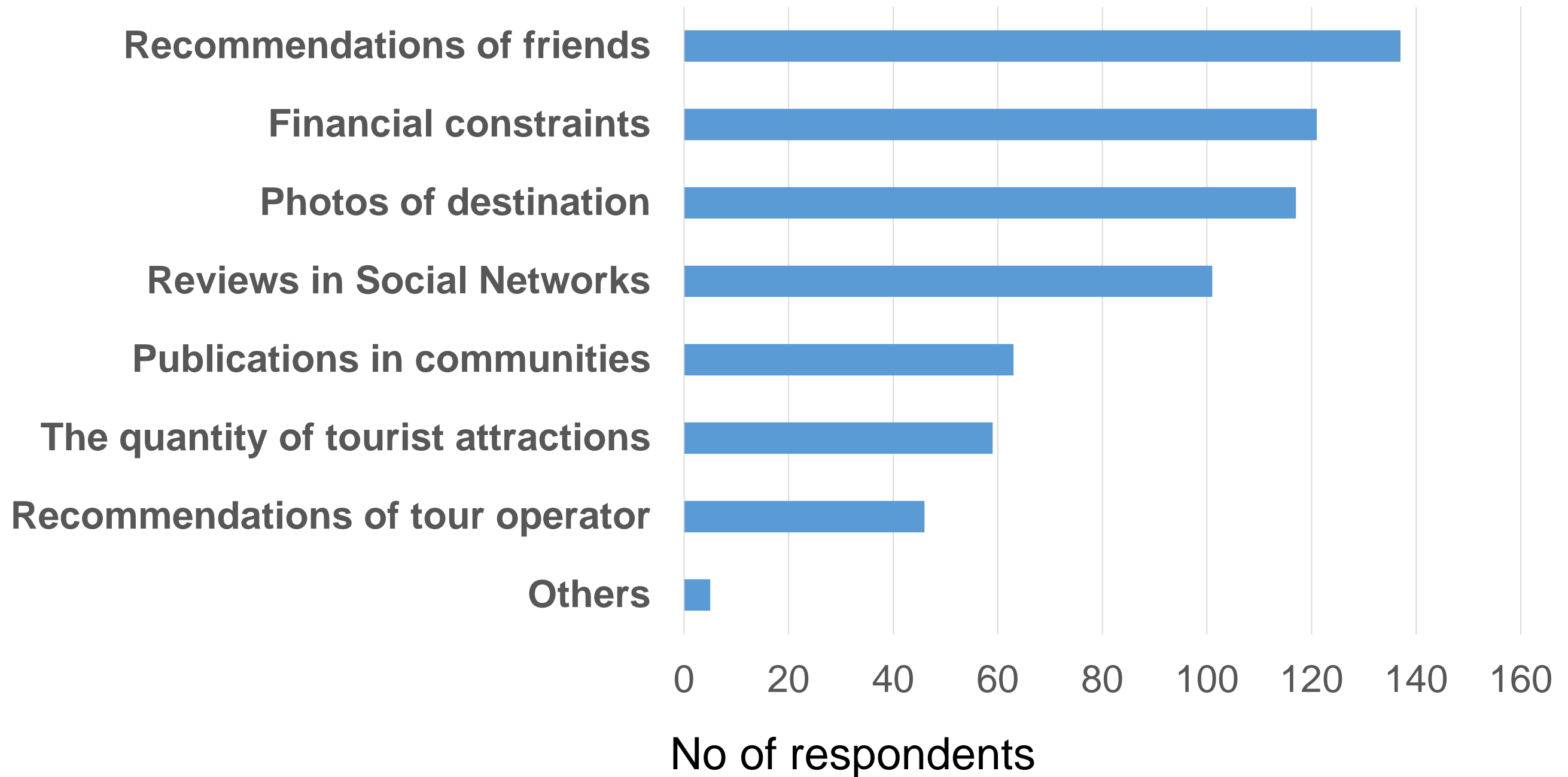


RESULTS OF SEM HYPOTHESES ESTIMATION



Hypothesis		St. estimation	t-value	p-value	Result
H1. Relationships with OTC members have positive attitude to community peer communication	F1 -> F3	0.586	4.612	0.000	Supported
H2. Trust to the OTC influences on peer communication	F2 -> F3	-0.241	-2.060	0.009	Supported
H3. Perceived utility influence on OTC perceived value	F4 -> F6	0.300	3.018	0.003	Supported
H4. Attitude to destination information on OTC perceived value	F5 -> F6	0.333	0.005	0.996	Insignificant
H5. Perceived utility influence on OTC perceived value	F3 -> F6	-0.031	-0.206	0.837	insignificant
H6. Attitude to destination information influence on peer communication	F5 -> F3	0.431	3.580	0.000	Supported
H7. Peer Communication influence on perceived utility	F3 -> F4	0.466	4.807	0.000	Supported

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DESTINATION CHOICE



Adds to the literature on the role of SMM on emerging markets

- OTCs influence on Russian travelers' choice confirmed:
 - Russian travelers tend to purchase travel products provided by firms that host online communities (T-test)
 - OTC impact on attractiveness of Russian tourism destinations
 - OTC impact on attractiveness of foreign tourism destinations for Russian consumers
- In Russia, OTCs are not yet well developed
- Advantages of company hosted OTCs: loyalty, low cost for support, profit
- Factors that influence consumer choice in Russia: clearly set OTC goals, usability and content are crucially important
- Additional factor: Russian travelers are cautious about publishing personal information on the Internet (especially due to warnings of Russian media about cases of apartment thefts based on Instagram information)

Managerial implications

- Managing SMM is highly important for client orientation and company image in the Russian tourism sector
- Tourism companies should pay special attention to OTC goalsetting, usability and content



LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH



Limitations:

- Number of respondents
- Intercorrelation of revealed factors

Future research:

- Extended sample
- Cluster analysis and customer segments behavior
- Cross-cultural comparisons

Thank you for your attention!



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