Enhancing community consensus in Oman tourism: A communication approach

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ABSTRACT

Background: As the world pays increasing attention to innovations in the tourism sector, this study will examine how local communities respond to such innovations, particularly in Oman, which is diversifying its economy through tourism. This study highlights several factors influencing stakeholders' acceptance of innovative tourism, including local communities, businesses, and tourism students. **Purpose:** This study aimed to identify the determinants of whether tourism enterprises adopt innovative practices and effective communication strategies to diffuse information and create awareness regarding creative tourism. **Methods:** The current study employed a quantitative methodological approach based on data gathered from 533 respondents representing a cross-section of tourism industry stakeholders. **Results:** The findings illustrate significant considerations regarding the acceptability of Oman's new tourism development, with a great emphasis on communication strategies. Equally, the research outlines real implications for countries interested in developing innovative tourism by highlighting a pronounced active community approach. This study was conducted in specific geographic regions, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future studies can be performed with a broader selection of locations and stakeholder perspectives to increase the validation of the Diffusion of Innovation model for tourism contexts. **Conclusion:** This study emphasizes the need for community participation in tourism innovation processes. A sense of ownership creates more enthusiasm and cohesion among local stakeholders and encourages them to accept new tourism practices socially. **Implications:** This research strengthens community dialogue regarding tourism. This study adds to the literature on the diffusion of innovation in the tourism industry by providing empirical evidence on the adoption of innovative tourism practices.

Keywords: Innovative tourism; community consensus; communication strategies; Diffusion of Innovation theory; stakeholder engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an essential part of Oman's economic diversification efforts to reduce its dependence on oil. Tourism contributed 2.9 percent to GDP in 2019. The sector struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic (Oxford Business, 2023). Fitch Solutions International reports that Oman's tourism business is recovering owing to digital marketing and new investments. Thus, the sector contributed 2.4% to GDP in 2021. The first comprehensive digital platform was established in June 2021 (Oman Observer, 2022) to boost national and international investment and attract 11.7 million tourists by 2040. Oman intends to raise the tourism sector's share of GDP more than 3% by 2030 (Tripathi & Al Shahri, 2024). To achieve Oman's "Vision 2040", the government is improving worldwide performance, growing and strengthening product offerings, exhibiting differentiated destinations, and facilitating traveller-destination engagement (Said & Al Obidani, 2022).

Oman has many world-class hotels and resorts for domestic and international travellers. Modern airports, clean roadways, boutique hotels, and luxury resorts have been built with infrastructure investments. The Omani government has developed tourism because it can boost economic growth (Muthuraman & Al Haziazi, 2019). Foreign visitor visits to Oman rose among the top ten fastest in 2022 compared to 2019. Skift, a US travel news and research firm, ranks Oman seventh internationally in 2022, with a 38% increase in visitors from 2019.

BMI expects Oman's tourism sector to increase through 2027 and beyond. The government is designing a tourism strategy to support "Vision 2040" growth, attract investment, and improve visitor experiences.

However, the success of the aforementioned tourism strategies requires community support and consent (Tripathi et al., 2023). More research is needed to gather community consensus on innovative tourism practices initiatives. While the diffusion of innovation (DoI) model is commonly used in various contexts to understand the adoption and spread of innovations, its applicability in creating awareness and encouraging community acceptance of Omani tourism practices remains unexplored. Through the DoI model, this research seeks to ascertain how this innovative approach can be enhanced in recognition and acceptance by the Omani community. This research addresses this knowledge gap through an evidence-based view that will assist policymakers in making plans and regulations supporting inclusive tourism development. This research aims to improve visitor satisfaction, ensure increased investment, and drive socioeconomic development in Oman's tourism sector.

This study examines the critical role of communication in driving consensus and community acceptance of innovative tourism in Oman. As the tourism sector seeks to recover and grow post-pandemic, ensuring stakeholder engagement and local acceptance is critical for sustaining innovation in tourism development.

Innovative tourism initiatives and strategic communication playcritical role in aligning recovery efforts with community needs and expectations? This research aims to understand how communities in Oman adopt innovative tourism practices by examining the stages of the Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) model, namely, awareness, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation; identify key factors that influence the acceptance and adoption of such innovations, particularly from the perspectives of diverse local stakeholders; and establish a comprehensive framework that outlines effective strategies and actions to build community consensus around tourism innovations. Ultimately, this research offers practical recommendations to overcome potential challenges and utilize integrated communication strategies to raise community awareness, foster community support, and promote sustainable development in Oman's evolving tourism landscape.

