The Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions: A Pre and Post Analysis of Tourist Behavior with Special Reference to Delhi-NCR Region

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Tourism Management

By

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2022

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I declare that the work of my PhD thesis titled “The Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions: A Pre and Post Analysis of Tourist Behavior with Special Reference to Delhi-NCR Region” has been carried outby me in the department of Tourism under School of Hotel Management and tourism (SOHMT) in LPU, Jalandhar. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of bibliography provided. No part of the thesis was previously presented at any other institution.

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Indrajit Chaudhury

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
eWOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
HTTP	Hypertext Transfer Protocol
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IED	Internet-enabled Device
IF	Internet Forums
LBS	Location Based Services
LBSM	Location Based Social Media
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTA	Online Travel Agencies

Abstract

Travel have been about assisting and anticipating requests and how technology is used to simplify and streamline the user journey. Behavioural travel intention represents the individual's intention to perform or not perform a specific behaviour. Travel intention is a mental process that transforms motivating action into behaviour. Travel intention speaks about one's intention to travel (Ajzen, 1991).

Berthon et al.(2015)said that travellers use UGC to find travel-related information before choosing a destination. User-generated content is any variability of content like chats, discussion forums, social networking sites, blogs, and advertisements created by users and on social media websites. Users formed visual media on an online system, made accessible via social media, improving a brand's visual marketing.

User-Generated Content (UGC) discusses users' role in submitting, reviewing, and responding to online content (Berthon & McCarthy, 2015). The influence of UGC on the tourist industry has grown significantly in recent years. They may be used to draw the attention of potential visitors and advertise travel locations, goods, and services. UGC is a fantastic approach to listening to what prospective travellers' say about any tourism attraction or product. Visitors immediately access a wealth of free material posted on many websites, forums, and blogs (Aydin, 2020).

UGC has a significant impact on how travellers make pre-trip and post-trip decisions. UGC may be used to plan a vacation, decide where to stay and go on the trip, and share post-travel experiences. UGC is crucial for travellers since it may aid in their decision-making over where to go. This knowledge might be crucial for travellers looking to avoid possible tourist traps and locate the finest sites for their interests. This information may be crucial for locations with a wide variety of attractions. By offering details on the climate, culture, and customs, UGC may aid travellers in planning their trip. UGC may, therefore, significantly influence travel decisions by educating people about locations and motivating them to go. The local economy may benefit from increased employment in the tourism sector due to higher visitor expenditure.

Research Gap

The increasing use of user-generated content helps to acquire information about the testimonials and experiences of consumers, influencing consumer decision-making. UGC in tourism is how tourists share their experiences and feedback on the destinations (Oliveira, 2018).

Osei and Abenyin (2016) found that travellers use UGC in planning trip but predominately uses it at the awareness stage, which is the pre-trip stage. International tourists most utilize the UGC. The relationship between social media usage and demographics, like age, was relatively significant. However, a significant gap exists in the comparative analysis of UGC's influence on the travel intentions of the individual pre- and post-trip. Additionally, it is unclear what content companies are using as a promotional tool to gather customers' satisfaction levels and if the content is authentic and genuine or is just being used to direct the travellers to their preferred destinations.

Therefore, through the undertaken research work, the existing research gap was bridged, and the influence of UGC on pre-and post-trip travel intention of customers was identified.

Statement of the Problem

The problem statement talks about the context for the study and identifies the general analysis approach. Individuals are likely drawn to content that depicts exciting and attractive locations, perceived risk, UGC brand engagement, visit intention, and tourist destinations as they consume more UGC content online via blogs and other web platforms (Rather, 2021).

Businesses use the information on travel websites to assess how satisfied and how travellers perceive specific locations. Genuine user-generated content (UGC), which demonstrates the content creator's intention, gives decision-makers a new way to connect with the potential target market, which many businesses have mostly ignored. Due to this, tourism businesses and marketers no longer have as much of an impact on potential tourists (Xu, 2022).

Travelers frequently consult web content while determining where to go, according to the latest studies. This research topic will present a complete view of user-generated content's impact on travel intention: before and after the trip, providing ideas on usage levels, level of influence, and belief. Also, try to expedite the impact of User Generated Content on a traveller in the creation of perception through User Generated

Content to support travel intention, which has a multiplier effect on the society that may create jobs in the tertiary sector. However, if the internet material is erroneous or prejudiced, this reliance might have unfavourable effects.

This problem statement seeks to investigate the effect of UGC on traveller decision-making, and the following research questions are raised for the current study:

1. Whether tourists' gender and age influence how user-generated content are browsed?
2. Is there any Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions?
3. What is the moderating role of Promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention?
4. Is there any mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan?

Purpose of the Study

Location and travel marketers try to change consumers' behaviour to get tourists to use and purchase their goods and services. It is crucial to investigate how UGC affects travellers' intentions. Concern regarding how UGC may affect travellers' choices is on the rise. The bias or accuracy of many internet material sources impacts how travellers behave.

This study aims to explore how user-generated content affects travellers' choices. The purpose of this study by the ministry is to evaluate how personal norms affect travellers' intentions to use UGC during vacation planning in conjunction with destination choice and capitalising on the same to generate a source of income.

Significance of the Study

This study clarifies the research problem and precisely what was achieved to show why previous work needs to be continued. User-generated content (UGC) has provided a wide range of information that has facilitated traveller discovery of the ideal location and, as a result, has helped to improve travel intentions.

However, if biased or incorrect, UGC can harm traveller behaviour. The Delhi-NCR region will be the primary focus of this study's investigation of the impact of UGC on travellers' decision-making. The study will examine the effects of erroneous UGC on traveller decision-making and offer insights into how various forms of UGC influence traveller behaviour.

Research Objectives

The study objectives are outlined as follows.

Objective 1: To examine if gender and age influence the way user-generated content is browsed.

Objective 2: To examine the Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions.

Objective 3: To examine the moderating effect of Promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention.

Objective 4: To examine the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan

Research Hypotheses

After considering the research gap and objectives of the study following six hypotheses have been drawn for the current study. The literature review suggested transparent relationships among the survey variables, so no exceptions have been marked as null hypotheses.

H_1: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the gender groups

H_2: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups

H_3: UGC has a positive impact on travel intentions

H_4: UGC has a positive effect on travel plans

H_5: There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intentions

H_6: Travel intention mediates the relationship between UGC and travel plan

Research Methodology

The general strategy adopted to proceed with the research work is research methodology. The methodology discussed the many integrated research techniques for analysing how user-generated content impacts travellers' travel plans. As the undertaken study is on user-generated content's impact on travel intentions, it is more about the influence of societal norms and rules.

Park et al. (2020) highlighted in their work that the positivism approach helps in proceeding with the identification of causal relationships. The concentration on the facts under the application of positivism philosophy was beneficial in fulfilling the research objectives like the impact of age and gender on the travel intentions of the

individuals, moderating effect of promotional tools on UGC, and also travel intentions' mediating effect between UGC and travel plan.

