



Effects of Social Media in Tourism Marketing: Outlook on User Generated Content

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ABSTRACT: Social media has transformed the tourism industry, shifting it from its conventional model into an extreme knowledge pattern. This study focuses on the use of social media for tourism marketing to enhance tourist satisfaction through user-generated content. A mixed research method was employed, with an exploratory approach used to identify the critical success factors of social media user-generated content (UGC) for marketing tourism products. Purposive sampling was utilized, and data were collected from 200 respondents. To analyze the data, frequency distribution, multiple regression, and hypothesis testing were employed for user-generated content on social media for tourism marketing. The results of the study reveal that people spend an average of one to six hours daily on social media platforms. Graduate students aged 21-30 and employed individuals are more likely to use social media for travel purposes. The study also indicates that factors such as advocacy, a positive brand impression, travel inspiration, and careful content development are crucial for social media in tourism marketing. The travel industry provides visitors with personalized services, offering a social media network that systematically shares users' and like-minded people's experiences, allowing users to customize their anonymity and add value to their personal details.

KEYWORDS: Social media; Web 2.0; user generated content; tourism marketing; tourist experience.

1. Introduction

The advent of the internet has revolutionized various processes, continually bringing about new changes. Social media, a significant aspect of the internet, has taken the world by storm, becoming intertwined with people's personal lives and utilized by businesses to connect with customers. Tourism is no exception, as social media has had a profound impact on how tourism marketing is conducted. The advantages of exchanging timely, accurate, inexpensive, and nearly limitless information have made social media an integral part of travel planning and decision-making [1]. Consequently, travelers themselves play a more active role than ever. The rapid dissemination of information has intensified competition, making traditional marketing methods potentially insufficient for reaching consumers effectively. Organizations are now investing in social media for their marketing activities [2]. In practical terms, social

media comprises modern digital software technologies, typically presented as apps and websites, which provide users with a digital environment for transmitting and receiving digital content and information through online social networks. Marketers can engage with an expert audience, collaborate with them, and network together for marketing through social media. Social media marketing also offers companies the opportunity to build consumer confidence [3].

The impact of social media on tourism marketing encompasses travel analysis, social networking, customer care, the transformation of travel agencies, and changes in loyalty programs [4]. Studies [4] and [5] indicate that social media sites are now the primary source for seeking and sharing travel information, making tourism marketing initiatives more social media-centric. Marketing activities often revolve around specific destinations, with social media forming the foundation for these strategies due to its easy accessibility and cost-effectiveness, enabling effective consumer outreach [6]. In the United States, 89% of marketers use Instagram, while 70% use Facebook and Twitter, and 59% use YouTube to seek out influencers. Many also utilize social media for providing customer service, exemplified by Airbnb, which maintains accounts on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, dedicated to resolving customer queries [7]. Bangladesh is beginning to recognize the effectiveness of social media for tourism marketing. Although the country's tourism sector has been progressing slowly, recent years have seen improvements, with a rise in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index from 125th to 120th [8]. This marks the most significant improvement among Asia-Pacific countries, reflecting greater ICT readiness, moving from 116th to 111th, indicating the country's high potential for upward mobility [8]. These developments are testaments to the ongoing digitalization processes in Bangladesh, with 91.2 million internet users [9]. Social media is proving to be the most effective way to reach customers and implement marketing strategies.

1.1. Background of the study.

It hasn't been long since social media emerged, yet it has permeated every aspect of our lives. Social media comprises web applications that allow users to post and share content [10]. Social networking sites, as described by [11], serve as platforms for creating virtual communities and social networks, connecting people based on common interests, regardless of geographical distances. There are approximately 2 billion social media users on the internet, with Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter being the most widely used platforms by global marketers to reach their customers [12]. Bangladesh has also embraced social media for tourism marketing. The Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) has adopted social media as a means of promoting tourism. The BTB recognizes the power of social media as a marketing tool and now maintains various social media accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WeChat, to engage with both national and international tourists. Furthermore, they have allocated a higher budget for digital marketing through Facebook. Social media has provided individuals with a platform to share their travel experiences, complete with photos and videos, enhancing the credibility of their reviews to others. People seek assurance in their travel-related decisions to ensure their experiences meet their expectations, and in this regard, the opinions of actual travelers are considered more reliable than statements from

organizations themselves [12], underscoring the importance of user-generated content in social media marketing.