Innovation can transform any industry by developing new and improved ideas, products, and services that benefit both people and society (Davila et al., 2012). Thus, tourism innovation involves the use of novel methods to improve travellers' experiences and business performance (Hall & Allan, 2019). Every social invention and novelty spreads and becomes progressively accepted (Malek & Costa, 2015). Tourism development efforts need community support and acceptability; thus, participation is crucial. It also delivers advantages to the local communities. The success of tourism depends on community involvement in planning and management. Lack of information and knowledge often prevents involvement. Awareness helps change views, which influence decision-making about new things and ideas. Experts concur that rational decision-making works (Bizzarri et al., 2022). Effective communication helps community members understand the potential benefits of innovative tourism through multiple communication channels, which helps them adopt new tourism practices (Sigala et al., 2025). Researchers have found that interpersonal and digital communication channels increase innovation awareness and understanding (Rogers, 2003). Such channels help recipients grasp the invention and its benefits, making information more accessible and relevant.

Communication channels are used to persuade people to adopt an innovation. Advanced communication channels such as electronic media, ads, campaigns, expert opinions, and social media materials favorably influence beliefs and attitudes (Tran & Corner, 2016). Information, opinions, and social cues from effective communication channels influence decision-making (Mustafa & Al-Abdallah, 2020). Researchers note that peer networks, expert guidance, and online reviews favorably impact innovation adoption decisions (Goldenberg et al., 2009). These channels help consumers understand the pros, cons, risks, and societal trends of an innovation before adopting it (Fry et al., 2018). This applies to innovative tourism.

Successful implementation of innovations requires effective communication channels as they facilitate the flow of instructions, work support, and feedback (Stachová et al., 2017). Research shows that due to ineffective or unreliable communication, many problems occur during the implementation of the innovation process (Cannavacciuolo et al., 2015). Effective communication is essential when it involves significant group character and participation (Arnfalk et al., 2016). Communication channels, such as well-designed training programs, guidebooks, and online communities, positively influence innovation implementation. These channels provide individuals with the necessary support and resources to exercise their ability to adapt and utilize innovations (Rogers, 2003).

Communication channels are crucial during this confirmation and approval stage, when individuals want reassurance and acceptance for innovations (Turnbull & Meenaghan, 1980). According to a study, social media, online forums, and user feedback influence innovation adoption confirmation. These channels boost trust in adopted innovations through social support, testimonials, and feedback. Better group performance requires communication (Ali et al., 2020). If authorities emphasize communication to share their opinions and gain rewards, people will be motivated to succeed. A trustworthy environment and reliable information sources from effective communication, time, and resources will be used. Poor communication can produce misunderstandings and disruptions, leading to poor decisions and performance, especially in innovation. Communication affects innovation, decision-making, and results (Rahimnia & Molavi, 2020). A study found that favourable innovation adoption decisions lead to continued and further adoption. Adverse decisions cause innovation rejection or discontinuation. (Rogers, 2003). Innovations are adopted or rejected based on their perceived benefits, risks, compatibility, and relative advantages.

RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative research approach has been used to identify and measure two contrasting modes of reality. Based on the research objectives, the authors used random sampling (probability sampling) and snowball sampling (non-probability sampling method) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which were adopted to reach tourism stakeholders and local communities. First, based on the pilot study, a questionnaire was designed to include 10 constructs such as of awareness/knowledge (6 items), pursuasion (2 items), decision (5 items), implementation (4 items), confirmation (1 item), adoption (2 items), rejection (3 items), continue adoption (3 items), discontinue adoption and continue rejection, and integrated communication strategy (11 items). Some items in the questionnaire are adopted from the previous studies relevant to this study, with some modifications (Tripathi & Al Shahri, 2024). The Likert scale used is 1 = SD, 2 = D, 3 = N, 4 = A, 5 = SA. The ethical approval has been taken from the

