



The impact of integrated social communication on resident's perception and support for tourism development

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Abstract

Local residents play a significant role in the growth of sustainable tourism and have a direct influence on it. In Vietnam, local governments have organized many training sessions to raise awareness and promote residents' support for and participation in sustainable local tourism development. However, differences in the culture, knowledge level and traditional communication methods of local people mean that this activity is not very effective. The purpose of this research is to analyse the influence of social media on residents' value perception and support of tourism. The survey was conducted online and in person; 368 respondents from three typical communities in the Vietnamese city of Can Tho provided responses. The results of the study indicate that: (1) three elements had a direct impact on residents' engagement in promoting tourism: social media use, social support, and value perception; and (2) there was a link between the information source and residents' perceptions and their attitudes. At the same time, the study demonstrates that the relationship between social support (information support, emotional support, and peer support) and social media has a significantly greater impact than one-way information support from traditional government media. Some governance implications to raise awareness and strengthen residents' support of tourism are proposed.

Keywords Residents' support of tourism · Social media usage · Social support · Residents' perception value · Attitude · Can Tho communities

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1 Introduction

Long-term development in the tourism industry has been shown to be directly influenced by the support and participation of local citizens (Erul and Woosnam 2021; Qin et al. 2021; Plaza-Mejía et al. 2020). Residents are critical stakeholders directly impacted by the negative effects of local tourism development (Adongo 2017; Chang 2018; Hoang et al. 2020; Munanura et al. 2023; Nunkoo et al. 2013; Ramkissoon 2023; Šegota et al. 2022), and residents' attitudes towards tourism are another direct factor in tourist experience and satisfaction (Plaza-Mejía et al. 2020). Various theories have guided numerous investigations into the attitudes of communities towards tourism (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Olya 2020; Plaza-Mejía et al. 2020). The majority of these studies showed that residents' attitudes are influenced by numerous sources of many different factors, such as perceptions of positive and negative impacts of tourism (Munanura et al. 2023; Olya 2023; Ramkissoon 2023; Šegota et al. 2022); community attachment (Olya 2023; Tang et al. 2022); place attachment (Erul and Woosnam 2021; Shen and Shen 2020); emotional solidarity (Erul and Woosnam 2021; Munanura et al. 2023; Phuc and Nguyen 2020); and social support (Chang 2018; Lee et al. 2023). However, not many studies have mentioned the social support of social media in terms of providing information and knowledge to help form awareness, thereby affecting residents' support tourism development (Nunkoo et al. 2020).

It has been demonstrated that social media has significant impact on the dissemination of information and the formation of relationships (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022). Social media networks have been found to promote public participation in economic, social, political, and work environment issues. Consequently, the use of social networks is significant for obtaining information, raising awareness, and sustaining social relationships among all members of society. Residents can access a collection of images, metaphors and narratives on social media to help comprehend unfamiliar or novel scientific concepts. This would be of great assistance to local residents with disparities in education and cultural knowledge (Shockleya et al. 2020).

Numerous studies have examined the impact of social media on tourism. Prior research has focused on connections between service providers, destination managers, and travellers (Senyao and Ha 2022) and the impact of social media on travellers' decision-making (Dolan et al. 2019; Giglio et al. 2019; Liu et al. 2019), with inadequate consideration for destination communities (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022). To cover this knowledge vacuum, this study investigates how social networks support factors that increase perceptions and encourage active support of local communities. This is accomplished by utilizing social network theory (SNT), social exchange theory (SET), and an analytical perspective of the information society (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Uchinaka et al. 2019). In addition, the study examines how social media, particularly Facebook (which 93.8 per cent of Vietnamese adults aged 16–64 were using the internet to access as of February 2022), can assist individuals in promoting sustainable tourism practices in their local communities.

To demonstrate the efficacy of this strategy, the study will focus specifically on Can Tho city residents. Can Tho is located at the centre of the economic, cultural and social growth of the Mekong Delta region. The provision of services, which accounts for 52.32 per cent of the local economy, is one of the most significant industries in Can Tho's accelerated growth. Can Tho is also a major transportation hub, transporting visitors throughout the region. Typical tourist attractions in Can Tho, such as Cai Rang floating

market, fruit gardens and Ninh Kieu Wharf, are all associated with the characteristics of river gardens and the friendliness and hospitality of the local community (Tran and Chu 2020). Therefore, maintaining people's support for tourism development in Can Tho is crucial.

2 Literature review

2.1 Residents' perceptions and supportive attitudes according to social exchange theory (SET)

In the history of research on residents' support for tourism development, SET seems to be the most commonly applied theory (Nunkoo et al. 2013; Plaza-Mejía et al. 2020). Based on SET, Perdue et al. (1990) argued that locals appear to use the benefits or anticipated costs of relevant services to evaluate the growth of tourism (i.e. social exchange). When residents perceive that a transaction will benefit them personally, they are more likely to view it favourably, and vice versa. Tourism researchers have borrowed SET to explain residents' perceptions of and support for tourism (Ap 1992; Nunkoo et al. 2020).

Residents' support has been defined as their attitude towards tourism efforts (Hoang et al. 2020; Phuc and Nguyen 2020). Residents' attitudes towards tourism may include affection (emotions), cognition (beliefs), and action tendencies (Chang 2018), which are indicators of their future behaviour. The population's level of support has been shown to be highly dependent on their awareness of and commitment to tourism-related activities (Gursoy et al. 2019). The assistance of residents enabled more effective monitoring and planning of tourist activities, which was a key factor in enhancing the residents' own favourable perception of tourism development (Phuc and Nguyen 2020). When local residents perceived more positive benefits (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental opportunities) than negative views (tourism development costs), they were more likely to support tourism's future growth (Gannon et al. 2020; Gursoy et al. 2019; Hadinejad et al. 2019). Residents' higher perceived value of tourism will motivate them to support local tourism development (Hateftabara et al. 2020; Hung et al. 2020; Oyla et al. 2020). However, focusing solely on the benefits and individual-level costs overlooks how the bonds between individuals in a group influence residents' behaviour (Chang 2018; Senyao and Ha 2022). Social network theory fills any voids. The first hypothesis is established:

H1: Can Tho city residents' perceived value of tourism positively influences their support for tourism development.