Additionally, social media marketing offers opportunities to tourism service providers, such as accommodations, leisure activities, transportation, and tours, to connect with tourists who accept these services into their organizations. This research aims to determine the extent to which user-generated content (UGC) on social media influences tourists' final travel decisions, reflecting the effectiveness of marketing efforts. As social media continues to play a vital role in tourism marketing, there is a growing emphasis on incorporating user-generated content in marketing messages. Given that the current tourism market is primarily composed of millennials, who are known to be prolific contributors of UGC online and frequent travelers, understanding how UGC shapes tourism marketing is crucial. Moreover, the tech-savvy Generation Z will become the next generation of customers and travelers, and they are highly influenced by UGC marketing. Therefore, it is essential to explore how UGC can shape tourism marketing. The findings of this research will help determine the most effective strategies for utilizing social media in tourism marketing at different stages of the consumer journey.

1.2. Social media.

To understand Social Media, it is essential to start by explaining the concept of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 can be defined as a series of interactive, open-source internet applications that empower users in various aspects of business and social processes. These applications encourage collaboration and facilitate the sharing of information, knowledge, and ideas among users [13]. Web 2.0 serves as the foundation for the concept of social media. Social media has been the subject of extensive study over the years and can be described as web-based applications that have evolved from the principles and technologies of Web 2.0. These applications enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content (UGC) [14]. As [15] defines it, social media encompasses new forms of media, typically involving digital platforms, that allow user participation and interaction. Social media users can be individuals or businesses. Social media acts as a virtual platform that enables individuals to engage in conversations and share various types of content with their family, friends, and like-minded individuals. Additionally, it assists businesses in understanding how their brand, products, and services are perceived by people. This insight is valuable for making informed business decisions through discussions with online reviewers [16]. While social media is often associated with popular social network sites like Facebook, it extends beyond these platforms.

Social Network Sites (SNS), as described by [17], are web services that enable individuals to build public or semi-public profiles and establish connections with other users. Users can view and exchange information with others in their network. The scope of social media is extensive, and its definition has evolved over time. [18] studied various definitions of social media and synthesized the key concepts into what is relevant today. Social media is characterized by its foundation in internet-based applications (Web 2.0), its reliance on user-generated content (UGC), and its backbone of user-specific profiles that facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting people's profiles to others'. Over time, various types of social media platforms have emerged (Table 1).

Table 1. Social Media for Tourism [19].

Social Media Tools	Description	Example
Media sharing sites	Enable users to upload, arrange and exchange multimedia information with selected individuals and/or communities.	YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat
Blogs/Microblogs	Enable writers to post on the site, hoping that someone will read them.	Twitter, Tumblr, Weibo
Virtual/Online Communities or Discussion forums	Provided interactive resources on a website, individuals may share personal information, preferences and opinions.	Lonely Planet, Yahoo Answers, Reddit, Quora
Social Networking sites	Enable people to create social connections and interests between friends and acquaintances and connect to brands online.	Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+
Consumer Review Networks	Enables people to identify, view and exchange information on brands, goods , services, travel destinations, etc., by means of which positive feedback can become social evidence of product / service quality.	TripAdvisor, Yelp, Zomato
Virtual Worlds	Offer computer-simulated environments in which people in a virtual world can interact.	Second Life., Onverse

1.3. Social media in tourism marketing.

Marketing nowadays cannot be done through reach alone, but it must be done by both capturing the customers' attention as well as be engaged with them, so it is no longer just about messages sent to customers, but also about having conversations [20]. This has led to the concept of Social Media Marketing. [21] put it simply as how a business, brand, or website can be promoted by engaging with current and potential customers through social media channels and also agree with this, as they opine marketers can develop their brands over social media in many ways like being present on these platforms as a brand persona, engaging with their customers, and marketing their content over these platforms [22]. Particular social experiences in social media nowadays have a positive effect on important marketing outputs, including new customers and sales [23, 24]. Social media tactics to not monetize social networks but to pursue alliances with social media tools and their clients [25]. The companies should incorporate such tactics in conventional marketing strategies instead of using them in a fragmented way, but must be sure not to pressure their customers because these push methods keep the customers from the media [26].

Social media has impacted people's daily lives – and that includes the tourism industry, as travelers tend to rely on social networking sites for travel-related decision making [27] and [28] also discussed on how social media have been adopted by travelers for all kinds of travel related purposes, such as sharing their own travel stories on various platforms like blogs, microblogs, social knowledge sharing sites etc. and for interacting with online communities. Social media is not only a means of looking up tourism information, but they are also an effective tourism marketing tool [5] This is further supported by a research conducted by [29] has shown that social media is a competitive marketing tool and a tool of strategy for tourism companies is important from both a marketing perspective as well as from the perspective of travelers, as around half the respondents said they use social media to look for travel-related information like accommodation, transportation, etc. and are influenced by the reviews left by their friends regarding their travel experiences along with [30] aptly says the days of marketing destinations through glossy brochures and static images are drawing to an end, because people are more excited by content in websites such as YouTube, where the videos can provide a glimpse of the actual experience being promised to them, and they can be

easily looked up. Moreover, such websites provide a forum for users to speak up about their travel experiences, which make them an integral part of the overall marketing process, as words of an actual traveler holds value and could impact travel decisions.

