Adoption of ChatGPT for Travel Information: Exploring Innovation, Trust, and Word of Mouth among Gen Z

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ABSTRACT
The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed how individuals search for information, including travel destination information. This study aims to examine the influence of ChatGPT's innovation characteristics and perceived trustworthiness on affective response and word of mouth (WOM) among Generation Z users in Surabaya, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 100 respondents through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that ChatGPT's innovation characteristics positively influence both affective response and perceived trustworthiness. Affective response significantly impacts WOM, highlighting the critical role of emotional engagement in promoting user recommendations. However, perceived trustworthiness does not directly affect WOM, indicating that trust alone is insufficient to drive users to recommend ChatGPT without strong emotional involvement. This study expand research on AI adoption in the tourism sector and provides practical insights for AI developers and tourism marketers targeting Generation Z users.

Keywords: *ChatGPT, Innovation Characteristics, Perceived Trustworthiness, Affective Response, Word of Mouth, Generation Z, Tourism Information Search, AI Adoption.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including how individuals search for travel information, select tourist destinations, and share travel experiences. Among the prominent technologies emerging in recent years is generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), with one of the most popular forms being ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI. ChatGPT employs natural language processing to answer queries, provide destination recommendations, and assist users in planning trips automatically and interactively. This technology has been widely adopted across critical sectors such as education, tourism, public services, and e-commerce (Dwivedi et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2023).

Particularly among younger generations such as Generation Z, generative AI has become one of the most frequently utilized technologies. Generation Z, comprising individuals born between 1997 and 2012, is recognized as a cohort deeply familiar with digital technology. They spend a significant amount of time online, are quick to adopt technological changes, and are highly responsive to digital experiences perceived as practical and engaging (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). In metropolitan cities like Surabaya, the high penetration of internet access and ease of access to digital devices make Generation Z a highly potential and strategic group for exploring the use of ChatGPT in travel destination searches (BPS Kota Surabaya, 2023). In the context of adopting new technologies such as ChatGPT, several factors influence user acceptance and behavior. One widely referenced theoretical framework is the Diffusion of Innovations Theory by Rogers (2003), which highlights that innovation characteristics namely, relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, and trialability play a crucial role in influencing adoption decisions. Previous studies have confirmed that these characteristics significantly affect initial perceptions and user interest towards a technological innovation (Kim et al., 2022).

However, when utilizing AI for travel information searches, the perceived trustworthiness of the technology becomes a critical issue that cannot be overlooked. Despite the convenience offered by AI platforms like ChatGPT, users often raise concerns regarding the accuracy of information, data security, and potential biases in the recommendations provided (Shi et al., 2021). Consequently, trust perception becomes a key determinant of whether users will genuinely rely on ChatGPT for searching travel destinations and subsequently recommend it to others (Kim

et al., 2023). Before users spread information to others, an emotional response, known as affective response, typically occurs. This includes feelings of interest and positive evaluation towards the use of technology. When users feel interested and satisfied with their experience in searching for travel information via ChatGPT, they are more likely to share these positive experiences through word of mouth (WOM) (Han et al., 2019). Word of mouth has emerged as a powerful marketing tool, particularly among Generation Z, who are active on social media, online forums, and messaging platforms. When Generation Z perceives that ChatGPT effectively and accurately assists them in finding travel destination information, they are more inclined to recommend ChatGPT usage to their friends, family, and broader social networks (Gursoy et al., 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how innovation characteristics, trust in ChatGPT, and affective responses can drive WOM in the context of travel information searches. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of innovation characteristics and perceived trustworthiness on affective response and word of mouth in the context of ChatGPT usage for travel destination searches among Generation Z in Surabaya. This research is expected to contribute academically to the development of technology adoption theories while providing practical insights for AI application developers and tourism industry stakeholders seeking to leverage the potential of Generation Z in disseminating technology-based travel information.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the influence of ChatGPT's Innovation Characteristics, perceived trustworthiness, and affective response on word of mouth (WOM) among users of AI technology, specifically ChatGPT. A quantitative approach was selected because it allows the researcher to objectively measure relationships between variables and statistically analyze the data to test predetermined hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2021). The population of this study consists of individuals categorized as Generation Z, namely those born between 1997 and 2012, who are currently between 12 to 27 years old and reside in Surabaya. The inclusion criteria for respondents are that they must have used ChatGPT at least once within the last six months. The sampling technique employed is purposive random sampling, where respondents are randomly selected but based on specific considerations. The sample size in this study is 100 respondents, which is considered adequate for analysis using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique (Hair et al., 2019). Data were collected through the distribution of an online questionnaire, which was developed based on indicators from previous research and modified to suit the context of AI usage among Generation Z.