This study was designed to be quantitative. Quantitative methods will be applied because of the high standardization of quantitative methods to make comparisons of findings easy. Therefore, using EFA and CFA, the impact of UGC on travel intentions was analysed using the collected data.

Summary of Key Findings

The prime objective of this study was to look at how user-generated content (UGC) affected travellers' intentions to trip and the function that promotional tools performed as an intermediary. Also, the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and travel plan is analysed.

The study also examined the associations between age and gender in the browsing behaviour of the UGC. All the postulated six hypotheses were accepted. The results have shown a significant favourable influence of UGC on travel intention and plan after the travel. Besides, the travel intention is found to mediate between the UGC and the travel plan after travel.

Moreover, a significant interaction between the UGC and the promotional tool positively influenced travel intention. Moreover, this signified the promotional tool moderating the relationship between the UGC and the travel intention after the travel.

Scope towards Government Issues

The research is expected to give the business, community, and government a vision to define marketing strategies concerning the use of user-generated content for accessing tourist destinations.

Scope towards Conceptual

This study may also serve as a primer on user-generated content for the readers, sparking their interest in learning more. Theoretical conclusions will aid in categorizing suggestions related to UGC in selecting traveller perceptions of destinations.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1. Chapter Overview

The tourism industry has rapid growth all over the world. India is no exception and has witnessed an increased number of tourists in recent years. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts that by 2025, India will be the most popular tourist destination in the world (Krishnan, 2022). This sector indirectly impacts the economy, estimated to be worth $2 trillion by 2025 (Godha, 2022). Internet and social media coverage help to retain the relationship due to the digital information available, known as user-generated content (UGC). The user-generated content provides information regarding the various destinations, hotels, travel guides, budget travelling, and local delights because of travel. Therefore, the current study examined UGC as a tactical tool and its influence on travel intentions and plans concerning the Delhi-NCR region.

1.2 Background and importance of the Study

The tourism industry contributes most to the economic expansion of countries. The websites' tourism capabilities allow users to exchange travel-related data from social networking sites. Tourism, directly and indirectly, contributes to a large portion of the world's GDP, which also offers services like foreign exchange and jobs. Before and after travel, clients post reviews or suggestions on hotel booking websites about accommodation (Godha, 2022).

According to Fotis et al. (2022) , the information about travel posted on social media or tourist websites is trusted by travellers. Tourists are likely to believe in the information offered on social media platforms since it has a high perceived value. Indian tourism is known for its rich cultural and historical heritage, variety of seasons with scenic beauty spread across the country.

Tourists reach places of interest based on the original content and content converted data from photos, videos, and other images (Xie, 2022). The previous literature indicates that while browsing the content, travellers get influenced by the destination images, reviews, and blogs and establish a long-lasting relationship with the inferences for tourism management. These links are positioned between user-generated content as decisive future tourism planning and a promotional tool. Present-day tourists depend on social media platforms to explain their choices and usage (Wengel, 2022).

The promotion of tourist destinations is apparent from user-generated content platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. As tourists have become content creators' influencers and destinations' promoters (Kumar, 2022).

The growth of user-generated content influenced consumer behaviour drastically in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Web 2.0-based applications do the exchange of ideas, views, and knowledge through connection and communication impact tourist behaviour intensely (Khan, 2022; Tsiakali, 2018).UGC is a valuable source of information for travellers that they can use to plan their travel and search for potential destinations (Aghaei, 2012). UGC has been observed to play an influential role in shaping travel intentions as companies streamline strategies and obtain insights (Saura, 2019).

UGC marketing plays a vital role in the promotion of tourist destinations worldwide. The tourist's role in social media plays an important role in their destination-related decision-making (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2022) .This thought suggests that UGC can impact significant tourism behaviour. Traveller view user-generated content (UGC) as a crucial tool in the travel and tourism business, from planning decisions to information-seeking (Xiang Zheng & Ulrike, 2010; Adamış, 2022).

Travellers rely on the online reviews posted by other travellers who have previously visited the destination and contribute further to the effects of gender and age in online travel reviews (Assaker, 2020). UGC plays a role like information search in travel decision-making behaviours and tourism promotion. UGC focuses on means for interacting with consumers (Zeng, 2014).

Previous studies on UGC suggest that increasing online content (UGC) available to travellers empowers them and enables them to make their own travel choices (Xiang, 2015). This affects travel planning behaviour. The pieces of knowledge of travellers' intention to use and understand online hotels and user-generated reviews for travel planning were found (Ayeh, 2016).

UGC influences consumer behaviour through online and offline channels (Mendes-Filho, 2022). Online UGC has the highest impact because it is immediate and can be accessed anywhere. Offline UGC is created offline and then shared online. It has a lower impact because it is less accessible and can be more difficult to share (Ingrassia, 2022).

Travellers plan their trips based on online content. Virtual tourism greatly impacts people's on-site destination choices (Lu, 2021). According to Nezakati (2015) & Fuad Mehraliyev (2021), UGC impacts the complete travelling process, the pre, during, and the post-travel. The study additionally provides a pre- and post-analysis of tourist behaviour concerning the UGC that influences travel intention and, consequently, the travel plan.

Thus, the study discussed knowledge sharing of user-generated content in tourism during pre-traveling decision-making. The traveller shares the importance of content on UGC when they believe it has objectivity and is reliable. Travellers share such content on their own UGC platforms. During the planning phase of a trip, several elements drive travellers to post their travel experiences on social media. During this time, travellers study travel-related user generated content, purchases, and destinations and develop expectations that guide their travel arrangements (Arica, 2022).

Raus (2022) conceptualized and identified tourist engagement on social media along with indicators where the traveller evaluates his trip, indirectly increasing tourist satisfaction. Using UGC may assist marketers in assessing the competitiveness of a destination's image, devising successful communication strategies for customers, and developing connections with consumers. Even though user-generated content (UGC) may create a pleasant tourist experience that ultimately leads to a desired travel intention and plan, UGC use on tourist behaviour in the pre-and post-travel stages has not been empirically examined. UGC can also target potential buyers by mining and adapting from social media wherein user-generated content creator's purchase intent was reflected (Xu, 2022).

Social media is accountable for changing how tourists extract and perceive information according to their needs and desires (Chhabra, 2022).There are several challenges with UGC, including the fact that information can be inaccurate or misleading and that people can be irresponsible in using UGC.

Additionally, there is a risk that UGC could be used to promote unethical or illegal activities. For example, a study found that some travel bloggers promoted tourism to Syria, even though it is a war-torn country (Distel, 2022).

There are also challenges with using UGC for marketing purposes. For example, if a travel blogger is paid to promote a hotel or destination, this could be seen as unethical and potentially harmful to the destination's reputation. It is also possible for

UGC to be manipulated or faked, which could negatively affect a destination's reputation. For example, a travel blog promoting false information about a destination could damage the destination's reputation or hotel. These factors can hurt short-term and long-term tourism (Hayat & Al Mamun A, 2022).