1.4. Online journey towards tourism.

Every customer undertakes a hypothetical journey when they purchase a product or service. Traditionally, this journey is represented by a series of steps leading towards purchase, called the purchase funnel. Wikipedia defines it as ‘a consumer-oriented marketing model which represented the theoretical customer journey to buy a service or a good’ and which also referred to as the so-called ‘customer funnel’ or the so-called ‘marketing funnel’. Some variations of the funnel exist, but the main stages include *awareness* of the existence of product or service, *interest* in a group of products or service and *desire* to try out a particular one (sometimes merged as *consideration* stage), and *action* or the buying stage, whereby the product or service is purchased. A customer either proceeds from one step to the next or exit upon becoming disinterested, and the challenge for businesses is to try to have as many people contained in the process and be convinced to buy [31]. However, sales cannot be the ultimate goal – it needs to be about building good relationship with customers. This involves expressing gratitude for their purchase as well as acknowledging their voice, and as [32] puts it, giving customers a platform by sharing their posts, comments and reviews on the social media page of the business can enhance relationship with customers, and such integration extends the traditional funnel into further steps, like loyalty, engagement and advocacy.

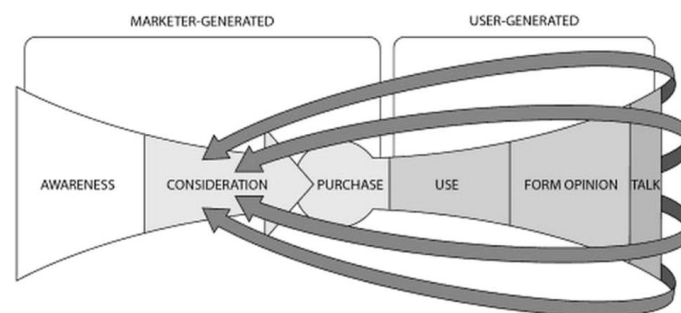


Figure 1. The social feedback cycle [33].

When social media is incorporated into the picture, the process resembles the figure above. The social feedback cycle portrays how social media connects back to the classic purchase funnel. People’s opinions in the form of e-word of mouth (eWOM) loop back towards the top of the funnel and ultimately influences people’s final purchase considerations (Figure 1) [33]. As seen in Figure 1, the responses evoked after purchase are generated from the user themselves. Their influence extends into the sphere of business-generated steps at the beginning of the process, thus influencing other customers’ journeys. In tourism, this comes in the form of reviews and recommendations of travelers who have already undergone the experience themselves, highly sought by potential travelers while planning a trip.

1.5. User-Generated Content (UGC) – the lifeblood of social media.

From the above discussion, the noticeable repeated theme is that customers (in the case of this research, tourists) have become highly powerful forces for marketing through social media, exerting influence by sharing their opinions. UGC is also referred to as User created

Content (UCC) has users as its main content source (photos, videos, text, audio, blogs, and forum posts). UGC is original and feels customers more real. The actual thoughts, perceptions, views and suggestions of the users are quickly absorbed as if it were their own. Moreover; Tourism marketers might have used social media initially for other benefits, such as reaching targeted customers across the globe with just a single click of the keyboard [34]. But businesses now direct so much of the marketing efforts into social media that the platforms can become oversaturated with messages from all kinds of service providers. It becomes difficult for customers to distinguish which business is putting up genuine offerings and who is exaggerating. Because of this, tourists once more rely on the words of other people like themselves, and their word of mouth can be found on social media as user-generated content (UGC) besides [35] defines user-generated content (or customer-generated content) as content related to any brand created by the consumers than any official representative of the brand, like employees or affiliates, which can take numerous forms – reviews, podcasts, modified social media. UGC is regarded as more credible than website, travel agency and publicity media details [36]. Brands are now prone to sharing such content on their websites, but primarily on their social media pages, where it usually has the most exposure to consumers. Social networking sites function by having people join the network, contribute to it, and lead to network expansion. These communities rely on UGC to keep operating this way, as put by [37]. As tourists' role as customers become increasingly collaborative, the terms user generated content (UGC) or customer generated media (CGM) can highlight the pivotal roles individual consumer play as they submit, review and respond to online content, according to [38]. UGC is rapidly becoming the most important and widely used source of travel information, which causes changes in the traveler's purchase path and traditional marketing approaches no longer hold true [39]. As marketers are perceived to be inherently less trustworthy, as often the virtues of products and services are exaggerated while omitting negative details, customers feel like advertisement directly from businesses is sure to be misleading. Many people outright refuse to make purchase decisions based on such ads alone. The aim of this study is to develop a better understanding of how social media user generated content (UGC) impacts tourism marketing. But, the specific objective of this study to study how social media affects every stage of the marketing funnel or the customer journey. This study also focused on User-Generated Content (UGC) which is 'lifeblood' of social media, can be harnessed and used advance tourism marketing efforts for tourists satisfaction.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a mixed research methodology, combining exploratory research and descriptive research techniques. The initial phase involved an exploratory study that examined existing literature to understand the general impact of social media on the customer journey of tourists. This exploration led to the identification of critical success factors of social media in tourism marketing, with a particular emphasis on the active and collaborative role of social media in the tourism marketing process. The study recognized User Generated Content (UGC) as a key driver that positively influences tourism. Subsequently, descriptive research was conducted to reveal the practical aspects of how tourists are influenced throughout their customer journey by UGC on social media and to assess the significance they attribute to UGC in making travel decisions.

