

All things travel, just a click away...

The travel industry is highly influenced by technology and information, with travellers now relying on technological advancements such as mobile travel apps to perform various travel related activities pre-trip, during the trip and post trip. As at 2021, there has been an 86% increase in mobile travel app downloads worldwide, with a 3.3million app downloads for South Africa in 2022. However, uninstallation rates of mobile travel apps stand at 32.2%, and are an area of concern for marketers and app developers. This is why marketers and app developers are continuously seeking ways to keep users engaged with travel apps – which raises the question: “What determines user engagement with mobile travel apps?”

A research study was conducted by Nombeko C.S. Dube, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#) to investigate the determinants of user engagement with mobile travel apps. The ability to engage users towards using a mobile travel app is considered a key means for travel related companies to establish long term business relationships with consumers and to ensure user retention. Mobile travel apps are primarily information systems; thus, this study used the information systems success model to propose information quality, system quality and service quality as the main determinants of user satisfaction, with the expectation that user satisfaction will determine user engagement.

A self-administered online questionnaire was utilised, with 254 responses obtained from South African mobile travel app users for leisure or business. The study offers a framework that demonstrates how the quality of a mobile travel app (information, system, service) positively and directly influences user satisfaction, with user satisfaction influencing user engagement. The findings indicated that all three quality dimensions are significant predictors of user satisfaction, with user satisfaction predicting user engagement with mobile travel apps. System quality emerged as the most significant predictor of user satisfaction.

The study makes several managerial implications. To attain user satisfaction, travel related companies and app developers have to create a quality system; focusing on app attributes such as functionality, system design, and practicality so as to simplify the process of operating the apps. The study recommends that a travel app should offer users complete and accurate information, through the use of features such as

real-time updates for travellers. More so, a mobile travel app should provide real-time interaction and management services to handle user enquiries. Additionally, a review feature for users to provide feedback could be included on the app so as to be aware of service delivery wins or failures. In conclusion, travel related companies and app developers should design travel apps with a focus on information quality, system quality and service quality to meet and exceed users' expectations so as to enhance user engagement.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2022 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Nombeko C.S. Dube under the supervision of [Dr Michael Humbani](#).