2.2 Social network theory (SNT)

SNT was built upon the foundation of social comparison theory. As a result, residents may modify their attitudes and behaviours through social references (Riordan 2000). SNT has investigated the impacts of stakeholder relationships and described the effects of internal network bonds on actions (Chang 2018; Lee et al. 2023). This has helped researchers to comprehend the mutual bonds and behaviours observed in human societies (Chang 2018; Wellman 1982). Social networks have commonly been viewed as a form of social capital (Burt 1997), defined as a structure of connections through which individuals can gain access to resources, knowledge, and social support (Granovetter 1985).

2.3 The relationship between social exchange theory and social network theory

Numerous studies have demonstrated that SET claims that analysing the benefits and costs of increasing tourism could affect the level of support from local residents. When group interests conflict, it is still possible to reconcile them through group influence, develop a consensus on values, and remedy imbalances in the exchange of interests (Chang 2018; Olya 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022). This demonstrates the influence of group authority on the evaluation of tourism development and the attitude of individuals towards tourism development (Senyao and Ha 2022). Consequently, the value of tourism development influences attitudes towards tourism development via social network relationships.

In this investigation, SNT was applied to online social networks. As a type of social network in the modern information society, the function of social networks has shifted to become an essential conduit for facilitating social contact and adopting responsibility (Liang 2011; Nunkoo et al. 2020). Recent research indicates that online communities can provide social benefits to their members (Aichner et al. 2021; Zhong et al. 2021; Senyao and Ha 2022; Nadeem et al. 2019). Also, social media is a tremendous resource for fostering close relationships with others and enhancing one's consciousness and wellbeing (Pasca et al. 2023; Lee et al. 2023; Wu et al. 2020; Chen et al. 2020). Social support has been identified as an important social asset that internet users can obtain from an online community (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022).

2.4 Social media usage and social support roles

2.4.1 Social media usage

Social media is the most effective online networking instrument in the information society, having become intertwined with real-world social and economic life and having experienced exponential growth in recent years (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022). Consequently, social media is a substantial repository of information with numerous attractive and readily accessible expression styles. Social media was described by Levy (1997) as a new knowledge space that was more dynamic, open and adaptable than conventional information channels characterized by rigidity, hierarchy and sequentiality.

Social media has become an essential means of social interaction and information collection in the public sphere (Ku et al. 2019; Nunkoo et al. 2020). Social media has facilitated the creation and dissemination of content by residents. The role of the public has shifted from passive consumers to active contributors to the production and dissemination of news (Choi 2016). Social media integrates information technology and communications, social interaction, and the production of written, visual and audio content. Consequently, the new social space created by social media has reinvented social interaction and boosted social capital in real-world contexts (Farmaki et al. 2020). Messages and news are both received and transmitted via social media, influencing users' perspectives and behaviours simultaneously (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022). Consequently, the prevalent use of social media has significantly increased the capacity of residents to participate in public affairs, assisting users in modifying their cognition and behaviour (Nunkoo et al. 2020). The following hypotheses have therefore been established:

H2: Social media usage positively influences residents' perceived value of tourism.

H3: Social media usage positively influences residents' support for tourism development.

2.4.2 Social support

Social support is defined as “an individual’s experiences of being cared for, being responded to, and being helped by people in that individual’s social group” (Liang et al. 2011: 71). According to Thoits (2011), social support encompasses a range of resources or aid that individuals may receive from their family, friends, supervisors and colleagues. Social media has been extensively utilized due to its potential for social support (Hu et al. 2019; Liang et al. 2011; Ouyang et al. 2016). Social support is an essential aspect of social media effects research (Fig. 1).

This study discusses three forms of social support: information support, emotional support, and peer support. Information support and peer support relate to assisting with problem resolution in the form of suggestions, evaluations and ratings on the internet, based on information sources provided by users themselves when sharing their experiences, thus cultivating and enhancing connections on social networks and imparting interest in each stage of using social networks (Hu 2019; Nadeem 2019; Sheikh 2019). Social support of social networks has been demonstrated in a number of research fields, including economic, social, political and medical, proving useful in times of epidemics and natural disasters (Ogie et al. 2022; Zhong et al. 2021), and especially in social commerce research (Nadeem 2019; Sheikh 2019). In the field of tourism, studies have found that in the process of using social networks, residents’ awareness is raised by the provision of information, emotional support and consulting support from other users (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022). On the other hand, the more support and personal awareness people receive, the more they trust social networks to find out more information (Senyao and Ha 2022; Zhong et al. 2021). The following hypotheses are therefore established:

H4a: Information support positively influences social media usage.

H4b: Information support positively influences residents’ perceived value of tourism.

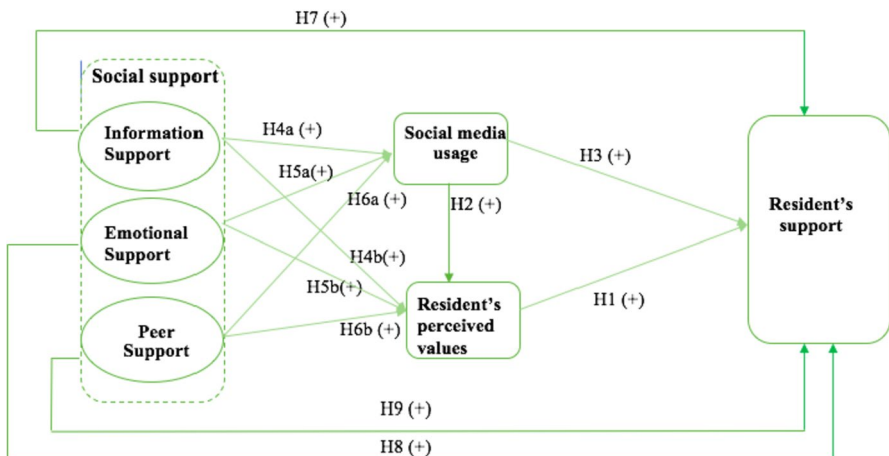


Fig. 1 Proposed research model

H5a: Emotional support positively influences social media usage.