To test the hypotheses derived from these exploratory and descriptive findings, survey questionnaires were administered to the study participants. The study included travelers who frequently engage in travel activities and are active social media users (N=200). All participants volunteered to take part in the study, and for this reason, purposive sampling was employed to collect data through structured, closed-ended questionnaires. Basic descriptive statistics, such as frequency and descriptive statistics, were computed using SPSS to understand participant characteristics, identify crucial features and advantages, and validate the hypotheses. Additionally, regression analysis was applied to determine the critical success factors of User Generated Content (UGC) on social media in the context of tourism.

The UGC on social media was observed to span both pre-travel and post-travel stages, as outlined in the previous section. These stages were identified as follows: providing travel inspiration, creating awareness about destinations or travel services, shaping tourists' perceptions, influencing considerations before purchase, impacting final travel decisions, altering existing travel plans, serving as a basis for evaluating satisfaction during the visit, contributing to a positive brand impression, enhancing reliability, fostering loyalty development, and promoting tourist advocacy. These variables were treated as independent variables in this research. A positive cause-and-effect relationship between these variables and the dependent variable (UGC's impact on the overall travel experience) would suggest that the use of travel-related UGC throughout these stages plays a pivotal role in successful tourism marketing. Consequently, the study formulated the following hypothesis:

H₁: Tourists perception regarding social media sites as reliable, informative, interesting, accurate, easy to find, entertaining throughout all stages of travel has a significant impact on awareness of destination and services

H₂: Social media usages and frequency of travel has a significant on throughout all stages of tourism has a significant impact on User Generated Content (UGC)

H₃: Travel-related UGC utilization in tourism marketing throughout all stages of travel has a noteworthy impact on tourists' decisions

H₄: Travel-related UGC utilization in tourism marketing and promotion throughout all stages of travel has a substantial impact on tourists' overall experience.

3. Results and Discussion

Data analysis was conducted based on the data collected through the distribution of a questionnaire to get a glimpse of the respondents' perception and habits surrounding tourism and social media. The results of the analyses are provided in this section.

3.1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents.

Table 2 provides an overview of the study's participant demographics. A total of 200 respondents took part in the study, with 53% being female and 47% being male. Notably, the age distribution of most respondents falls within the 21-30 years category, accounting for 45 % of the sample. This finding aligns with the expectation that this age group is among the most active social media users. Surprisingly, respondents above 50 years of age make up the second-largest group in the survey, representing 23.5 % of the total. This suggests that even

older age groups are gradually becoming more accustomed to technology and social media use.

In terms of educational qualifications, the results show that 45.5% of respondents hold a master's degree or higher, while 44.5% hold a bachelor's degree. The majority of the participants are gainfully employed, with 52.5% being service holders, 10.5% engaged in business, and 29.5% being students. Regarding income levels, the data reveals that 42.5% of respondents earn more than BDT 40,000 per month, 14.5 % earn between BDT 30,001 and BDT 40,000, and 26 % earn BDT 10,000 or less.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	93	47	47
	Female	107	53	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	
Age	Below 20	2	1.0	1.0
	21-30 years	90	45.0	46.0
	31-40 years	34	17.0	63.0
	41-50 years	27	13.5	76.5
	Above 50	47	23.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	
Education	Higher secondary	16	8.0	8.0
	Diploma	4	2.0	10.0
	Bachelor's degree	89	44.5	54.5
	Masters' degree or higher	91	45.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	
Occupation	Student	59	29.5	29.5
	Businessman	21	10.5	40.0
	Service holder	105	52.5	92.5
	Social worker	1	.5	93.0
	Self employed	5	2.5	95.5
	Unemployed	2	1.0	96.5
	Retired	7	3.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0		
Monthly income	BDT 10,000 or less	52	26.0	26.0
	BDT 10,001 - 20,000	16	8.0	34.0
	BDT 20,001 - 30,000	18	9.0	43.0
	BDT 30,001 - 40,000	29	14.5	57.5
	Above BDT 40,000	85	42.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0		