1.3. Definition & Concept - UGC s

1.3.1 History of UGC and Terms Used in UGC

In 1990, bulletin board systems implemented UGC forums, later web forums. With worldwide web growth, user-generated content has become increasingly popular. The correlation between UGC like Instagram and destination preferences of tourism clients is based on the information, influence, and intention stages which emphasize traveller behaviour in tourism marketing (Eken, 2022).

In 2005, the BBC channel invented user-generated content to define vast information and photographs shared by individuals on the internet. In the early times, the concept was referred to as brand-specific content created by the brand customers and published on all the possible channels (Gutierrez, 2020).

The article published by Gutierrez (2020) highlights that the earliest use of UGC, even before the word was coined, was for collecting information and not for advertising. The creation of the Oxford Dictionary is the earliest practical application of the information collection process, referred to as UGC in today's era.

Gutierrez (2020) mentioned in the article that the focus on sharing information about current events around the world led to the emergence of the word 'citizen journalism. The use of online bulletin boards was every day for the collection of information. Instance, a bulletin board collecting information on actors, directors, movies, and performances, now recognized as IMDb, also started as the platform where all the information can be brought together. In 2006, TIME. Magazine published "you" as a person as a year to reflect on UGC on Web 2.0.

Sultan et al. (2021) explored travellers' responsibility towards environmental behaviour in tourism within the user-generated content pattern and its effectiveness for convincing destination marketing organizations. The study found that UGC impacted how people perceived brands.

UGC had a significant impact on sources of user-generated content. They also spoke on strong-tie, weak-tie, and tourism-tie sources and their destinations' effects on tourist satisfaction (Narangajavana, 2019) .

1.3.2. Defining UGC

User-generated content (UGC) represents an online activity of internet users who develop original content and post it onto websites for others to read and interact with. In the last twentieth century, web services have stopped producing content and also helped users with a resource to develop and distribute content. The study presents research on user-generated content studies, which include a content analysis (Naab, 2016).

Scholars have defined the intersection of Web 2.0, user-generated content, and social media by various terms, like social media and the participatory web, since the new millennium (Schmidt, 2011).

UGC can be defined as any creative online content published on public platforms and may or may not have any direct linkage to commercial benefits. Tourism and hospitality research speaks about the application of user-generated content (Stepchenkova, 2015).

According to Kar et al. (2021) ,UGC provides information to tourists, managers, and scholars regarding factors impacting customer service experience by mining social media discussions.

Aydin(2020) also claims the legitimacy and validity of the source of information as compared to other data sources. This content, like images, audio, blogs, texts, and videos by travellers, usually speaks about hospitality facilities' UGC usage behaviour.

Bigne et al. (2020)provided a more personal and engaging perspective on the product or service and helped increase customer engagement through UGC's tourist experience. User-generated content can be a valuable resource for businesses, as it can help build brand awareness and loyalty and generate leads and sales.

1.3.3 Types of UGC

There are several types of user-generated content, each with its unique benefits: comments, reviews, testimonials, forum posts, blogs post, social media posts, case studies, videos, texts, and images that explore the co-creation experience and value in the tourism review online platform (Lam, 2020; Tsiakali, 2018).

Table 1.1: Types of User Generated Content

Types	Author	Description
Images	Wardle (2010)	Images are powerful tools for marketing and communication. They can be used to highlight features of products and services, attract attention to content, and create a positive brand image. Images should be used in a way relevant to the target audience and can help promote the business goals.
Review	Stone (2013)	Reviews are a powerful way for users to share their thoughts on products and services. They can help to build brand awareness and loyalty, as well as generate leads and sales.
Blogs post	Marine-Roig & Clave (2015)	Blog posts are user-generated descriptions of their experiences with products and services. They can be a valuable resource for businesses, as they provide an opportunity to connect with potential customers and build relationships.
Testimonials	Estrella-Ramón(2017)	Testimonials are user-generated descriptions of how the product or service has helped them achieve specific goals. They can be a valuable resource for businesses, as they can help to build brand awareness and loyalty and generate leads and sales.
Forum posts	Tsiakali (2018)	Forum posts are user-generated discussions about products and services on a specific forum. They can be a resource for businesses, which provides an opportunity to connect with potential customers.
Social media post	Tsiakali (2018)	Social media posts are user-generated descriptions of services on social media platforms. They can be a valuable resource for businesses, as they provide an opportunity to build relationships.
Comment	Lam et al. (2020)	Commenting on products and services is a way to share Users' thoughts and feedback. Commenting can help build brand awareness and loyalty and generate feedback for improving the product or service.

1.4. UGC in Tourism Sector - the importance

The travel and tourism industries are growing faster than ever in emerging and developing nations. The tourism landscape has significantly changed in just ten years (Salem, 2018).

Digital media transforms how travel is traditionally planned, bought, marketed, enjoyed, and shared. Digital platforms have made it possible for User-Generated Content (UGC) quickly displace traditional sources as the most significant and well-liked source of travel information (Salem, 2018).

Existing travel agencies, guidebooks, conventional marketing techniques, and star rating systems are all impacted by UGC, as is the consumer's itinerary. Additionally, it provides new opportunities for developing nations to leverage these platforms to achieve practical performance improvements using big data. Together with local businesses and tourist management organizations, the World Bank Group and TripAdvisor sought to maximize the advantages of UGC while minimizing its downsides (Salem, 2018).

1.4.1 UGC In the Travel Industry

UGC can be used to engage potential tourists and promote destinations, products, and services. It can also be used to create content for social media, including reviews and recommendations. This content can link user-generated content (UGC) and travel intention by enticing new travellers and informing seasoned travellers about the attractions with a destination image (Mehmood, 2018).

UGC can also help to improve customer service by helping tourism companies understand their customers better. For example, if a customer posts a negative review of a tourist attraction, tourism companies can use this information to improve their services. Therefore, UGC has significant potential in the travel industry and can help to drive more traffic to destinations. The UGC platforms include TripAdvisor, Instagram, and YouTube, which are considered popular (Acuti, 2018).

User-generated content (UGC), which includes everything from blog posts and photos on social media to videos, reviews, and material from a mobile device, is any information produced by travellers regarding their travel experiences (Missaoui, 2019).

User-generated content (UGC) plays an integral part in trip planning since it is a more effective marketing tool and more reliable than brand material. Empowerment through UGC influences travellers' intentions to utilise UGC while making trip plans (Milne, 2017). This is because it is seen as being more authentic, and it provides a more personalised experience of a destination.

Moreover, UGC can be used to promote destinations, products, and services and create content for social media about a travel destination. Travel reviews and blog recommendations attract new tourists, while videos highlighting a destination and positioning hotel brands by text-mining user-generated content (UGC) encourage travellers to visit again (Feng Hu, 2020). The customer service sector is one of the most significant in society and is essential in encouraging interpersonal relationships. Therefore, UGC has the potential to improve customer service by helping tourism companies understand their customers better.

1.4.2 UGC in Hotel Industry

UGC is created by the internet user, such as comments on blogs, social media posts, or photos, and reviews posted for hotels on the travel website like TripAdvisor impacted the hotel industry because it can help create a more interactive and engaging experience for guests (Dinçer, 2017).