University's research department to collect data. A total of 533 responses were collected from Salalah, Dhofar region, Muscat tourism community, local communities, businesses, and students. Community engagement occurred during the Empty Quarter Festival and Muscat Sustainability Week in the second and third phases of the study. Data was collected in-person and online. The author also visited Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat Hospitality Academy, Oman College of Tourism, and Oman National Institute. The Student and Community Services Centre head and department heads have collaborated on data collection. Due to Oman's average age (29.2 years), this study sampled students, tourism stakeholders, and local residents (Worldometers, 2023). Students need to work after graduation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The usable sample (533) included respondents of all ages, with the majority (84.8%) under 35. The sample had 36.4% men and 63.6% women. College graduates comprised 68.1% of participants. Financially, 64.7% of participants were middle class. The maximum responses were recorded from Omani nationals (98.1%). Students (49.2%) were the most prevalent occupation. Table 1 lists all respondents' backgrounds.

Data: WarpPLS8 performed PLS-SEM on the data (Kock, 2024). PLS-SEM handles small samples. Measurement and structural models must be estimated (Hair et al., 2022). SEM confirmed that the dataset met the normality assumption that skewness and kurtosis should be between -3 and +3 (Hair et al., 2022). Skewness ranged from -1.247 to 0.0009, and kurtosis from -0.902 to 2.595. These findings are acceptable.

Measurement model: Before examining the measurement model, the author conducted an in-depth assessment and analysis of each construct's discriminant and convergent validity, as well as internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and composite reliability (CR). Therefore, the author thoroughly analyzed the factor loadings, CRs and values, average variance extracted (AVE), and variance inflation factor (VIF). As a necessary consequence of this study, the author analyzed the factor loadings, CRs and values, AVEs, and VIFs. Table 2 shows that the three reliability and validity measures (CR, AVE, and α) meet the standard of 0.7 and 0.5, as specified by Hair et al. (2021). Next, the author assessed the presence of multicollinearity and standard method bias using the Harman single-factor test and by analyzing the VIF values (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The VIF value of each instrument was below five, indicating the absence of significant collinearity.

In addition, Harman's single-factor test revealed that none of the individual factors accounted for more than 50 percent of the data variability. Hair et al. (2021) stated that the heterotrait-monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT) is a reliable measure of discriminant validity. the author used this correlation ratio to

Table 1 Sample's Traits (533 = n)

Sample's Traits	%	Freq.	Sample's Traits	%	Freq.
Age Group			Nationality		
18 to 35 Years	84.8	452	Expat	1.7	9
36 to 45 Years	11.4	61	Omani Nationals	98.3	524
46 to 55 Years	2.6	14			
56 to 65 Years	1.1	6			
Gender Distribution			Professional Categories		
Male	36.4	194	Student	49.2	262
Female	63.6	339	Tourist professionals	1.5	8
Qualification			Travel and tourism	.9	5
Intermediate	17.1	91	Businessperson	8.4	45
Bachelor	68.1	363	Recreational activity organizer	.8	4
Post Graduate	5.8	31	Not working	21.0	112
Others	9.0	48	Travel and tourism studies	.8	4
Economic Classification			Other Profession	17.4	93
Low Income Group	14.8	79			
Middle Income Group	64.7	345			
Upper Income Group	18.2	97			
High Income Group	2.3	12			

Source: Research Results, 2025

evaluate discriminant validity. Table 3 shows that all reported values are below the HTMT cutoff of 0.90, indicating adequate discriminant validity (Kock, 2024). The analysis shows good HTMT ratios, indicating sufficient discriminant validity. Table 2 presents the item loadings, means, standard deviations (SD), p-values, and confidence intervals. Structural model and hypothesis testing: The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was used to estimate the fit of the model. An SRMR value of 0 indicates a perfect fit, and an SRMR value of 0.1 is generally acceptable for PLS models (Kock, 2024). The model fit was satisfactory with an SRMR of 0.086. The expected p-values and path coefficients (β) of the expected associations in the inner model are shown in Figure 1 and Table 4. The findings show that communication channels have a strong positive influence on awareness ($\beta = 0.602$ and $p < 0.01$), persuasion ($\beta = 0.399$ and $p < 0.001$), decisions ($\beta = 0.451$ and $p < 0.01$), implementation ($\beta = 0.789$ and $p < 0.001$), and confirmation ($\beta = 0.109$ and $p < 0.001$), indicating that H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are acceptable. Similarly, awareness has a strong positive influence on persuasion ($\beta = 0.383$ and