3.2. Frequency of travel and social media usage.

Table 3. Yearly trips and daily social media usage of respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Number of trips in a year	None	10	5.0	5.0
	1 - 3 times	151	75.5	80.5
	4 - 6 times	35	17.5	98.0
	7 - 9 times	2	1.0	99.0
	10 times or above	2	1.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	
Daily social media usage	Less than an hour	12	6.0	6.0
	1 - 3 hours	96	48.0	54.0
	4 - 6 hours	67	33.5	87.5
	7 - 9 hours	17	8.5	96.0
	10 hours or above	8	4.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0		

Table 3 represents the frequency of travel and the social media usage of the respondents. It shows that 75.5% of them are likely to travel around 1-3 times in a year, and 17.5 % may travel even more in a year up to 4-6 times. However, 5 % of the respondents are also unlikely to travel in a given year. The respondents' social media usage is also similar, as they are seen to spend time on social media every day around 1-3 hours (48%) to 4-6 hours (33.5%). About 6 % of respondents who spend less than an hour on social media daily are mostly service holders or businessmen.

3.3.Social media platforms used.

Figure 2 showed that Facebook (98%) and YouTube (90.5%) are the most popular social media platforms among the respondents, and a large number of them also use Instagram (52 %). These are the most easily recognizable social media platforms in existence as well. Google+ (28%) and LinkedIn (24%) have moderate usage. Figure 3 sheds light on the social media usage on these platforms for tourism purposes. Facebook still stands as the most generally consulted platform for tourism information and sharing related content (96.3%), and YouTube also still holds the second place (61.2%), which can reflect the popularity of watching travel vlogs and video content.

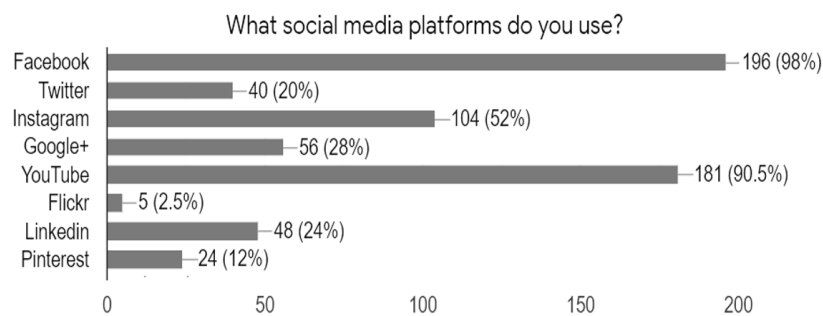


Figure 2. Social media platforms used by respondents.

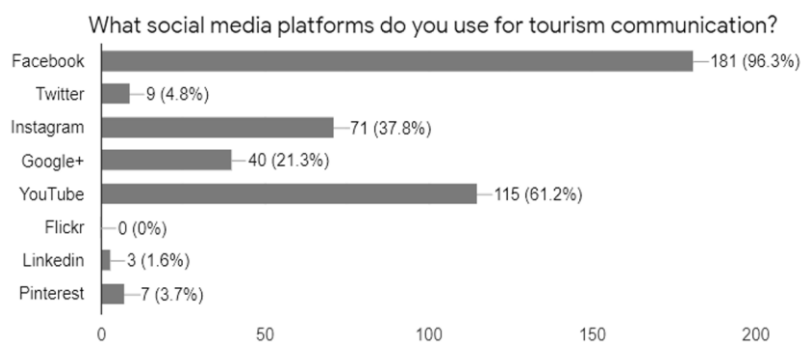


Figure 3. Social media platforms used for tourism communication.

3.4.Sources of travel information.

Social media is undeniably the most frequently consulted online source for travel information, with 49% of respondents stating that they always use social networking sites, and an additional 22% indicating they use them very often. Travel review sites, such as TripAdvisor, also receive a moderately positive response, as they are reported to be used sometimes by 30% of respondents and very often by 27%, depending on the individual's preferences, while 14% of tourists always consult them. Conversely, this study reveals that

traditional offline sources of travel information, such as electronic and print media, rank the lowest in terms of usage. A cumulative 61% of respondents indicated that they rarely or never use radio/television for travel information, while 51% rarely or never use newspapers/magazines, 52% rarely or never consult brochures, and 57% rarely or never refer to travel guide books. This suggests a lack of informative and engaging content in these media sources, leading tourists to lose interest in them.