For example, if a hotel offers guests the opportunity to leave feedback about their stay online, UGC could be particularly valuable in helping to improve the quality of those reviews. If a hotel offers its guests the opportunity to create and share photos of their stay, this could lead to increased online traffic and more potential customers. There are several ways in which UGC impacted the hotel industry. UGC assisted in travel planning and gauging travel products based on past reviews left by guests, promoted a hotel brand or product, and generated online traffic (Ukpabi, 2018).

Additionally, the available technology enables us to access a vast sum of tourist data on tourism web platforms like UGC, which can help create a more interactive and engaging experience for guests by offering opportunities to leave feedback about their stay online. Thus, promoting a hotel brand or product more engagingly through social media or providing opportunities for guests to share photos of their stay (Cvelbar, 2018).

According to the reports of Cornell Hospitality Research, user-generated content act as a factor in travel plans. Hotel, restaurant, and other travel-related company owners benefit from UGC. UGC also helps to decide where leisure travellers will stay (McCarthy, 2010).

Moreover, online reviews act as a vital source of information for travellers because social media plays a gradually significant role as the source of information (Xiang Zheng & Ulrike, 2010).

Hotel accommodation becomes a central item in the travel plan based on online interpersonal influence or eWOM. By harnessing the power of user-generated content, hotels can create a more engaged and interactive experience for their guests, leading to increased business and brand awareness (Litvin, 2008).

Table 1.2: Major UGC Travel Platforms

	Audience Size	Reach	UGC Function
Blogs	2+ million blog posts published daily	Globally, various providers globally	Long-from travel content and tips from bloggers, influencers, and other content creators.
Facebook	1.45 billion daily active users on average for March 2018 2.20 billion monthly active users as of March 31, 2018	Global excluding China, North Korea, and Iran and various temporary bans	Crowd-source travel tips, share articles, upload photos and videos of trips, live stream travel experiences, check in to travel destinations and experiences and post user reviews. Much of UGC content from consumers are posted privately.
Instagram	800 million+ monthly active accounts 500 million+ daily active accounts	Global, except China	Real-time content, live video, and photos via Insta- gram stories, videos, and more.
Snap Chat	158 million users spending 25–30 mins a day	Number one iPhone App in 13 countries and number 2 or 3 in 15 others	Real-time content, live video, stories, short text, and more. Content is short-term and constantly renewed.
TripAdvisor	455 million average monthly unique visitors	49 markets	Reviews, photos, Q&A, and forum posts are added by users for hotels, restaurants, and attractions.
Twitter	330 million monthly active users	Global excluding China, North Korea, and Iran and various temporary bans	Travelers share photos, tweet at brands, and engage with travel influencers.
WeChat	1 billion user accounts 902 million daily users	Primarily Greater China	Post content, engage with brand accounts, book travel, message friends while traveling, and more.
Weibo	340 million active monthly users	Primarily Greater China	Publish text, images, and video posts; influencers use this platform to talk about travel.
YouTube	One billion+ user	Global excluding China, North Korea, and Iran and various temporary bans	Travel guides, video blogs, short destination clips, packing guides, and more.

Source: (Salem, 2018)

1.5. UGC, Travel Intention and Travel Plan

UGC influences the decision to travel by providing the traveller with information about potential destinations. There are two aspects of looking at UGC's influence on potential tourists.

The work by Wilson (2012) highlighted that the apprehensions and anxiety that individuals have before planning and taking the trip could be overcome by the UGC posted about the specific destination or experience. User-generated content motivates people to post (or not) and on where and what type of content patrons share from a recent trip. For example, a traveller who finds excellent UGC about a new destination may be more inclined to plan a trip there.

In contrast, someone who encounters negative UGC about the same destination may decide against traveling because of the increasing omnipresence of social media platforms. The position of user-generated content for establishments marketing their destinations, products, and services to tourists continues to increase (Dedeoğlu, 2020).

Furthermore, if someone discovers that a popular tourist spot is featured prominently in UGC, they are more likely to research the destination and travel there. UGC can positively impact tourism by increasing awareness of destinations and encouraging people to explore new places. This knowledge may lead to increased spending by tourists in the local economy.

Similar to how UGC influences the pre-trip travel intention, the post-trip UGC can also impact the travel intention of the travellers. The reviews posted under UGC, which make the travellers follow a destination or an experience, can be identified or labelled as fake if the outcome does not turn out as explained in the content. On the other hand, the positive experience can increase destination loyalty among travellers and make them analyse UGC before making future trips. Relationships between destination image, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM) publicity show how user-generated content (UGC) influences visitor loyalty behaviour (Hsiu-Yuan, 2012).

The work by Xu et al.(2021) highlighted that the acceptance of the content and the destination influences the travel intention of consumers. However, when

analysed for the differential impact on males and females, it was found that it is easier to gain loyalty from male travellers than from female travellers.

Xu et al.(2021);Assaker & Guy Hallak(2019) mentioned that male travellers are convinced based on the perceived usefulness of UGC, whereas females look for satisfaction from the UGC associated with their trip. The explanatory variables like travellers' usage intentions' of UGC and online reviews bridge the gap between customer expectations and experience impacting their travel intention pre- and post-trip (Narangajavana, 2019).

An example of how UGC could influence travel intention is illustrated in the case of the Destination: Miami blog. The blog features UGC about the city of Miami, which may influence potential travellers' decision to visit the city (Assaker G., 2020).

In addition, UGC about Miami may increase tourists' spending in the city. Therefore, UGC can significantly impact travel decision-making by informing people about destinations and encouraging them to explore new places. UGC helps in place branding thus, increase in the local economy by an increase in spending by tourists. Specific promotional tools like social media platforms and travel communities' feedback and reviews encourage tourists to visit a destination or explore experiences (Acuti, 2018).

1.5.1 UGC, Online Travel Intention and Significance of Promotional Tool

Many experts believe that UGC can be essential in influencing consumer behaviour, particularly regarding travel planning and booking. UGC can directly impact online travel intention by influencing the selection of destinations, choice of travel mode, and accommodation preferences. Thus, social media users help in brand identity and brand image creation. UGC can positively or negatively affect online travel intention depending on its content and context (Skinner, 2018).

Marketers have used different promotional tools to enhance UGC's impact on travel intention. Rathore (2020) explains social media platforms as a medium for exchanging and communicating information, even for tourists and travellers. UGC act as a promotional tool like Facebook, Instagram, and online travel communities that helps tourists plan their travel based on the opinions and comments posted. The contents are about the travel mode, hotels, destinations, experiences, and other

relevant information. Thus, the influence of user-generated content supports tourists' travel planning in India. The benefits of travel content posted on UGC sites help gather travel information (Rathore, 2020).

In another study by Egger et al. (2022) ,destination image formation is another significant aspect of the promotional tools, which further connects with the travel intention of the tourists and influences not just their pre-trip psychology but also the post-trip analysis of the content. Therefore, UGC shared that using promotional tools is crucial in influencing individuals' travel intentions.