H5b: Emotional support positively influences residents' perceived value of tourism.

H6a: Peer support positively influences social media usage.

H6b: Peer support positively influences residents' perceived value of tourism.

Compared to traditional media, social media creates superior value for users by providing media, creating links to group resources through social support (information support, emotional support and peer support). Common resources formed by social network relationships will influence individuals' perceptions and attitudes, thereby motivating them to undertake actions for the common good (Chang 2018). Stakeholder networks—authorities, local organizations, businesses—are seen as a condition for promoting social communication and residents' participation, as well as a means to build solutions to community issues by sharing material and non-tangible resources (Pasca et al. 2023). On social networking sites, after receiving information and enhancing their personal emotions, users are willing to support tourists and promote the destination's image (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao et al. 2020). Therefore, the next hypotheses are established:

H7: Information support positively influences residents' support for tourism development.

H8: Emotional support positively influences residents' support for tourism development.

H9: Peer support positively influences residents' support for tourism development.

3 Methodology

3.1 Case overview

The Mekong Delta, the largest rice production area in Vietnam, is where the renowned ST25 rice variety is grown. In the Mekong Delta, Can Tho is a significant transportation centre and a popular tourist destination. Cai Rang floating market and ecological fruit plantations attract both domestic and foreign tourists (Tran and Chu 2020). Tourism in Can Tho is growing in areas that are semi-urban (Ninh Kieu Wharf is a grade 1 urban centre directly under the central government) and semi-rural (the area of floating markets and produce plantations) (Phuc and Nguyen 2020; Phuong 2017). As a result of the aforementioned factors, residents' levels of education and access to knowledge have been unequal and their awareness of tourism limited, resulting in a variety of negative behaviours (Nhan et al. 2022; Phuong 2017). Strengthening the provision of social support to raise people's awareness and support for local tourism activities is an important factor in developing tourism in Can Tho city.

The survey was conducted at tourism destinations including Ninh Kieu Wharf, Cai Rang floating market, and the adjacent produce plantations. In order to obtain comprehensive coverage of respondents' evaluation of how the development of tourism in Can Tho has affected them, these three locations are representative of Can Tho's tourism spaces.

Numerous tourist activities, particularly in the Ninh Kieu Wharf area, have an undeniable effect on the residents' way of life (see Fig. 2).

3.2 Data collection and data analysis procedure

3.2.1 Data collection

Using a five-point Likert scale, survey questions for this study were developed using a quantitative research methodology. The objective is to focus on local residents' perceptions based on the following study methodology: (1) social support with information support (four items), emotional support (four items) and peer support (six items) adopted and revised from previous studies (Oh and Lee 2012; Zhong et al. 2021); (2) social media usage (five items), inherited from the scales by Uzir et al. (2020) and Zhong et al. (2021); (3) residents' perceived value (five items), simulated from the scale by Phuc and Nguyen (2020); and (4) residents' support for tourism development, including cognition (four items), affection (five items), and action tendency (three items) modelled from the scales by Carmichael (2000) and Chang (2018).

The survey was performed online and in person. This study employs Google Forms to facilitate survey results. However, support staff were still required for the following reasons. People dealing in the Cai Rang floating market region, in particular, are all from distant rural areas, and they may use smartphones and update Facebook information as part of their lifestyle. Their degree of information technology utilization, however, is insufficient for them to log in and fill out online surveys on their own; our support crew must be

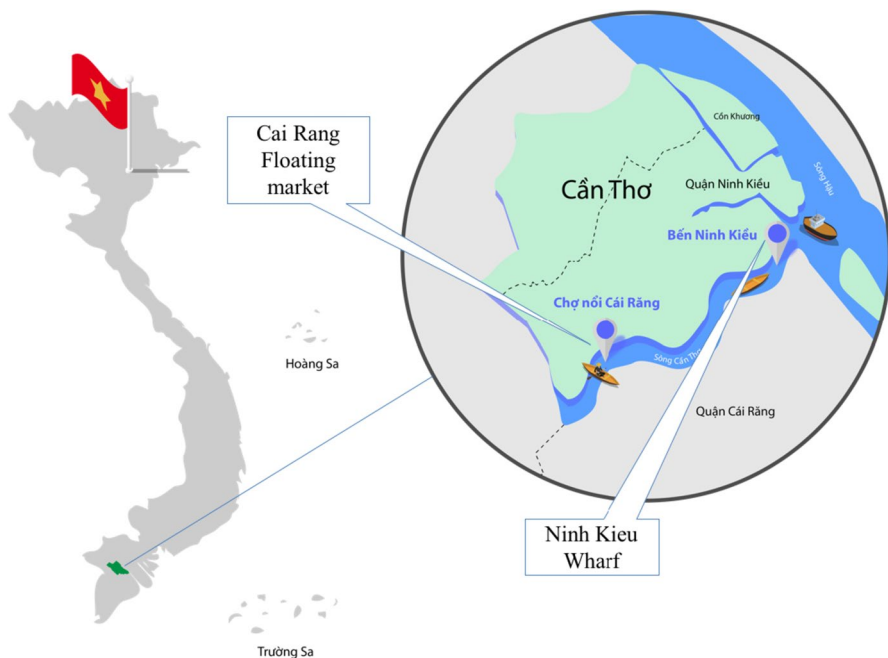


Fig. 2 Location and map of Can Tho city, Vietnam

there to assist them in this process. Paper surveys are impractical in floating marketplaces owing to high waves and winds. Thirty students from Can Tho University and HUTECH University participated in the survey, which was divided into three groups: ten students in Cai Rang floating market, twelve students at Ninh Kieu wharf, and eight students in the adjacent fruit orchards. In order to ensure accuracy and adequate representation, support organizations strived to survey a diverse audience in terms of occupation, age, and gender. The thirty supporting students were also selected based on the criterion of being local to the three aforementioned locations in order to distinguish between permanent and temporary residents. Students were instructed on how to conduct effective interviews with those who currently resided, worked or conducted business in the communities. Each household that completed the survey received a 50,000 VND voucher.