Table 2 Reliability of Reflective Constructs Across Different Contexts

Construct/Items	Loading	Mean	SD	P-value	Confidence interval		CR/ Ca/ AVE/ VIF
					2.5%	97.5%	
Awareness/ knowledge		4.1	.60				0.860/0.803/0.511/2.1
Awareness 1	(0.786)	3.6	.89	<0.001	0.519	0.678	
Awareness 2	(0.963)	4.0	.91	<0.001	0.714	0.868	
Awareness 3	(0.956)	4.2	.82	<0.001	0.740	0.894	
Awareness 4	(0.967)	4.2	.79	<0.001	0.727	0.882	
Awareness 5 a.	N.A.	4.1	.85	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Awareness 6 a.	N.A.	4.3	.82	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Persuasion		3.9	.70				0.824/0.715/0.543/2.7
Persuasion 1	(0.968)	4.0	.94	<0.001	0.732	0.886	
Persuasion 2	(0.882)	4.0	.96	<0.001	0.623	0.779	
Decision		3.5	.59				0.743/0.570/369/2.3
Decision 1	(0.847)	3.3	1.0	<0.001	0.481	0.640	
Decision 2	(0.795)	3.6	.96	<0.001	0.449	0.608	
Decision 3 a.	N.A.	3.3	1.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Decision 4	N.A.	3.4	.93	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Decision 5	(0.953)	3.7	.94	<0.001	0.589	0.746	
Implementation		4.0	.70				0.877/0.811/0.642/3.6
Implementation 1a.	N.A.	4.1	.86	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Implementation 2	(0.834)	3.8	.88	<0.001	0.684	0.840	
Implementation 3	(0.977)	4.0	.88	<0.001	0.782	0.935	
Implementation 4	(0.968)	3.9	.90	<0.001	0.791	0.945	
Confirmation: Tourism creates employment opportunities.	(1.000)	4.2	.80	<0.001	0.925	1.075	1.0/1.0/1.0/2.2
Adoption		4.2	.72				0.906/0.793/0.825/2.5
Adoption 1	(0.946)	4.2	.78	<0.001	0.834	0.986	
Adoption 2	(0.961)	4.2	.81	<0.001	0.834	0.986	
Rejection		3.2	.79				0.795/0.612/0.564/1.5
Rejection 1	(0.956)	2.9	1.2	<0.001	0.672	0.828	
Rejection 2	(0.849)	3.3	1.0	<0.001	0.632	0.788	
Rejection 3	(0.952)	3.4	.91	<0.001	0.713	0.868	
Continue adoption	(1.000)	3.8	.86	<0.001	0.925	1.075	1.0/1.0/1.0/1.5
Later adoption 1		3.4	.86				0.819/0.659/0.694/1.8

Table 2 (continued)

Later adoption 2	(0.967)	3.5	1.0	<0.001	0.756	0.910	
Later adoption 3	(0.962)	3.4	1.0	<0.001	0.756	0.910	
Discontinue adoption	(1.000)	3.7	.96	<0.001	0.925	1.075	1.0/1.0/1.0/1.4
Continue rejection	(1.000)	2.9	1.1	<0.001	0.925	1.075	1.0/1.0/1.0/1.7
Integrated Communication Strategy (ICS)		3.8	.63				0.912/0.893/0.485/4.1
ICS 1	(0.894)	2.9	1.1	<0.001	0.644	0.800	
ICS 2	(0.840)	3.7	.93	<0.001	0.651	0.807	
ICS 3	(0.939)	3.9	.92	<0.001	0.625	0.781	
ICS 4	(0.838)	3.8	.94	<0.001	0.602	0.758	
ICS 5	(0.896)	3.8	.88	<0.001	0.526	0.685	
ICS 6	(0.962)	3.7	.89	<0.001	0.623	0.779	
ICS 7	(0.898)	3.8	.91	<0.001	0.600	0.757	
ICS 8	(0.944)	3.7	.92	<0.001	0.675	0.831	
ICS 9	(0.960)	3.8	.88	<0.001	0.639	0.795	
ICS 10	(0.966)	3.9	.84	<0.001	0.628	0.784	
ICS 11	(0.846)	3.8	.93	<0.001	0.575	0.732	