UGC is an umbrella term for user-generated content, including reviews, photos, videos, and blogs. It can significantly impact online travel intention because it can influence the selection of destinations, travel mode choices, and accommodation preferences. UGC can also indirectly impact online travel intention by influencing consumer perceptions about a destination or travel experience. Thus user-generated content and online reviews are very much pertinent in hospitality purchase decisions, including restaurants (Oliveira, 2018).

For example, suppose someone sees a lot of positive reviews about the Pompeii Archaeological Site written by travellers who have already visited the country. The context in online discussions is another critical factor impacting online travel intention; for example, suppose someone is looking to book a trip to Pompeii Archaeological Site but sees many reviews about the country written by travellers who have gone there recently. In that case, the context of these reviews may influence their online travel intention toward the Pompeii Archaeological Site, which further signifies the importance of promotional tools in influencing travel intention (Cuomo, 2021).

1.6. Research Gap

The increasing use of user-generated content helps to acquire information about the testimonials and experiences of consumers, influencing consumer decision-making (Oliveira, 2018).

Osei and Abenyin (2016) found that travellers use UGC in planning trip but predominately uses it at the awareness stage, which is the pre-trip stage. International tourists most utilize the UGC. UGC in tourism is how tourists share their experiences and feedback on the destinations. The relationship between social media usage and demographics, like age, was relatively significant.

However, a significant gap exists in the comparative analysis of UGC's influence on the travel intentions of the individual pre- and post-trip. Additionally, it is unclear what content companies are using as a promotional tool to gather customers' satisfaction levels and if the content is authentic and genuine or is just being used to direct the travellers to their preferred destinations.

Therefore, through the undertaken research work, the existing research gap was bridged, and the influence of UGC on pre-and post-trip travel intention of customers was identified.

1.7. Problem Statement

As people consume more and more UGC content on the internet through blogs and various web platforms, people are likely to get attracted to content that shows exciting and beautiful places, perceived risk, UGC brand engagement, visit intention, and tourist destinations (Rather, 2021).

Companies are using the content of the travel websites to check the traveller’s perception and satisfaction with various destinations. Authentic user-generated content (UGC), showing the content creator's intent, provides a new option for decision-makers to achieve the potential target market, which remained primarily untapped by many firms. This has reduced the influence of tourism marketers and enterprises on potential travellers (Xu, 2022).

Current research has shown that travellers rely heavily on online content when deciding where to visit. However, this reliance can have negative consequences if the online content is biased or inaccurate.

This problem statement seeks to investigate the effect of UGC on traveller decision-making, and the following research questions are raised for the current study:

1. Whether tourists' gender and age influence how user-generated content are browsed?
2. Is there any Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions’?

3. What is the moderating role of Promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention?
4. Is there any mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan?

1.8. Need for the study

In order to attract visitors to favour and buy their goods and services, location and travel marketers aim to influence their customers' behaviour. Therefore, it is essential to examine how UGC influences travel intention. There is a growing concern over the effect of UGC on traveller decision-making. Many online content sources are biased or inaccurate, which has implications for travellers' behaviour. This research seeks to examine the result of UGC on traveller decision-making.

1.9. Rationale of the Study

User-generated content (UGC) has created an abundance of information that has made it easier for travellers to find the perfect destination for them and has thus contributed to increased travel intentions. However, UGC can also hurt traveller behaviour if biased or inaccurate. This study will explore the effects of UGC on travellers' decision-making, focusing specifically on the Delhi-NCR region. The study will provide insights into how different types of UGC affect traveller behaviour and explore the consequences of inaccurate UGC on traveller decision-making.

The study will contribute knowledge for practices and academia on the traveller decision-making process and the effects of UGC on traveller intention. It will also provide insights into how destination marketing organisations can mitigate the adverse effects of biased or inaccurate UGC on traveller decision-making.

1.10. Significance of the study

The study will provide insights into user-generated content's impact on traveller decision-making, focusing on the Delhi-NCR region. This knowledge will be valuable for tourism operators, destination marketing agencies, travel agents, and individual travellers. This study will also identify the challenges associated with UGC and provide possible solutions to mitigate the adverse effects of biased or inaccurate UGC on traveller decision-making. This study will help understand the implications of UGC on traveller behaviour and decision-making.

1.11. Area of the study

Figure1.1 Area and Sub-Region of Delhi/NCR region

Source (Board, 2021).

The study is on various aspects of user-generated content (UGC) on travellers' decision-making while planning a trip. The National Capital Region (NCR) is interstate regional planning and development board for a region centered on the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT-Delhi). According to the notification, the NCR includes the whole NCT of Delhi and a few districts in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan, totalling 55,083 square kilo meters (Board, 2021). The area information for each sub-region is listed below:

Table1.3: Area and Sub-Region of Delhi/NCR region

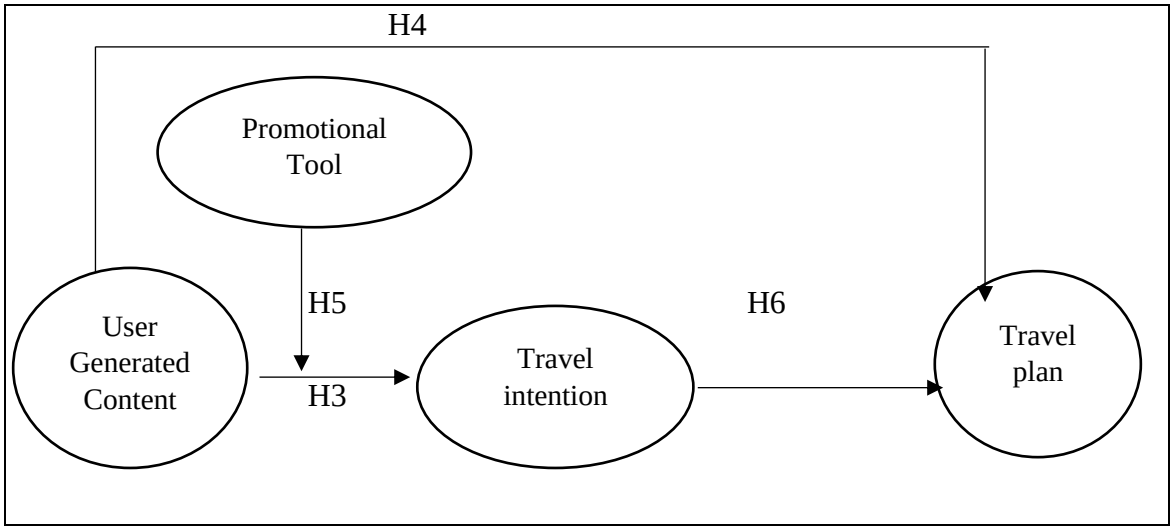
Sub-Region	Name of the Districts	Area (in sq. km)
Haryana	Faridabad, Gurugram, Nuh, Rohtak, Sonepat, Rewari, Jhajjar, Gurugram, Panipat, Palwal, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Mahendragarh, Jind, and Karnal (fourteen districts)	25,327
Uttar Pradesh	Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Bulandshahr, Baghpat, Hapur, Shamli, and Muzaffarnagar (Eight districts).	14,826
Rajasthan	Alwar and Bharatpur (two districts).	13,447
Delhi	The whole of NCT Delhi.	1,483
	Total Area	55,083 sq. km

Source: (Board, 2021)

The study used a survey methodology based on the conceptual framework provided in the next section to collect data from the Delhi/NCR region using a structured questionnaire.