3.2.2 Data analysis

The scales used in this study were first tested for reliability using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A scale is considered reliable if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeds 0.7 and the adjusted total correlation of each item is higher than 0.3 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to construct the validity and reliability analysis, analyse the validation of the model convergence and discriminant validity, and analyse the descriptive statistics. EFA required (1) eigenvalues ≥ 1 ; (2) total variance explanation $\geq 50\%$; (3) Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) ≥ 0.5 ; (4) significant coefficient of the KMO test ≥ 0.05 ; (5) factor loadings of all observed variables ≥ 0.5 ; and (6) weight difference between the loads of two factors > 0.3 (Hair et al. 2009).

Next, the data were analysed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the results obtained from EFA. CFA was used to assess the validity of the conceptual scale, and the structural model was utilized to examine the research hypotheses. A model is deemed appropriate for the dataset if the indicators meet the following threshold values: The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) ≥ 0.9 and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) ≤ 0.08 (Hu and Bentler 1999). Additionally, the scale's reliability is established if the composite reliability coefficient (CR) > 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Finally, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to check that the proposed model is appropriate: this is the case if the significance value of the chi-squared test < 0.05 ; Chi-square/df (CMIN/df) ≤ 2 ; and Goodness of fit index (GFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), CFI ≥ 0.9 . Besides these criteria, researchers have suggested that GFI should be > 0.8 , Goodness of fit index (RMSEA) ≤ 0.08 , composite reliability > 0.6 , and extracted variance > 0.5 (Hair et al. 2009).

Four hundred questionnaires were distributed for this investigation; 368 were returned for analysis, yielding a response rate of 92 per cent. The respondents comprised 37.5 per cent men and 62.5 per cent women. The age group with the highest response rate was 25–34 years old (43.5%). Principal occupations included tourism-related commerce and trade, service industry employees, and university students. Table 1 displays these demographic details.

3.2.3 Scale reliability tests

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales in Table 2 are all greater than 0.7, indicating that the reliability of the scale has been established (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The correlation coefficient between the item variable and the adjusted sum is greater than

Table 1 Profile of respondents

Classification criteria	Quantity	Rate (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Men	137	37.50
Women	231	62.50
<i>Age</i>		
18–24	130	35.30
25–34	160	43.50
35–55	61	16.60
Over 55	17	4.60
<i>Education</i>		
High school	68	18.50
College, University	225	61.10
Graduate	75	20.40
<i>Occupation</i>		
Student	134	36.40
Salaryman profession	24	6.50
Freelancer	40	10.90
Retail	110	29.90
Tourist service	41	11.10
Management of tourism business	19	5.20

0.3 for all factors with the exception of one affection (Aff2=0.265<0.3) item that was eliminated due to low load. The remaining scales are acceptable and appropriate.

3.2.4 Exploratory factor analysis

The results of the EFA are summarized in Table 3, along with the four-factor analysis result of 61.814 per cent. When the findings were evaluated, the value of each factor was greater than 0.4, which was consistent with the EFA (Hair et al. 2009). The Cronbach's alpha values of the factors indicated that they were adequate and exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.6 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The primary products entirely reflected the content of the components. All of these variables determined the extent to which locals perceived the influence of promoting sustainable tourism development. Most factor loading values were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ (Fidell et al. 2013). However, one emotional support item was eliminated due to weak loadings (ES1=0.441<0.5). The study model was appropriate (KMO=0.925; chi-squared=5557.892; df=276; P -value=0.000) (Hair et al. 2009).

Similarly, Table 3 displays the results of the EFA for tourism development support amongst local residents. According to the results, the total variance was 56.858 per cent. Cronbach's alpha values for all three components indicated that they were adequate and exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.6 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Similar to the EFA, the fundamental categories accurately reflected the content of the components. The median was set at 4.0. This research design was ideal for analysis (KMO=0.954; chi-squared=2606.570; df=55; P -value=0.000).

Table 2 Scale reliability test results

Observed variables	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected- item total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
<i>Information support (IS): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.869</i>				
IS1	11.640	7.717	0.661	0.855
IS2	11.800	7.293	0.767	0.814
IS3	11.860	6.987	0.735	0.826
IS4	11.800	7.119	0.722	0.832
<i>Emotional support (ES): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.879</i>				
ES1	14.990	10.880	0.590	0.880
ES2	15.110	10.004	0.709	0.854
ES3	15.170	9.685	0.769	0.839
ES4	15.160	9.547	0.794	0.832
ES5	15.120	10.284	0.696	0.857
<i>Peer support (PS): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.873</i>				
PS1	15.400	12.136	0.700	0.846
PS2	15.340	11.841	0.692	0.848
PS3	15.680	12.023	0.697	0.847
PS4	15.550	11.855	0.693	0.848
PS5	15.560	11.668	0.720	0.841
<i>Social media usage (SMU): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.883</i>				
SMU1	15.170	10.682	0.703	0.862
SMU2	15.440	10.805	0.681	0.867
SMU3	15.390	10.375	0.774	0.845
SMU4	15.290	10.330	0.698	0.864
SMU5	15.460	10.845	0.746	0.853
<i>Residents' perceived value (PV): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.886</i>				
PV1	16.460	12.112	0.712	0.863
PV2	16.510	12.185	0.709	0.864
PV3	16.530	11.774	0.731	0.859
PV4	16.520	12.223	0.712	0.864
PV5	16.550	11.729	0.752	0.854
<i>Cognition (Cog): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.902</i>				
Cog1	12.370	6.393	0.821	0.859
Cog2	12.370	6.970	0.739	0.889
Cog3	12.380	6.439	0.795	0.869
Cog4	12.410	6.373	0.772	0.878
<i>Affection (Aff): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.864</i>				
Aff1	12.410	6.533	0.736	0.816
Aff3	12.400	6.503	0.751	0.810
Aff4	12.420	6.594	0.717	0.825
Aff5	12.020	7.666	0.655	0.850
<i>Action tendency (Act): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.764</i>				
Act1	7.920	2.889	0.570	0.713
Act2	7.860	2.654	0.605	0.674
Act3	7.850	2.661	0.615	0.662