Source: Research Results, 2025

p < 0.001). Thus, H6 is supported. Likewise, persuasion has a strong effect on decisions ($\beta1 = 0.167$ and p < 0.001). Thus, H7 is supported. A 90% significance level is acceptable at a p value < 0.1 (Derrac et al., 2011). Thus, decision has an effect on implementation at ($\beta = 0.0058$ and p = 0.089) thus, H8 is supported. Implementation positively influences confirmation at $\beta1 = 0.416$ and p < 0.001, which supports H9. On the other hand, decisions significantly affect innovation adoption ($\beta = 0.461$ and p < 0.01) and innovation rejection ($\beta = 0.516$ and p < 0.001), indicating the acceptance of H10 and H11.

Innovation rejection significantly affects discontinued adoption ($\beta = 0.265$ and p < 0.001) and subsequent innovation ($\beta = 0.0279$ and p <

0.001), revealing the subsequent acceptance of H12 and H13. Innovation significantly affects continued adoption ($\beta = 0.311$ and p < 0.01) and continued rejection ($\beta = 0.0438$ and p < 0.01), explaining the acceptance of H14 and H15. In addition, as shown in Figure 1, the R2value represents the influence of exogenous constructs on endogenous constructs and evaluates the model's prediction accuracy. R2values below 0.25 indicate low prediction accuracy, R(2) values below 0.50 indicate moderate prediction accuracy, and R2values below 0.75 indicate high prediction accuracy. Community channels explained 36%, 40%, 31%, 67%, and 26% of the variance in awareness/knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation,

Table 3 Discriminant Validity and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios of Correlation

HTMT ratios (good if < 0.90, best if < 0.85), ICS*= Integrated communication strategy, constructs 5,8,10, and 11 have one item each. Thus, cells are empty

| Construct (HTMT)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Awareness/ knowledge												
Persuasion	0.829											
Decision	0.632	0.689										
Implementation	0.781	0.856	0.696									
Confirmation												
Adoption	0.720	0.880	0.582	0.708								
Rejection	0.442	0.424	0.863	0.405		0.309						
Continue adoption												
Late adoption	0.371	0.288	0.924	0.328		0.257	0.645					
Discontinue adoption												
Continue rejection												
ICS*	0.718	0.774	0.777	0.708		0.572	0.517		0.400			

Source: Research Results, 2025

respectively (R2= 0.36, 0.40, 0.31, 0.67, 0.26).

The decision stage explained 26% and 27% of the variance in adopting or rejecting the innovation, respectively (R2= 0.26 and 0.27). All R2 values exceed the 0.26 threshold Cohen (1988) recommended to indicate a significant model. Additionally, the effect size (f2) indicates whether the effect determined by the path coefficients is small, medium, or significant. The recommended values are 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively (Kock, 2024). As shown in Table 4, all correlations have a medium impact except H1 and H4, which have a high impact.