1.12. Research Model

Figure 1.2: Conceptual Model of the study



1.13. Summary

The impact of UGC increased rapidly in recent years on the tourism sector. They can be used to engage potential tourists and promote destinations, products, and services. UGC is a great way to get feedback from potential tourists about any destination or product.

Tourists have direct access to a pool of information freely available on different platforms in the form of blogs, forums, and websites. UGC extensively influences travellers to make their travel decisions process pre-trip and post-trip. UGC can be used to prepare for a trip, make informed decisions about where to stay and visit, and have post-trip experiences.

UGC is important for travellers because it can help them make informed decisions about where to visit. This information can be critical for travellers who want to avoid potential tourist traps and find the best attractions for their interests. This information can be essential for destinations with a diverse range of attractions. UGC can also help travellers prepare for their trip by providing information about the weather, culture, and customs.

Therefore, UGC can significantly impact travel decision-making by informing people about destinations and encouraging them to explore new places. In addition, increased tourist spending may create more jobs in the tourism industry, contributing to the local economy.

1.14. Overview of Thesis

This thesis has been presented in five chapters:

Chapter 1 overviews the brief thesis discussion of the major subjects. The first chapter introduces the research's overall goal.

Chapter 2 speaks on the theoretical foundation of the research study.

This chapter covers essential concepts such as user-generated content and addresses travel intention and the role between user-generated content and promotional tools. The importance of user-generated content in influencing travel decisions is highlighted in this chapter. A study of the literature done in this chapter also identifies and outlines the research gap. This chapter also contains the research objectives, which serve as a bridge to close the research gap. This chapter also covers the study's geographic area, Delhi/NCR, and the UGC platform for this research.

Chapter 3 discusses the research strategies used to achieve the objective and proposes an analytical method for extracting and analyzing information from the analysis. This chapter speaks on the research approach to determining trip intention. Furthermore, the method used in this study to compare the Travel plan and intention with the user-generated content is detailed. The usefulness of the data analysis tools used for this study is also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 4: The results of the analysis of user-generated content and its impact are presented in this chapter. The components of the travel intention discovered through UGC (travel reviews) are also provided, along with the accompanying thoughts. This chapter also includes the results of survey data analysis. The results of the impact of user-generated content on travel intention are also shown.

Chapter 5 talks about the findings from the preceding chapter are addressed in further depth. This chapter examines and explains the findings' various interpretations and ramifications. Based on existing literature, visitor attitudes expressed in user-contributed content about travel behaviour are reviewed and debated. The impact of user-generated material on tourist travel intentions in Delhi/NCR is investigated. This chapter also focuses on the study's addition to the current body of knowledge. This chapter also discusses the research's managerial ramifications. A quick summary of the thesis is included in the chapter.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

This thesis investigated the influence of User Generated Content on travel plans and intention. As a result, to begin by offering a complete knowledge of User Generated Content. This chapter starts with a quick overview of the topic under consideration: User Generated Content. to mention that Travel Behaviour, Travel plans, Travel intentions, and Promoting Tool from the existing research are examined, analysed, and contrasted to address each issue. This chapter provided the theoretical background for this research. This chapter addresses numerous relevant literatures and presents a reason for this research. This chapter presented a research gap based on a study of the literature. This chapter also describes the research region and introduces the UGC platform from which UGC was retrieved.

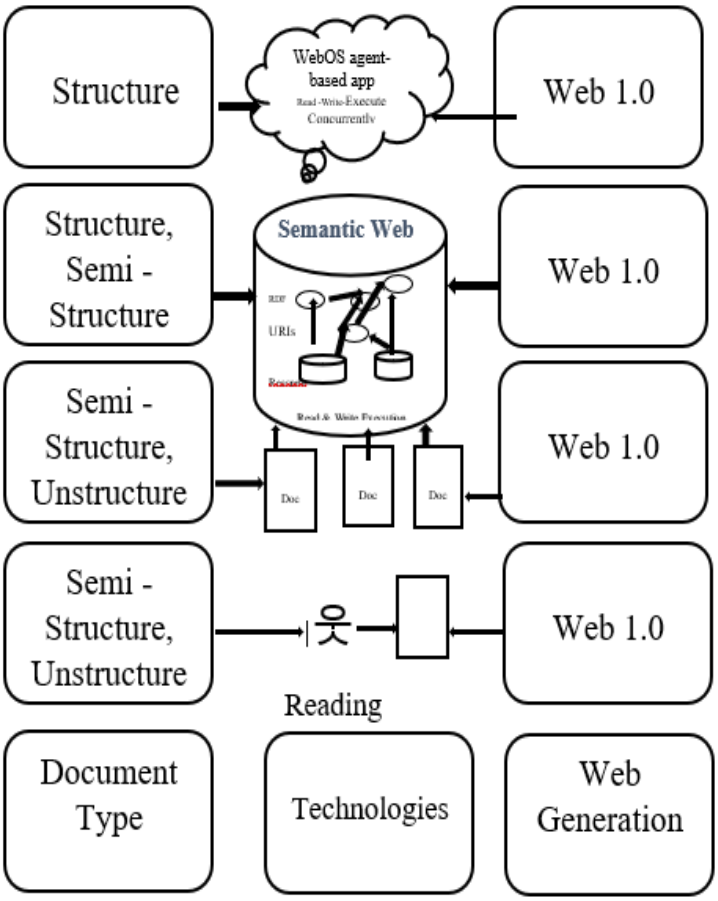
2.2. Web evolution: From Web 1.0 To 4.0

The most significant worldwide info medium is World Wide Web (WWW), via which users may exchange, read, and publish data through computers linked to the internet. They gave a quick overview of the Web's growth from web1.0 to web 4.0 (Nath & Pranjal, 2015).

The key objectives of Web 1.0 were getting online and finding information. User-generated content is referred to as Web 2.0. Web 3.0 is viewed as the semantic Web, in which computers, rather than people, would generate and think of new content. Web 4.0 will be the web of intelligent connections, as it is also known.

In a similar spirit, White (2010) states that Web 4.0 is similar to Web of Things, a subsection of the broader Internet of Things concept. Buzzwords like "Web 3.0," "Web 4.0," "The Smart Web," and "The Web of Things" are commonly used, although no one can forecast the Web's future. The Web continued to discuss Web 2.0, 3.0, and X. 0's characteristics and potential (Murugesan, 2010).

Figure 2.1. Web technologies and document types



Source:(Nath & Pranjal, 2015)

Web 1.0 initial stage of the internet lasted in the 1990s. Web 1.0 was a read-only web, where the role of a passive observer, unable to create or upload anything on the sites visited, was of users (Aghaei, 2012).