Table 3 Exploratory factor analysis

Factors/items	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained	Cronbach's alpha	Overall mean
Information support (IS)		1.463	4.656	0.869	
IS2	0.851				3.900
IS3	0.787				3.840
IS4	0.747				3.900
IS1	0.717				4.050
Emotional support (ES)		1.210	3.780	0.869	
ES4	0.891				3.730
ES3	0.857				3.720
ES5	0.638				3.770
ES2	0.627				3.780
Peer support (PS)		1.654	5.643	0.873	
PS2	0.873				4.040
PS5	0.731				3.820
PS3	0.721				3.700
PS1	0.708				3.980
PS4	0.696				3.830
Social media usage (SMU)		1.898	6.589	0.883	
SMU2	0.838				3.740
SMU5	0.782				3.720
SMU3	0.768				3.800
SMU4	0.764				3.900
SMU1	0.584				4.020
Residents' Perceived Value (PV)		10.016	41.936	0.886	
PV2	0.831				4.130
PV5	0.798				4.090
PV3	0.784				4.110
PV1	0.776				4.190
PV4	0.692				4.120
Residents' support for tourism development (RS)		6.665	56.858	0.933	
Cog2	0.840				4.14
Cog1	0.837				4.14
Cog3	0.808				4.13
Aff3	0.792				4.02
Cog4	0.792				4.10
Aff1	0.766				4.01
Aff5	0.751				4.40
Aff4	0.749				4.00
Act3	0.690				3.96
Act2	0.669				3.95
Act1	0.556				3.90
KMO					0.949
Bartlett's test	Chi-Square				8811.128
	df				595

$p < 0.001$

3.2.5 Verifying factor analysis

Table 4 displays the combined effects of the variables influencing local perceptions and support for sustainable tourism development. Related values included Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE, the aforementioned values were completely consistent and satisfied the established criteria.

The CFA model in Fig. 3 is used to evaluate the degree of convergence of factors in the model. The findings demonstrate that the research model is adequate (chi-squared=1221.992; $df=512$; P -value=0.000; $CMIN/df=2.387 < 3$; $GFI=0.831$; $TLI=0.907$; $CFI=0.915$; $RMSEA=0.062$) (Hair et al. 2009).

Figure 3 demonstrates that the one-way connection met the convergence and uniqueness requirements. In addition, discriminant values were used to evaluate AVE based on the squared correlation between articulated structures. The correlations between squared structures were always less significant than the AVE estimations. These structures were distinguished from other elements. Table 5 indicates that the indicators were also satisfied (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 2009).

3.3 Structural equation model

3.3.1 Model quality of fit and hypothesis testing

Structural equation modelling was used to demonstrate the relationships between the factors according to the research model to evaluate, measure and test the model's hypotheses. Figure 4 summarizes the findings of the SEM analysis on the relevance of the study data. The suggested model was regarded as good (chi-squared=1221.992; $df=512$; p -value=0.000; $CMIN/df=2.387 < 3$; $GFI=0.831$; $TLI=0.907$; $CFI=0.915$; $RMSEA=0.062$). As a result, the study model's reliability was proved (Hair et al. 2009).

3.3.2 Hypothesis testing using SEM

Table 6 verifies the significance of the study's hypotheses, demonstrating that all twelve hypotheses developed were significant with p -values < 0.05 ; therefore, the data supported all hypotheses.

Based on the findings presented in Table 7, it was observed that the indirect effect of Information support on Residents' support for tourism via Resident's perceived values (ISPVRS) was found to be statistically significant. However, the indirect effects of other factors were not deemed significant in this analysis.

Table 4 Confirmatory factor analysis

Term	Scale	No. of reliability test	Reliability test		Average variance extracted
			Cronbach's Alpha	Composite	
Residents' support for the development of tourism in Cantho, Vietnam	RS	11	0.933	0.935	0.568
	PV	5	0.873	0.873	0.579
	SMU	5	0.883	0.884	0.605
	PS	5	0.886	0.885	0.607
	ES	4	0.869	0.883	0.653
	IS	4	0.869	0.870	0.627

Fig. 3 CFA results of the saturated model

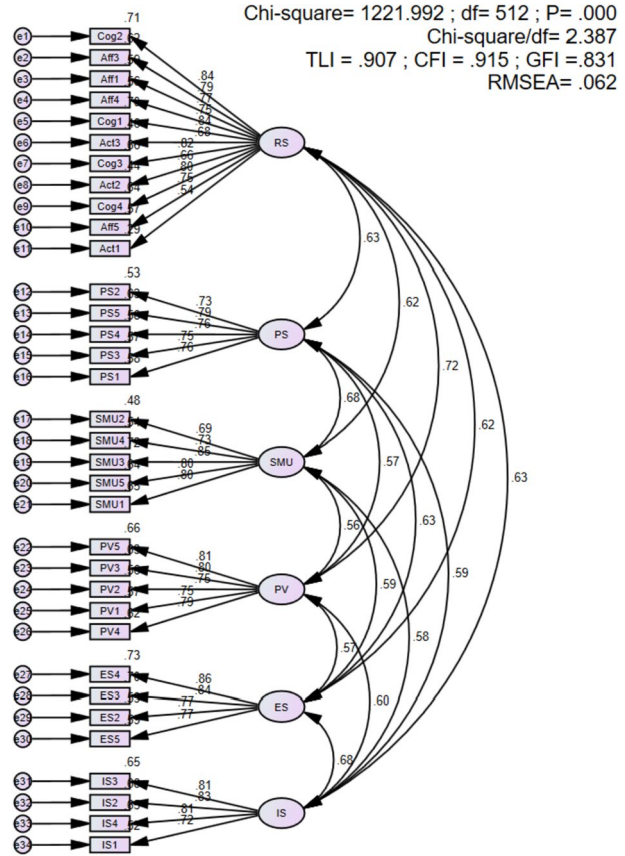


Table 5 Correlation matrix

Constructs	RS	PS	SMU	PV	ES	IS
RS	0.754					
PS	0.627***	0.761				
SMU	0.620***	0.676***	0.778			
PV	0.723***	0.569***	0.562***	0.779		
ES	0.624***	0.626***	0.592***	0.575***	0.808	
IS	0.625***	0.588***	0.581***	0.596***	0.677***	0.792