2.1. Measurement

Table 1. Measurement

Variable	Measurement
ChatGPT Innovative Characteristic Fakfare et al (2025)	Using ChatGPT is very convient
	Using ChatGPT makes my life easier
	Overall, I think that ChatGPT is not complicated to use
	It is not complicated to do everything I want
	I would not be complicated for me to learn and understand ChatGPT
	ChatGPT fits various aspect of hospitality/tourism information
	ChatGPT fits into diverse hospitality/tourism information search situation
	The usefulness of ChatGPT is highly observable
	Many people can notice the benefits of ChatGPT
	The utility of ChatGPT for hospitality/tourism information can be noticeable
	The trialability of ChatGPT use is high
	The degree of being triable that ChatGPT has is high
	The ChatGPT use is easy to try
Affective Response Fakfare et al (2025)	Using ChatGPT would be beneficial
	Using ChatGPT would be wise
	Using ChatGPT would be satisfactory
	I want keep trying ChatGPT for tourism information
	I'd like to confirm the utility of ChatGPT for tourism information
	I desire to keep trying ChatGPT to determine its utility
Trustworthiness	ChatGPT provides reliable information

Variable	Measurement
Jun et al. (2014); Kim et al. (2022)	ChatGPT acts in the best interests of the user
	ChatGPT is not manipulative
Word of Mouth (WOM) Han et al. (2019); Al-Ansi et al. (2019)	I would like to recommend ChatGPT to friends or family especially for finding tourism information
	I would like to share my experience using ChatGPT in finding tourism information through social media
	I plan to expand my experience using ChatGPT
	I encourage others to use ChatGPT

3. RESULT

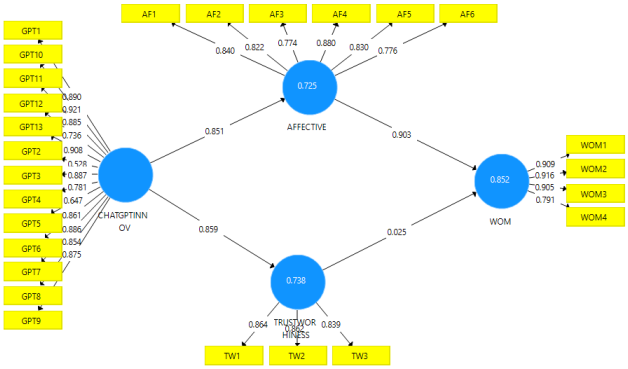

Figure 1. Output SmartPLS

3.1. Convergent Validity

Based on the table below, it can be concluded that all constructs meet the requirements for convergent validity. This is indicated by all item outer loadings exceeding the threshold value of 0.5 (Chin, 1998)

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Variable	Measurement	Outer Loading	Criteria
ChatGPT Innovative Characteristic)¥	GPT1	0.890	Valid
	GPT2	0.528	Valid
	GPT3	0.887	Valid
	GPT4	0.781	Valid
	GPT5	0.647	Valid
	GPT6	0.861	Valid
	GPT7	0.886	Valid
	GPT8	0.854	Valid
	GPT9	0.875	Valid
	GPT10	0.921	Valid
	GPT11	0.885	Valid
	GPT12	0.736	Valid
	GPT13	0.908	Valid
Affective Response	AF1	0.840	Valid

Variable	Measurement	Outer Loading	Criteria
	AF2	0.822	Valid
	AF3	0.774	Valid
	AF4	0.880	Valid
	AF5	0.830	Valid
	AF6	0.776	Valid
Trustworthiness	TW1	0.864	Valid
	TW2	0.862	Valid
	TW3	0.839	Valid
Word of Mouth (WOM)	WOM1	0.909	Valid
	WOM2	0.916	Valid
	WOM3	0.905	Valid
	WOM4	0.791	Valid