Between 2000 and 2009, the second phase of the internet, Web 2.0, emerged as social networking, interactivity, and user input in content creation.

The third phase of the Web, Web 3.0 or Semantic Web, which will last from 2010 to 2019, is designed to organise how users browse and search for content (Nath & Pranjal, 2015). As the transition from Web 2.0 to Web 3.0 occurs between 2004 and 2014, this timeframe is crucial for studies on online behaviour. (Nations, 2016; Davis, 2009).

Davis (2009) states that Web 4.0 had all aspects of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 become omnipresent. Web 2.0 is a web application that offers services to its users. Web 3.0 or Web 4.0 is defined unclearly, and the emergence of a new Web 4.0 is

still in its infancy. Web 4.0, known as Web OS, is an operating system that functions similarly to the human brain, resulting in a vast network of scholarly communications (Sebastian Weber, 2010).

Web 4.0. is an online network that provides transparency, participation, and collaboration for essential industrial, social, and others. (Bauman, 2017) Table 1 compares some differences between web 1.0, web 2.0, and web 3.0 (Patel, 2013).

Table 2.1: Comparison between Web 1.0, Web 2.0, and Web 3.0

Web1.0	**Web2.0**	**Web3.0**
1996	2006	2016
The Web	The Social Web	The Semantic Web
Tim Berners Lee	Tim O'Reilly	Tim Berners Lee
Read-only web	Read and write Web	Read, Write and execute web
Information Sharing	Interaction	Immersion
Millions of users	Billions of users	Trillions of users
Echo system	Participation	Understanding self
Connect information	Connect people	Connect knowledge
Brain and Eyes(=Information)	Brain, Eyes, Ears, Voice and	Brain, Eyes, Ears, Voice, Heart,
	Heart(=Passion)	Arms and legs(=Freedom)
The Hypertext/CGI Web. (The basic)	The Community Web (for people: apps/sites)	The Semantic Web (for machines)
Pushed web, text/graphics-based flash	Two ways web pages wikis, videos, podcasts, shading, Personalpublishing,2Dportals	3D portals, Avtar representation, Interoperable profits, Multi-user virtual environment (MUVEs), Integrated games, education and business, and all media flows in and out of virtual web-worlds.
Companies publish content that people consume (e.g., CNN)	Companies create platforms that enable individuals to publish content for other people, and people post material for other people (e.g., Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia, Blogger, Myspace, RSS, Digg)	By utilising the connections between individuals or certain types of material (such as Facebook, Google Maps, and My Yahoo!), people create apps that people can engage with, while businesses provide platforms that allow people to publish services.

Source: (Patel, 2013)

Web 4.0 lacks a precise definition and is the fourth generation of web technology (Khaleel Ibrahim, 2021). The early cases that have appeared show that Web 4.0 has several aspects. A new internet of things (IoT) that communicates is known as Web 4.0. This study confirmed the idea of Web 4.0, which is considered a symbiotic (human-machine interaction) intelligent network.

Table 2.2: Key features and used techniques of Web4.0

Feature	Technology
Virtual assistance as 2D/3D Experts system	Experts' system
Accuracy and analysis of data	Data sciences
Security	Blockchain
Decision-making and precision	Adaptive fuzzy-based inferencing
Optimization	Machine learning
Live human-like assistance with visualization	Augmented reality
Human interaction/natural language understanding	NLP

Source: (Khaleel Ibrahim, 2021).

2.3. Definition of User Generated Content

An online community was known as "Web 2.0" does information sharing and user-centered collaboration via the internet. The term "Web 2.0" refers to the mainframe industry with the help of the internet as a platform. (O'Reilly, 2005)

Further research reveals that websites allow users to write their content (weblogs or 'blogs'), trip reviews, photographs, and videos. The term used for this type of content is User Generated Content (Werthner & Ricci, 2004). Walter Von (2006) , labelled UGC for defining user help in the new media environment. "User-generated content is connected to the concept of interactivity" It can be defined as

UGC as an interactive process (Quiring, 2008; Schweiger, 2005). User-generated content refers to online information sources (Blackshaw, 2004).

According to Park et al. (2007) & George (2007), UGC is a well-thought-out new kind of WOM communication and information (reviews and opinions) offered by the consumers who have used a product or service.

UGC on the Web serves as informants, asking questions about products and offering recommendations based on their experiences, reviews, judgments, and opinions (Jumin, 2008).

The user is the key focus of UGC activities, and he or she is not simply a consumer but also a content provider (Constantinides E, 2007). Web 2.0 technology is responsible for the development and transmission of UGC. User-generated content (UGC) is data, information, and media posted on the internet by regular people (Daugherty, 2008). UGC is a new kind of WOM communication like digital video, blogging, photography, wikis, and social networks (Daugherty, 2008; Constantinides, 2009; Park & Han, 2007)

According to Carmen et. al. (2009) ,UGC is a kind of electronic communication enabled by Web 2.0, the second wave of web-based services, that enables online collaboration and information sharing.

The effect of user-generated content (UGC) on composition sales was further investigated. Consumer reviews and ratings, online media reviews and ratings, sales rankings, blog buzz (informal arguments), and percentage change in Myspace friends were all used in study. UGC (user-generated content) boosts revenue (Vasant Dhar & Chang, 2009).

User Created Content (UGC) is "the sum of all how individuals utilize social media, typically used to characterize the numerous sorts of publicly available and generated media material by end-users" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The phrase "user / consumer-produced material/media" describes how people utilize social media. Cox et al. (2009); Dotan (2010) and O'Connor (2010) termed "user-generated content websites" to define "the conjunction of blogs and social networking sites". "User-generated content" was defined as "the conjunction of blogs and social networking sites" (Vasant Dhar & Chang, 2009).

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) did not consider UGC for the following reasons: (a) emails and messages are not UGC because they are not accessible to the public; (b) copying and pasting other UGC without making any changes is not considered UGC because it is not a creative effort that is reflective; (c) commercial content.

Pan & Zhang (2011) conducted a content analysis of UGC to see how people use it. Their findings suggest that the length of a review and the polarity of the opinion (positive/negative) impact how valuable it is perceived. They did show that the type of product (experiential vs. utilitarian) affects the perceived utility of reviews.

The information available on the internet publicly created is user-generated content (UGC). This includes vlogger-produced YouTube videos about production, consumption, and commentary (Knoll, 2016).

UGC "can be developed by individuals or collaboratively, as well as produced, modified, shared and consumed" (Estrella-Ramón, 2017) .

"UGC is a term used to describe any type of content generated by consumers or end-users of an online system or service and made publicly available to other consumers and end-users, such as video, blogs, discussion forum postings, digital photographs, audio files, and other types of media." "User-generated content (UGC) is also known as consumer-generated media (CGM)" (Beal, Vangie, 2018).

"User-generated content is material about a brand that its customers freely create." Customers who have had positive encounters with a brand are driven to share their experiences with their peers. Referrals are one of the simplest and quickest strategies to grow consumer base" (Boachie, P, 2018).