Figure 1 shows the links between components in the Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) framework, using communication as the key exogenous variable. The model shows many statistically significant correlations, validating the theory and illuminating Oman's tourism innovation. Communication plays a crucial role in innovation adoption, favorably impacting awareness ($\beta = 0.60$), persuasion ($\beta = 0.383$, $p < 0.05$), decision-making ($\beta = 0.45$), implementation ($\beta = 0.78$), and confirmation ($\beta = 0.416$, $p < 0.01$). Rogers' (2003) DoI theory emphasizes communication as the primary way to transmit new ideas. The model further shows that communication influences implementation and confirmation more than decision-making, demonstrating that stakeholder support improves over time in Oman, as trust is built through continuous messaging.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) values indicate moderate to strong explanatory power: awareness ($R^2 = 0.36$), persuasion ($R^2 =$
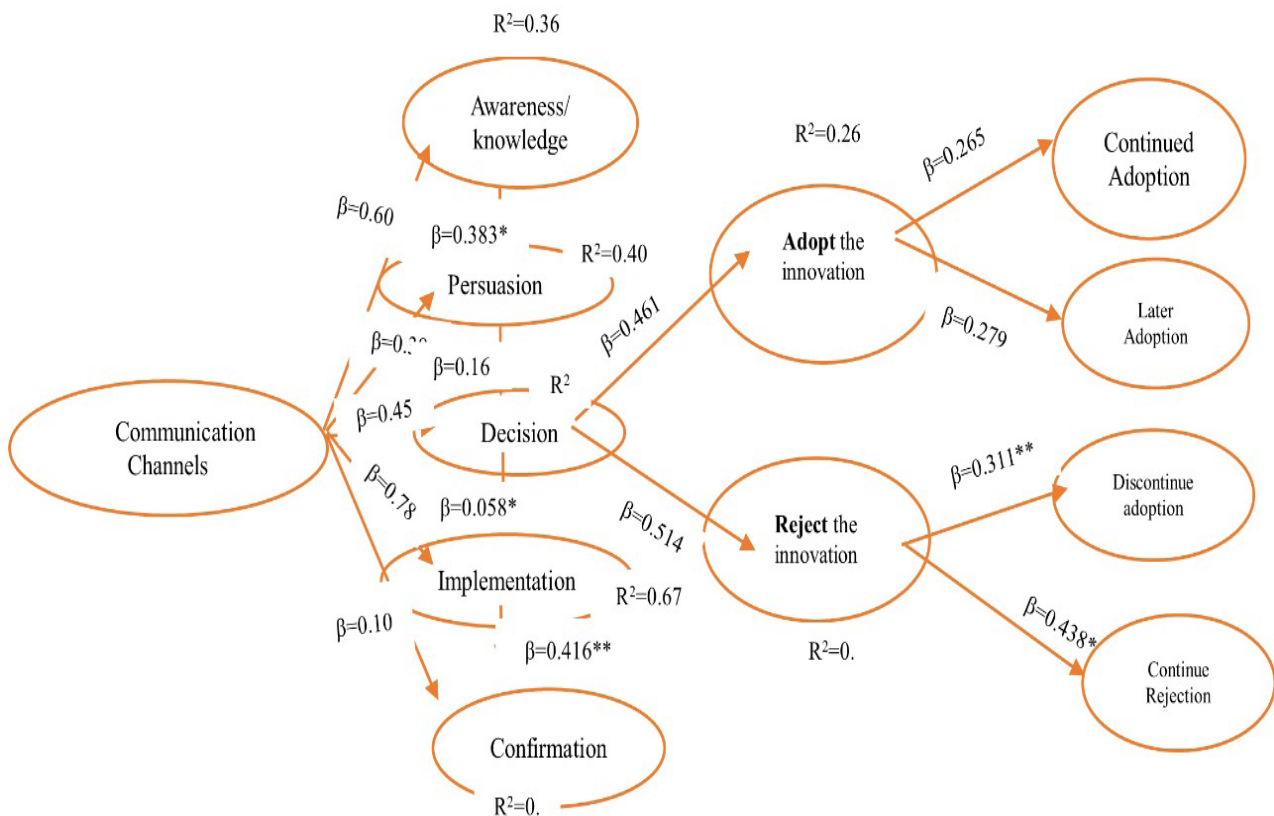
Source: Research Results, 2025

Figure 1 Structural model

0.40), decision ($R^2 = 0.461$), implementation ($R^2 = 0.514$), and confirmation ($R^2 = 0.67$). These figures show that communication accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance at each stage, especially in implementation and confirmation, highlighting its cumulative influence. This sentiment underscores how persuasion in the Omani context is cognitive, social, and emotional. Interestingly, the path of the decision to reject the innovation is stronger ($\beta = 0.514$) than the path to adopt ($R^2 = 0.26$, β not shown), suggesting that hesitation or rejection may dominate initial reactions. However, among those who rejected, some eventually stopped rejecting ($\beta = 0.311$, $p < 0.01$), indicating an opportunity to re-engage

through adaptive communication strategies. Conversely, those who rejected may also reinforce their rejection ($\beta = 0.438$), which is a warning signal that ineffective messages may reinforce rejection.

Compared to previous studies (Sigala et al., 2025; Tran & Corner, 2016), this model extends the literature by emphasizing the dual outcomes of rejection, discontinuation, or continuation, which are often less explored in tourism research. The model also asserts that adoption is not a one-off event but a fluid process influenced by post-decision experiences and exposure to ongoing communication. The results of this study support DoI theory while offering context-specific refinements.