3.2. Cronbach Alpha, Reliability, AVE

Based on Table 3, all constructs meet the reliability and convergent validity criteria. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values for all variables exceed 0.7, indicating high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019; Chin, 1998). Additionally, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.5, confirming good convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Specifically, ChatGPT Innovative Characteristic, Affective Response, Trustworthiness, and Word of Mouth (WOM) show strong reliability and validity, ensuring that the indicators appropriately measure their respective constructs. Thus, the measurement model is considered robust for further analysis

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha, Reliability, AVE

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ChatGPT Innovative Characteristic	0.960	0.965	0.685
Affective Response	0.903	0.925	0.674
Trustworthiness	0.816	0.891	0.731
Word of Mouth (WOM)	0.903	0.933	0.777

3.3. Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Variable	Original Sample (O)	P Values
ChatGPT Innovative Characteristic » Affective Response	0.851	0.000
ChatGPT Innovative Characteristic » Trustworthiness	0.859	0.000
Affective Response » Word of Mouth (WOM)	0.903	0.000

Variable	Original Sample (O)	P Values
Trustworthiness » Word of Mouth (WOM)	0.025	**0.798**

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. ChatGPT Innovative Characteristics on Affective Response

The innovative characteristics of ChatGPT, such as ease of use (relative advantage), alignment with user needs (compatibility), and ease of trial (trialability), can foster a positive affective response among users. Affective response involves feelings of interest and positive evaluation toward the use of technology. When technology is perceived to be beneficial, easy to use, and aligned with expectations, users are more likely to feel engaged and positively evaluate it (Rogers, 2003; Kim et al., 2022). Research by Jun et al. (2014) also shows that positive perceptions of innovation significantly strengthen users' emotional engagement, thus enhancing their interest and evaluation of the technology. Therefore, the innovative characteristics of ChatGPT directly contribute to building a positive emotional response.

4.2. ChatGPT Innovative Characteristics on Trustworthiness

Innovation characteristics such as the ease of observing results (observability) and compatibility with users' needs (compatibility) also influence users' perceived trustworthiness toward AI technologies like ChatGPT. Users are more likely to trust technologies that they perceive as providing tangible value, being user-friendly, and producing observable outcomes (Shi et al., 2021). Research by Kim et al. (2023a) found that positive perceptions of AI innovations enhance users' trust in the system. Similarly, Dwivedi et al. (2024) discovered that the perception of a technology's innovative excellence significantly increases users' trust. Thus, the higher the perception of ChatGPT's innovative characteristics, the greater the level of user trust toward this technology.

4.3. Affective Response on Word of Mouth (WOM)

A positive affective response, such as feelings of interest and positive evaluations toward ChatGPT, can encourage users to share their experiences through word of mouth (WOM). When users experience emotional satisfaction, they are more likely to communicate their positive experiences to others, either directly or via digital platforms (Han et al., 2019). Gursoy et al. (2023) further emphasize that strong emotional engagement is a key predictor of WOM behavior among users of new technologies. Kim et al. (2022) also support this finding, indicating that heightened interest and positive evaluations drive users' intentions to share their experiences with innovative technologies.

4.4. Perceived Trustworthiness on Word of Mouth (WOM)

Although trustworthiness is often assumed to positively influence WOM, several studies indicate that trust in technology does not necessarily lead directly to WOM behavior. Shi et al. (2021) revealed that trust primarily influences continued usage intentions rather than encouraging recommendation behaviors. Kim et al. (2023) found that users' trust in AI technologies like ChatGPT contributes more to reuse intentions rather than directly motivating word of mouth. This suggests that although users may trust ChatGPT, trust alone may not sufficiently drive them to recommend the technology unless combined with strong emotional responses or highly satisfying usage experiences.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the influence of ChatGPT's innovative characteristics and perceived trustworthiness on affective response and word of mouth (WOM) among Generation Z users in

Surabaya. The findings indicate that ChatGPT's innovative characteristics significantly impact both affective responses and perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, affective response positively influences WOM, highlighting the crucial role of emotional engagement in encouraging users to share their experiences. Interestingly, perceived trustworthiness was found to have no direct significant effect on WOM, suggesting that trust alone is insufficient to drive recommendation behavior without strong emotional involvement. These results contribute to the growing body of research on AI adoption, particularly in the tourism information search context, and underscore the importance of designing user-centric, emotionally engaging AI experiences to foster organic promotion through WOM

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