*** $p < .001$

The square root of the variance shared between the factors and their measures (average variance extracted) constitutes the bold diagonal elements. These represent the correlations between factors, while the off-diagonal elements denote the correlations between different factors. To ensure discriminant validity, it is essential that the diagonal elements be greater than any other corresponding row or column entry

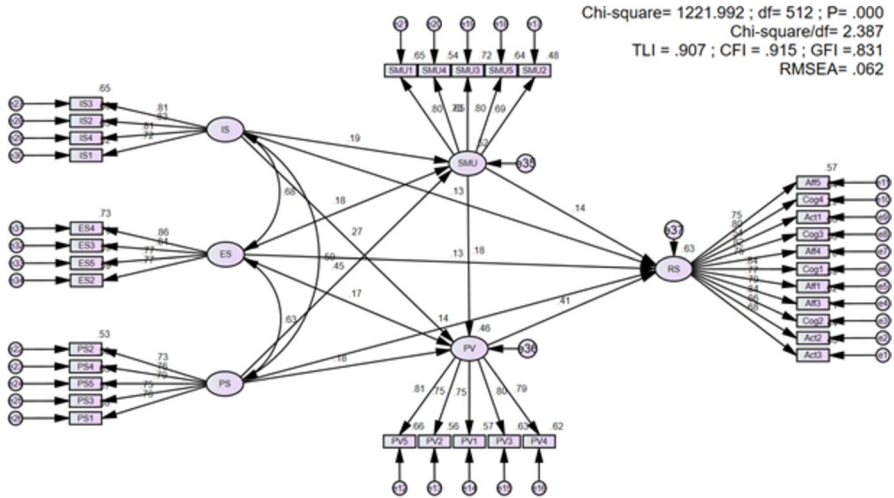


Fig. 4 Standardized SEM

4 Discussion and conclusions

This study aimed to provide concrete evidence of local residents’ support for sustainable tourism development based on the local community. The main objective of this study was to develop and test a scale to measure online social support of social networks to apply to the research field of people’s support for tourism. The survey results demonstrated the impact on value perception of using social networks and online social support, thereby promoting local people’s support for tourism development. The proposed model considers the use of social networks and their social support as new aspects that are particularly significant for tourism development and have an immediate impact on tourism development support. Twelve hypotheses were developed based on the examined correlations.

Can Tho residents gain a great deal of information support ($\beta = 0.195, p = 0.006$), emotional support ($\beta = 0.179, p = 0.014$), and especially peer support ($\beta = 0.450, p < 0.001$) by utilizing social media. The influence of social support on perceived value while using social media is also substantial, information support having the greatest positive effect ($\beta = 0.266, p < 0.001$), followed by emotional support ($\beta = 0.173, p = 0.023$), and then peer support ($\beta = 0.181, p = 0.019$). The refer to the network of residents formed via voluntary participation in interactions between residents from diverse backgrounds, allowing residents to connect regardless of ethnicity, sex or gender, profession, income or religion. Social media facilitates the connection of unrelated users who share a common interest. These members share a range of new information, thereby gaining access to useful, new knowledge and expertise (Seo et al. 2020). For that reason, informational support and peer support are always highly appreciated when it comes to the social support that social networks provide to users, including in healthcare (Zhang et al. 2021) and in the e-commerce environment (Hu et al. 2019). This study found that the more social support Can Tho residents received from social networks, the more they utilized social networks to acquire and share information about tourism. Participation in online social networks and receiving social support simultaneously increased residents’ understanding of the significance of tourist activities, positively influencing their attitudes towards tourism support. This finding is consistent

Table 6 Coefficients from SEM model

Hypothesized relationship	Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	C.R	P	Conclusion
Hypothesis 1: Resident's perceived values → Residents' support tourism	0.318	0.414	6.734	***	Supported
Hypothesis 2: Social media usage → Resident's perceived values	0.231	0.183	2.496	0.013	Supported
Hypothesis 3: Social media usage → Residents' support tourism	0.138	0.142	2.328	0.020	Supported
Hypothesis 4a: Information support → Social media usage	0.150	0.195	2.758	0.006	Supported
Hypothesis 4b: Information support → Resident's perceived values	0.257	0.266	3.555	***	Supported
Hypothesis 5a: Emotional support → Social media usage	0.145	0.179	2.458	0.014	Supported
Hypothesis 5b: Emotional support → Resident's perceived values	0.176	0.173	2.273	0.023	Supported
Hypothesis 6a: Peer support → Social media usage	0.391	0.450	6.227	***	Supported
Hypothesis 6b: Peer support → Resident's perceived values	0.198	0.181	2.349	0.019	Supported
Hypothesis 7: Information support → Residents' support tourism	0.094	0.126	2.015	0.044	Supported
Hypothesis 8: Emotional support → Residents' support tourism	0.099	0.127	2.013	0.044	Supported
Hypothesis 9: Peer support → Residents' support tourism	0.119	0.142	2.216	0.027	Supported

S.E. standard error, C.R critical ratios

*** $p < 0.01$

Table 7 Indirect effects

Indirect Path	Unstandardized estimate	Lower	Upper	<i>P</i> -value	Standardized estimate	Supported
IS SMU PV	0.035	0.002	0.120	0.079	0.036	No
IS SMU PV RS	0.011	0.001	0.046	0.074	0.036	No
IS SMU RS	0.021	0.000	0.079	0.097	0.028	No
IS PV RS	0.082	0.026	0.162	0.006	0.110**	Yes
ES SMU PV	0.033	-0.001	0.125	0.133	0.033	No
ES SMU PV RS	0.011	0.000	0.043	0.136	0.033	No
ES SMU RS	0.020	0.000	0.088	0.092	0.025	No
ES PV RS	0.056	0.002	0.130	0.089	0.072	No
PS SMU PV	0.090	0.015	0.215	0.051	0.083	No
PS SMU PV RS	0.029	0.004	0.074	0.054	0.083	No
PS SMU RS	0.054	0.008	0.144	0.057	0.064	No
PS PV RS	0.063	0.005	0.173	0.064	0.075	No
SMU PV RS	0.073	0.007	0.163	0.070	0.076	No