Table 4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Beta (β)	P-Value	f 2	Decision
H1 Communication channels positively affect awareness/knowledge.	0.602**	<0.001	0.362	Supported
H2 Communication channels positively affect persuasion.	0.399**	<0.001	0.252	Supported
H3 Communication channels positively affect the decision.	0.451**	<0.001	0.250	Supported
H4 Communication channels positively affect implementation.	0.789**	<0.001	0.647	Supported
H5 Communication channels positively affect confirmation.	0.109**	0.006	0.048	Supported
H6 Awareness/knowledge positively affects persuasion	0.383**	<0.001	0.239	Supported
H7 persuasion positively affects the decision.	0.167**	<0.001	0.075	Supported
H8 Decision positively affects implementation.	0.058*	0.089	0.029	Supported
H9 Implementation positively affects confirmation.	0.416**	<0.001	0.210	Supported
H10 decision positively affects innovation adoption.	0.461**	<0.001	0.212	Supported
H11 decision positively affects innovation rejection.	0.514**	<0.001	0.265	Supported
H12 Innovation adoption positively affects continued adoption	0.265**	<0.001	0.070	Supported
H13 Innovation adoption positively affects later adoption	0.279**	<0.001	0.078	Supported
H14 Innovation rejection positively affects discontinued adoption	0.311**	<0.001	0.097	Supported
H15 Innovation rejection positively affects continued rejection	0.438**	<0.001	0.192	Supported

Source: Research Results, 2025

In a culturally rooted society such as Oman, persuasion and confirmation stages are strongly linked to social norms, and communication must be adaptive, inclusive, and sustained over time to be effective.

This study shows that integrated communication tactics shape community consensus and the adoption of innovative tourism in Oman. Community members were affected by adoption persuasion, decision-making, implementation, and confirmation. Persuasion was the key to involving local communities. This study demonstrates that tourism innovations are confirmed only when community-wide adoption and internalization occur. The findings also recommend the consistent use of community meetings, print and electronic media, social media platforms, and targeted tourism marketing campaigns at both national and international levels to

disseminate information and build consensus among local stakeholders. As most respondents (mean = 4.10 for awareness; mean = 3.98 for persuasion) reported that timely and culturally aligned communications positively influenced their perception of tourism innovation, these strategies are crucial. These findings support the Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) theory (Rogers, 2003), especially the relevance of early adopter awareness and social influence. The study adds that culturally ingrained communication channels, such as word of mouth, tribal networks, and faith-based community leaders, shape beliefs and facilitate confirmation.

In addition, this study shows that innovation adoption and rejection are independent decision-making processes with different trajectories and effects. Encouragement of innovation adoption boosts subsequent adoption, thus enhancing long-term support and engagement. Innovation rejection affects both abandoned and ongoing rejection. This suggests that tourism stakeholders should prioritize innovation adoption to build community agreements and long-term acceptance.

The constructs used in this study also exhibited good discriminant validity. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios of Correlation analysis revealed that each construct - Awareness/Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, Adoption, Rejection, and Integrated Communication Strategy (ICS) - captures different but interrelated aspects of the innovation adoption process. The analysis shows that constructs in the early and middle

stages are highly interrelated, while constructs such as Confirmation, Advanced Adoption, Late Adoption, and Discontinued Adoption show a lower degree of interrelatedness than other constructs. This suggests that the later stages of adoption may be more context-dependent and influenced by cultural and social norms.

This study adds to the DoI paradigm by emphasizing the influence of culturally ingrained communication channels, such as word of mouth, tribal networks, and religious leaders, on opinion formation and confirmation. This recommends that the authorities should clarify and consult with the opinion leaders. These comments demonstrate how social norms and cultural values affect the early awareness and acceptance of innovation. To promote community consensus for innovative tourism development, emphasis should be placed on social values such as belonging, empowerment, and inclusion, which strengthen community legitimacy and involvement (Augusto da Costa et al., 2025). Building social capital and multilevel governance are essential for community-based tourism (Rocca & Zielinski, 2022). A collaborative strategy involving stakeholders is needed to create a management plan that balances culture, nature, and tourism (Lukoseviciute et al., 2024).