Travel agencies are considered more trustworthy sources of travel information, with a cumulative 67% of respondents expressing a positive inclination towards consulting them. Nevertheless, the most trusted source of information remains one's own family and friends, with 62% of respondents consistently seeking their recommendations for travel information. This underscores the high level of trust in recommendations from family and friends, surpassing trust in any other travel information source, whether online or traditional. This observation highlights the enduring influence of word-of-mouth recommendations. Furthermore, it suggests that if such word-of-mouth recommendations from known individuals can be incorporated into the context of social media, presenting them as electronic word-of-mouth in the form of user-generated content, it could have a profound impact on shaping tourist decisions.

3.5. Perceptions regarding social media application in tourism.

The respondents were asked to provide their opinion on social media application in the tourism context. The results are shown in Figure 4.

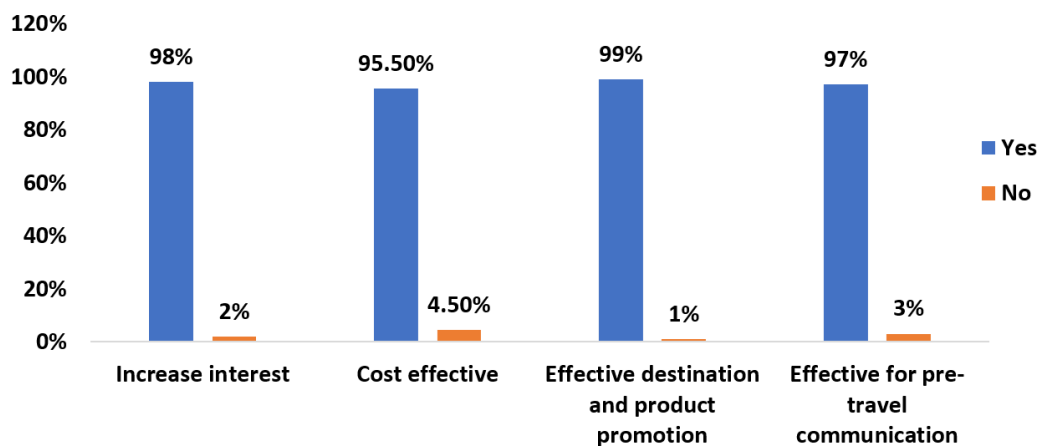


Figure 4. Tourists' perception of social media application in tourism.

For the most part, the respondents agree that social media is very effective for promoting a destination and its products. They also agree that when various tour related offerings are made through social media (e.g. tour packages marketed on Facebook, YouTube, etc.) tourists' interest in them may increase. Responses were also positive when asked if social media is effective for pre-travel communication, reflecting the general observation of social media's significant impact during the pre-trip stage, which is why tourism marketers focus diligently on this travel stage. The only observation here is that many tourists may not feel like social media is cost-effective, indicating that it is easier to obtain travel information from other sources. However, overall, respondents agreed (84%) that social media is well used for tourism promotion.

3.6.Descriptive statistics.

Descriptive statistics is used to summarize the data which has been collected and can be used to see what the opinion of the maximum respondents is. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Travel inspiration	200	1	5	4.26	.816
Awareness of destination and services	200	1	5	4.16	.878
Image formation	200	1	5	4.11	.882
Consideration	200	1	5	4.18	.884
Finalize decisions	200	1	5	3.95	.903
Modify existing decisions	200	1	5	4.14	.839
Evaluation of satisfaction	200	1	5	3.72	1.017
Good brand impression	200	2	5	3.88	.776
Reliability	200	1	5	3.95	.797
Loyalty development	200	1	5	3.94	.843
Advocacy	200	2	5	4.04	.856
Travel decisions and overall experience	200	2	5	4.16	.849
Valid N (listwise)	200				

Table 4 shows that the overall scores reflect positive opinions that user-generated content impacts tourists during different travel stages, ranging from ‘agree’ to ‘strongly agree’ (4 and above) for the majority of the variables. The highest score of a mean of 4.26 is shown for ‘travel inspiration’, denoting that user-generated content is the most effective in tourism marketing in the earliest stages of travel planning whereby tourists are inspired by UGC to decide to travel somewhere. The next highest score is a mean of 4.18 in the case of ‘Consideration’ which indicates that UGC in tourism marketing is the next most effective in influencing tourists’ consideration set, stating the importance of having attractive UGC at the disposal of tourism marketers to influence tourists to consider their own travel service or destination at the crucial point of time just before purchase. UGC is also highly regarded for awareness creation (4.16), modifying previous travel decisions (4.14) and image formation (4.11), and notably also important for earning tourists’ advocacy (4.04).