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.010$, * $p < 0.050$, $p < 0.100$

with previous studies pointing out the importance of online social support that users receive from social networks and their influence on people's perceptions and behaviour (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Ogie et al. 2022). The survey results prove that online social support (information support, emotional support, peer support) is not only useful in emergency situations such as epidemics and natural disasters (Ogie et al. 2022; Zhong et al. 2021) or in social commerce (Nadeem et al. 2019; Sheikh et al. 2019), but is also very useful for increasing residents' perceived tourism values.

According to the findings in Table 6, residents' utilization of social networks has a positive and substantial effect on their perceptions of value ($\beta = 0.183$, $p = 0.013$). This demonstrates that the participation and collaboration in the online social network of numerous stakeholders, such as tourism organizations, tour operators, local organizations and visitors, influence residents' perceptions of the value and benefits. Multiple studies have shown that there may be a conflict of exchange interests among different parties involved in tourist development, thereby impeding the long-term growth of tourism operations (Niezgoda and Czernek 2014; Phuc and Nguyen 2020). The social network therefore functions as a mediator in these disputes. By means of group influence, social networks can generate a consensus on ideals and rectify inequities in the distribution of benefits (Chang 2018). This coordination helps to balance the interests of tourism development stakeholders and establishes communication policies to enhance the sharing of information between local governments and communities (De Pourcq et al. 2017; Phuc and Nguyen 2020). This result is consistent with Lee et al.'s (2023) observation that problems can often be better addressed by integrating different ideological and developmental approaches.

There was a strong correlation between social support, social media usage, residents' perceived values, and residents' support for tourism development. Information support ($\beta = 0.126$, $p = 0.044$), emotional support ($\beta = 0.127$, $p = 0.044$), peer support ($\beta = 0.142$, $p = 0.027$), social media usage ($\beta = 0.142$, $p = 0.020$), and residents' perceived value ($\beta =$

0.414, $p < 0.001$) all significantly and favourably explain residents' support for tourism. The study found encouraging and consistent findings when compared with earlier evaluations, indicating a substantial association between residents' perceived values and their support for sustainable tourism growth (Phuc and Nguyen 2020; Styliadis et al. 2014). Previous studies have highlighted the economic, sociocultural and environmental implications of perceived values, which are thought to be variables influencing community support (Chang 2018; Phuc and Nguyen 2020).

The findings from Table 7 suggest an indirect influence of information support received from social media on residents' support for tourism through perceived value ($\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.006$). Information disseminated through social media plays a pivotal role in shaping a favourable perception of how tourism affects local communities. Exposure to content showcasing the positive facets of tourism, such as job creation, cultural preservation, or business prospects, can foster a greater inclination among residents to support these initiatives. Moreover, when residents access information detailing the advantages, activities, and repercussions of tourism, it contributes to their comprehension of the tourism industry. This enhanced understanding prompts a heightened awareness of the contributions tourism brings to the community. Consequently, residents are more likely to demonstrate support and engagement with tourism initiatives when armed with a comprehensive understanding of its impact on the local environment.

The use of social media and increased tourism awareness will have a positive effect on the attitudes of Can Tho residents, helping to reduce negative attitudes towards tourists. It was discovered that three categories of travel information assistance predict social media use. The more assistance residents receive, the greater their reliance on social media for travel advice. Information support has a significant impact on how residents perceive the value of tourism. Residents have obtained a substantial quantity of active and passive information from news feeds on social media and continue to share it with their social networks. In contrast, residents' attitudes may be better predicted by emotional support and peer support than by informational support. This suggests that tourist information alone, such as information provided by the government about tourism-related activities, cannot alter the attitudes of locals. In contrast, emotional contact or information sharing from other community members, supplemented with information about local tourism activities on social media, showed a much stronger impact on attitude and behaviour change. This result is consistent with research on the social support of social networks during the COVID period by Zhang et al. (2021) and on the social support of intermediaries for local communities by Lee et al. (2023).

The support and participation of residents is a prerequisite for sustainable tourism development. Many studies have examined specific methods to increase support and increase citizen participation. While previous studies addressed the impact of social media on citizens' support and participation using qualitative methods (Nunkoo et al. 2020; Senyao and Ha 2022), the current study has provided a scale specifically to measure the impact of online social support on residents' perception and attitudes towards tourism development. At the same time, traditional social network theory is renewed with online social networks, suitable for the modern information society. From there, a number of recommendations were proposed from the research results.

5 Managerial implications

This study investigates the impact of social networks and social support on residents' attitudes towards tourism development in Can Tho through perceived value. The research makes the following fundamental contributions to knowledge.

Firstly, this study addresses the shortcomings of previous research on how to approach the opinions of residents through the influence of social network theory. This study contributes to the integration of two social exchange theories, SNT and the information society analytic perspective, in order to investigate the contribution of social networks to elevating awareness and promoting active community support. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of aligning stakeholders' interests through group influence and attaining a consensus on the advantages of social media.

Secondly, the study makes significant contributions to determining the factors that influence local residents' support. Previous studies have examined the impact of residents' perceptions of values and interests on their support and participation but have not addressed how social networks and online social support impact people's awareness of and attitudes towards tourism activities. Consequently, this study points out new findings: there is a relationship between social media usage and residents' perceptions. In addition, social support including information support, emotional support and peer support have a positive impact on local residents' awareness and attitudes towards supporting tourism development.