To ensure the success of innovative tourism, information and communication technology (ICT) support can be utilized as an amplifier of communication channels between tourism actors, local communities, and tourists, directly driving public engagement

and decision-making efficiency (Adeleye, 2023). While digital communication tools are important, they must be complemented by interpersonal and community-based approaches to ensure legitimacy and resonance (Yasir, 2021), emphasizing that communication is a critical factor in destination recognition and public support. In Oman, where local wisdom and cultural legitimacy shape public perception, the role of communication should be based on the cultural context (Bakti et al., 2018).

In addition, platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram, which have proven to be influential among millennials in Indonesia (Hartono et al., 2022), can also be effective in Oman, especially considering that 84.8% of the sample population is aged 18-35 years. This demographic similarity indicates that communication strategies must be participatory and culturally appropriate to effectively raise awareness and acceptance in traditional societies (Pratiwi et al., 2018). This study also aligns with insights from those emphasizing regenerative communication models that prioritize community participation and co-creation in tourism development (Pung et al., 2024). These converging perspectives reinforce the broader applicability of this study's conclusions, while highlighting Oman's distinct sociocultural context as a valuable testing ground for expanding the global tourism innovation framework.

Overall, these findings suggest that message design should be clear, consistent, and embedded in a culturally meaningful framework that emphasizes the tangible benefits of innovative tourism, such as job creation, cultural heritage preservation, and local infrastructure development. Trust-based and inclusive communication strategies are essential for promoting innovation adoption, enhancing community consensus, and ensuring the sustainable implementation of tourism innovations in Oman and comparable socio-cultural environments. The strong correlations among the constructs obtained in this study suggest that an integrated communication strategy incorporating all constructs is essential for developing community consensus and acceptance related to innovative tourism in Oman. The ICS approach provides an overarching framework that guides the steps taken by tourism stakeholders to foster community consensus and the acceptability of Oman's innovative tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides empirical insights into the factors that influence consensus and acceptance among communities in the context of innovative tourism in Oman. The findings of this study confirm that communication channels play an important role across the stages of the innovation adoption process, particularly in shaping awareness ($\beta = 0.602$), persuasion ($\beta = 0.399$), decision-making ($\beta = 0.451$), implementation ($\beta = 0.789$), and confirmation ($\beta = 0.109$), all of which were found to be statistically significant. Awareness, as the initial

stage, significantly influenced the subsequent steps in the adoption process and was rated highly by respondents, with an average score of 4.1 out of 5.

Cultural identity and a sense of belonging drove community support, especially as 84.8% of respondents were under 35 years old, a demographic that is more receptive to innovation but yet connected to their cultural roots. These context-specific findings illustrate that community agreement is established through rational argumentation as well as emotional and cultural resonance, expanding the global conversation on tourism innovation. This study adds to Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory by confirming that the choice and rejection stages highly predict persistent adoption (β = 0.311) and rejection (β = 0.438), unlike previous research.

This study suggests that integrated communication methods should address cognitive and affective public understanding. Tourism stakeholders should foster community support with trustworthy social actors, including opinion leaders, educators, and youth ambassadors. Innovative tourism should be promoted through social media, community forums, educational workshops, and cultural events in a legitimate and culturally relevant way. Clear messaging, repetition, and feedback build trust and acceptance. These findings can help tourist planners and politicians in Oman integrate national innovation goals with local values and develop sustainable and inclusive tourism.

In addition, this research emphasizes innovation adoption and rejection in decision-making. Encouragement of innovation adoption promotes sustained adoption, whereas rejection promotes discontinuance and rejection. Therefore, tourism officials should prioritize communication to enhance community participation in Oman's creative tourism. Thus, tourism authorities should adopt community social networks. Outreach to opinion leaders, community liaisons, social media influencers, and gatekeepers may spread tourism benefits, build good perceptions, and foster public and government collaboration. Colleges, universities, and communities should host tourism skill development programs, training, workshops, symposiums, conferences, and face-to-face meetings. Collect collective feedback through various channels. Customized communication approaches can embrace social communication styles. This suggests using community meetings, printed electronic media, social media platforms, and targeted tourism marketing campaigns at the national and international levels to disseminate information and build consensus to achieve long-term goals. Clear and appealing messaging should highlight the benefits of innovative tourism in targeted areas.

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