3.7.Reliability Analysis.

A reliability analysis was conducted through the internal consistency test by Cronbach’s alpha, measuring the consistency of the items used in the questionnaire. Generally, a value of $\alpha = 0.70$ or above indicates that there is sufficient internal consistency and that the study is reliable shows in Table 5. This reliability statistics is related to the Goodness-of-fit test in which illustrates that $\alpha = 0.919$, which is well above the acceptable value of 0.70 that means the study is reliable.

Table 5.Reliability statistics for Goodness-of-fit.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.919	12

3.8.Regression analysis.

The regression analysis has been done to test the relationship between the study variables and consecutive hypothesis testing. Table 6 provides the Model Summary of the analysis, providing the value of R (multiple correlation, determining the strength between the

relationship of dependent and independent variables) to be 0.750, showing a moderately strong correlation. R Square denotes the proportion of variance in the dependent variable, which can be predicted from the independent variables, which stands at 0.663. This indicates that the independent variables explain more than 66 % of the variance in tourism marketing's UGC application through social media in their positive experience creation and travel decision-making, as seen from tourists' perspective through their responses.

Table 6. Model summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SE of the Estimate
1	.750 ^a	.663	.537	.578

^a Predictors: (Constant), Advocacy, Consideration, Evaluation of satisfaction, Reliability, Travel inspiration, Awareness of destination and services, Good brand impression, Finalize decisions, Image formation, Loyalty development, Modify existing decision

Table 7. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	80.775	11	7.343	21.990	.000 ^b
	Residual	62.780	188	.334		
	Total	143.555	199			

^a Dependent Variable: Travel decisions and overall experience

^b Predictors: (Constant), Advocacy, Consideration, Evaluation of satisfaction, Reliability, Travel inspiration, Awareness of destination and services, Good brand impression, Finalize decisions, Image formation, Loyalty development, Modify existing decisions

Table 7 shows that the p-value stands at .000, indicating there is a high significance level. Thus at least one or more of the factors identified contribute to reliably determining the dependent variable.

Table 8. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.262	.277		.945	.346
	Travel inspiration	.108	.070	.104	1.535	.126
	Awareness of destination and services	-.038	.066	-.039	-.578	.564
	Image formation	-.049	.072	-.051	-.681	.497
	Consideration	.134	.068	.140	1.971	.050
	Finalize decisions	.081	.067	.086	1.204	.230
	Modify existing decisions	.277	.076	.274	3.634	.000
	Evaluation of satisfaction	.033	.052	.039	.629	.530
	Good brand impression	.025	.074	.223	3.432	.002
	Reliability	.126	.074	.118	1.713	.088
	Loyalty development	.104	.075	.104	1.392	.165
	Advocacy	.207	.076	.208	2.707	.007

^a Dependent Variable: Travel decisions and overall experience.

Table 8 shows the coefficients representing all the variables in the study, and from here the significance of the factors can be realized. It can be observed from the table that not all factors have equal importance. Thus UGC application in all stages is not equally significant in contributing to better tourist experience leading to improved tourism marketing. The most significant factors are identified in the stages of 'Modifying existing decisions' with sig value of .000, followed by 'Advocacy' (.007), Good brand impression (.002), and 'Consideration' (.050). Thus these independent variables reliably predict the dependent variable, i.e.,

utilization of UGC in these identified stages can contribute to positive tourist experience and lead to successful tourism marketing.

3.8. Result of hypotheses testing.

Taking into account the dimension and orientation of the linear relationships within the scores of variables, a correspondence coefficient (r) of Pearson was determined and tests were conducted to measure the relationship between Social Media User Generated Content (UGC) and tourists experience.

Table 9. Result of hypothesis testing.

Correlation Effects Relationship		Social media sites (reliability, information, accuracy, and others) relationship with Awareness of tourism destination and services	Social media usages and frequency of travel relationship with User Generated Content (UGC)	Travel related UGC in tourism Marketing significance on Tourists decision	Travel related UGC in tourism Marketing impact on Tourists experience	Rate the overall tourists experience towards Social media Marketing
Rate of Social media UGC in Marketing and Promotion with tourists experience	Pearson Correlation	.351**	-.009	.328**	.381**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) / P-Value	.002	.971	.004	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200	200
	Supports / Rejects	Support	Not Support	Support	Support	

N.B: $p \leq 0.01$ ***; $p \leq 0.05$ **

The study of the mediation effect describes how and why both variables are related. In this correlation effect analysis variable with the hypotheses of H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , & H_4 but Hypotheses H_2 is not supported with the statement is as: Social media usages and frequency of travel has a significant on throughout all stages of tourism has a significant impact on User Generated Content (UGC). The result also shows that there are four hypotheses like; H_1 , H_3 , H_4 are supported with respective values are $r = .351$, $.328$, $.381$, when $P = > .05$ and respective p-values are $p = .002$, $.004$, $.000$, with the statements are as; Social media sites (reliability, information, accuracy, and others) has a significant impact on Awareness of tourism destination and services, Travel related UGC in tourism Marketing strongly effect on Tourists decision, Travel related UGC in tourism Marketing influenced on Tourists experience.