Thirdly, this study developed a scale to measure online social support from social networks. While other studies generally mention the impact of social networks, the online social support scale (informational support, emotional support, social support) has provided a specific assessment criterion. The results also emphasize the contribution of emotional support and peer support to perfect the formation and development of support networks to raise awareness and strengthen residents' support.

Additionally, the research has practical implications for tourism management in tourist destinations, especially in rural areas. The results demonstrate the impact of social networks, particularly Facebook and social support, on local residents' perceptions and attitudes regarding Can Tho in Vietnam. Therefore, local governments must effectively utilize the benefits of social networks to raise residents' awareness in order to obtain their support for long-term development. Tourist information operations in Vietnam are relatively fragmented and formal; local tourist development activities are handled and controlled from the top down; there is a lack of bottom-up input; and most people are unaware of local initiatives and planning (Nguyen et al. 2022; Nhan et al. 2022). With social support such as information support, emotional support and peer support, social networks have had a significantly faster and greater impact than traditional media's one-way information assistance. People are not accustomed to or capable of going directly to state departments for local tourist information and responses. However, they have a tendency to explore social networks in order to obtain updated local travel information from their Facebook acquaintances. Furthermore, residents are the main stakeholders and an important component, so in the decision-making process there needs to be periodic consultation with locals to understand their attitudes and perceptions (Phuc and Nguyen 2020), thereby contributing to reducing conflicts and other negative aspects of sustainable development tourism. Facebook allows users to engage in multi-dimensional communication and is the most popular tool adopted by organizations to maintain stakeholder engagement (Jung et al. 2017; Maxwell and Carboni 2016). The introduction of government information from the Vietnamese government on the Facebook exemplifies the government's successful approach to residents, particularly during the global outbreak of COVID, when social isolation was widespread.

The effective use of social media to distribute information will improve communication and establish a unique approach. Residents can use social media to learn about unfamiliar or novel scientific topics by accessing a variety of images and narratives. This is a significant benefit for local residents with diverse educational and cultural contexts (Shockleya

et al. 2020). Locals with varying degrees of cultural awareness will believe in development and, as a result, assist businesses and municipalities in facilitating the development process (Nunkoo et al. 2020). Several service and tourism-related businesses in Can Tho have collaborated to establish local tourist fan pages for the purpose of promoting and delivering their services. However, given their commercialized and spontaneous business, their ability to provide social assistance to society is limited. If each city had an official local Facebook page maintained by the local Tourism Promotion Centre with participation from stakeholders such as businesses, tourism employees, residents and visitors, then the level of information dissemination, increased awareness, participation and support for sustainable tourism development among stakeholders would be enhanced.

6 Limitations and future research

Due to the study's limitation to three huge tourist communities in Can Tho city, the sample lacks characteristics that are representative of all tourism activities in Can Tho. Therefore, future research should be conducted on a larger scale and with larger populations to ensure greater coverage and breadth. In addition, the research is limited to the impact of social networks on local residents' perceptions and attitudes regarding tourism initiatives. Future research should examine additional benefits of social networks in tourism, such as emotional solidarity and the improvement of cultural intelligence to help residents better comprehend and manage cross-cultural situations.

Appendix

See Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8 Survey instruments of the items

Constructs	Measure items	Sources
Information support (IS)	IS1. I access Can Tho information from social networks IS2. If I have a question or need help, I usually look for answers on social media IS3. I'd rather use social media for information than ask someone directly IS4. On social media, I learned good experiences I never knew from anywhere else	Zhong et al. (2021)
Emotional support (ES)	ES1. Information and experiences on social media help me reduce stress ES2. If I post my concerns on private forums or groups, members will try to help me ES3. I feel supported and comforted when I post my life experiences ES4. Social media members expressed concern when I encountered difficulties ES5. When I'm depressed, members on social media will try to understand me and make me feel better	Zhong et al. (2021)
Peer support (PS)	PS1. Social media friends provided me with additional information that I had never known before PS2. I use social media to read about other people's experiences PS3. I use social media to share practical tips and recommendations PS4. I'd rather get advice from my social media friends than from other sources PS5. I've used some of the information I've learned from my social media friends as part of my own strategies	Zhong et al. (2021)
Social media usage (SMU)	SMU1. Social media helps me look up information more quickly and conveniently SMU2. I spend a lot of time thinking about content on social media and planning to use it on my own SMU3. I feel the urge to use social media more for more information SMU4. I think the use of social media has a positive impact on people's perceptions and attitudes about local tourism SMU5. I think I'm getting the benefit of social media to be more knowledgeable about travel	Uzir et al. (2020), Zhong et al. (2021)
Residents' perceived value (PV)	PV1. Through social media, I know that developing local tourism will benefit me PV2. The development of tourism in the locality has benefited all local residents PV3. Tourism development has increased job opportunities for locals PV4. Many visitors have supported the business activities of the locals PV5. The development of tourism has increased incomes for individuals in the region	Phuc and Nguyen (2020)
Support tourism cognition (Cog.)	Cog1. I welcome visitors to visit Cog2. Tourism development will not cause inconvenience and hassle Cog3. There have been many opportunities for tourism development in recent years Cog4. To avoid environmental degradation, the number of tourists should be controlled even if tourism income decreases	Chang (2018)

Table 8 (continued)

Constructs	Measure items	Sources
Affection (Aff.)	Aff1. I believe tourism should be actively encouraged in my community Aff2. Visitors are friendly and sociable with the population Aff3. I am ready to assist travelers in their daily lives Aff4. Tourism development has more positives than negatives Aff5. I support tourism and want to see it become an important part of my community	Chang (2018)
Action tendency (Act)	Act1. I will introduce the characteristics of my locality to visitors when the opportunity arises Act2. I will partner with tourism activities to create a local highlight Act3. I will partner with the local community to improve the environment and public facilities	Chang (2018)

Table 9 Factor correlation matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1.000	.574	.587	.666	.598	.568
2	.574	1.000	.597	.496	.530	.529
3	.587	.597	1.000	.499	.521	.536
4	.666	.496	.499	1.000	.564	.515
5	.598	.530	.521	.564	1.000	.604
6	.568	.529	.536	.515	.604	1.000

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization

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