3.9. Key findings.

The result of this study has identified a number of observations, which are mentioned in the following section:

- Social media usage is prevalent among people of various age groups, indicating a growing familiarity with social media platforms. The study revealed that individuals are now spending anywhere from one to six hours daily on these platforms. Consequently, a

significant portion of their daily attention is directed towards social media. This highlights the potential of social media as an effective means to reach potential tourists, as it captures more attention than other media channels.

- The majority of the respondents in this survey belong to the millennial generation, typically aged between 20 and 40 years. They have relatively high incomes and travel at least once or several times a year. This aligns with current trends, as millennials are emerging as a key customer segment in the tourism industry, with older generations gradually reducing their participation. Among the respondents, millennials accounted for 62% of the total, and the study also confirmed their high engagement with social media platforms. When examining specific social media platforms used for tourism purposes, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were found to be the most popular. This implies that these platforms hold significant potential for reaching and persuading tourists, making them a priority for tourism marketers.
- Among online information sources, social networking sites emerged as the most trusted source of travel information. In contrast, when seeking information from traditional sources, recommendations from family and friends were the most consulted. This underscores the enduring influence and reliability of word-of-mouth recommendations in the travel industry. Leveraging word of mouth from trusted individuals through social media can be highly effective in influencing tourists. Tourists already perceive social media as effective for destination and travel product promotion and communication. Incorporating e-word of mouth (eWOM) into social media strategies can further enhance the effectiveness of social media for travel purposes. This can be achieved by increasing the availability of user-generated travel content on social media platforms and utilizing it for tourism marketing, which may result in better outcomes in converting potential tourists into actual travelers and retaining them in the long term.
- Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents agree that travel-related User Generated Content (UGC) on social media has a substantial impact on their consideration of travel options. More importantly, travel-related UGC, as opposed to general brand-produced advertisements, serves as an inspiration for planning trips. This suggests that social media can be effectively utilized by tourism marketers in the pre-travel stage by attracting more tourists with visually appealing content created by travelers and their positive online experiences. Acknowledging and incorporating tourist-generated content also conveys that the tourism brand values tourists' opinions and contributions, ultimately fostering loyalty and advocacy among tourists who, in turn, attract future customers. The results of the regression analysis support this assumption, highlighting the significance of UGC in impacting travel decisions, consideration sets, post-trip engagement, destination and service awareness, and modification of existing decisions. The utilization of UGC in these stages proves to be the most crucial for tourism marketing, as it significantly influences the overall tourist experience.

4. Conclusions

It has empowered consumers worldwide to make more informed decisions, while also granting marketers deeper insights into customer demands, enabling them to better meet the desires of their target audience.

In the tourism sector, the conversations surrounding it, driven by tourists, play a pivotal role. The ability of marketers to harness these conversations for their benefit and effectively influence tourists to become their customers is crucial for the industry's vitality. Collaboration between tourists and tourism marketers is essential for the continued success of the tourism sector, and social media must be leveraged as a vital tool in tourism marketing. As time progresses, the balance of power will likely shift even more towards tourists. It is essential for tourism marketers to recognize this evolution and acknowledge the significant contributions of tourists. Marketing strategies should be crafted with due importance given to social media and travel-related user-generated content, rather than treating social media for tourism marketing as an afterthought. This forward-thinking approach will position tourism marketers to thrive in an evolving landscape where tourists wield increasing influence. The most important positive sharing and identification and various social media tools in traveling after considering the effect of tourism on social media is crucial and can be a sustainable competitive advantage due to their importance, scarcity, imitability and non-substitute. If travel companies have a good value-generation approach and concentrate on personalizing their services, they can boost converting costs. The Travel industry offers visitors a customized service, giving a social media network that systematically shares users and like-minded people's experiences and gives users the opportunity to customize anonymity and adds value to their personal details. Consequently, a number of social networking sites linked to tourism can be studied, focusing on different features, so that the features are more important for travelers. The usefulness of social media platforms in relation to tourism could be further examined. A comparative study may be conducted on the impact of social media i.e User Generated Content (UGC)/Customer Generated Content (UCC) in tourism between the south asian countries or developing countries to figure out the critical success factors or competitive advantages when using social media.

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