According to the World Bank (2018), user-generated content (UGC) is information users create and share using Web 2.0 apps. Any word or visual piece of information created by an individual user and published publicly or privately with their networks is called user-generated content (UGC). It includes social network content and product reviews, videos, blogs, and different types of online user comments (Salem, 2018).

User-generated content (UGC) is content produced by customers and used by businesses. It helps businesses establish credibility outside of online reviews. Using authentic user responses helps build credibility and trust and enhances customer retention (Nikki, 2019).

According to Gallegos(2021) and Boachie(2018) definitions, and depending on the sort of UGC, UGCs are not always acting as "users supporting a brand". User-generated content, a phrase that, despite its less popularity, is at the heart of the social media phenomena and should not be overlooked as a research topic (Santos, 2022).Various definitions available in the literature for UGC are mentioned below (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Definitions of UGC

Author and Year	Definitions
O'Reilly **(2005)**	Web 2.0 is a system to communicate all the information across borders easily.
OCED **(2007)**	UGC is the process where users contribute to a topic based on their understanding and experience.
Bruns and Schmidt **(2011)**	UGC is the process wherein individuals contribute freely and openly to the information associated with a product or service with no technical barriers or legal restrictions.
Naab & Sehl **(2016)** and Bigne et al. **(2020)**	UGC provides engaging and personal perspectives by the users that can be shared and distributed freely.
Saura et al. **(2019)**	UGC is "the content generated by users in social networks and digital platforms"

2.3.1. Terms for Describing UGC and Definitional Issues

While referring to blogs, wikis, and social networks as the primary Web 2.0 user-generated content sites, Cox et al. (2008) said "Web 2.0 websites" and "user-generated content websites" are also used interchangeably.

According to a literature survey by John (2015), there is still no agreement on the words used to characterize UGC. According to prior literature, there is no unanimity on the nomenclature used to characterize User Generated Content. In order to describe the same occurrence, several idioms are used interchangeably. The phrases "social media" and "Web 2.0" may be used and vice versa (Constantinides, 2009).

The influence and significance of user-generated content cannot be reduced to new forms or genres of traditional mass media. User-generated content, often known as Web 2.0, is a new term (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

Vicky and Wunsch-Vincent (2007) describe user-generated content (UGC) as "anything produced by amateur users." With a broad definition, user-generated content (UGC) comprehends media history via the lens of UGC history. As a result, amateur user-generated content, such as letters to the editor or a call-in radio programme, might be classified as UGC.

The meaning of UGC is inconsistent when using incomplete context, and several interpretations are found. It is information made publicly available on the Internet and showed some level of creative effort outside typical professional activities. "UGC stems from the fact that huge media companies use it to entice individuals to participate in any type of UGC-like media consumption actively (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Even though the terms "user-generated content websites" are used interchangeably by Burgess (2009); Dotan (2010), O'Connor (2010);& Dhar and Chang (2009) describe user-generated content as a combination of blogs and social networking sites. The terms used are "user-generated content websites."

Dhar and Chang (2009) defined "user-generated content" as "the conjunction of blogs and social networking sites". Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were referred to in Fischer and Reuber's (2011) definition of "new social media".

The phrases Web 2.0, UGC, and social media are frequently used interchangeably;

Wyrwoll (2014) points out that Web 2.0 is the construction of social media platforms where user-generated content is swapped based on technology can range from crowdsourced information, such as Wikipedia, to personal websites like YouTube. Like Flickr, it may be both communal and personal. User-generated content refers to content posted by users on an online site.

2.3.2 Conclusion

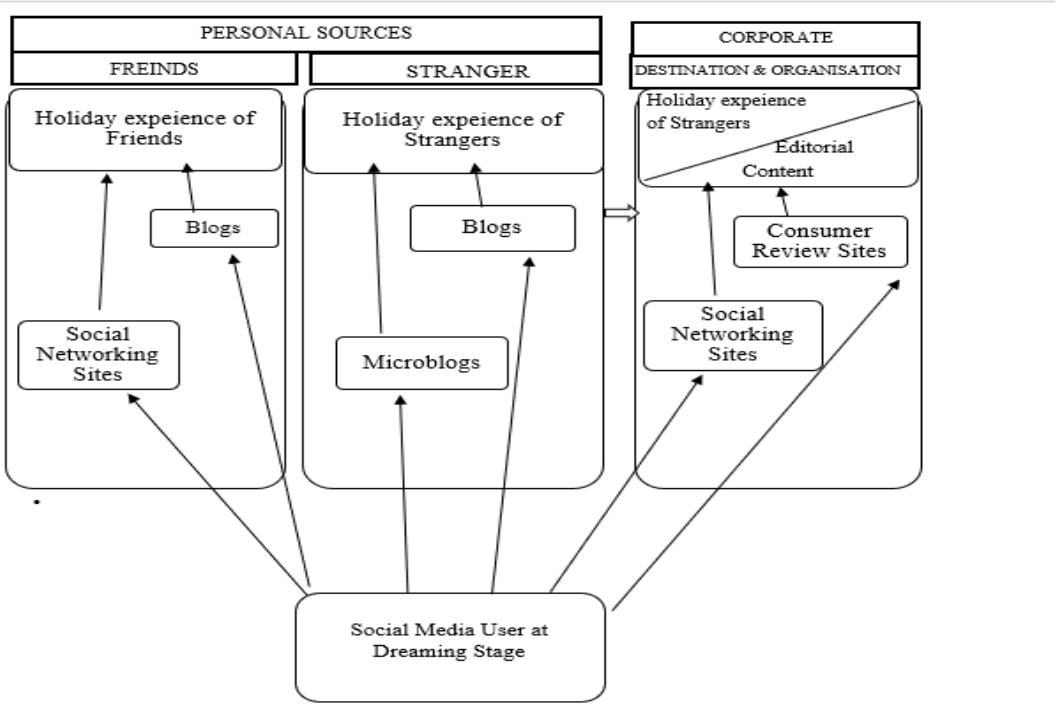
As a result of the preceding analysis, User-generated content (UGC) is developed and published by people not affiliated with a brand, such as fans or customers. This might be anything from a third-party website review to social media remarks.

As a result, user-generated content refers to anything people create on the internet. User-generated content makes up most web-based photographs, videos, and messages. User-generated content is any material developed, published, or submitted by a brand's users. It is often the most successful material for businesses. Contributors are frequently unpaid enthusiasts who promote a brand rather than itself.

2.4. UGC as Tourist Information Sources

According to John (2015), users cast on UGC for vacation travel-related information from social media-related two sources: personal and corporate. Personal sources are friends or strangers, as seen in Figure. Destinations and other travel-related initiatives with a social media presence are considered corporate sources.

Figure 2.1: Types of Sources



Source:(John, 2015)

Cox et al. (2008) said blogs and social networks as "key categories of Web 2.0 user-generated content sites" by combining the terms "Web 2.0 websites" and "user-generated content websites." They talked about how people utilise travel service providers' websites with user-generated content (UGC) and how that affects their search for information and travel loyalty. It appears to be one of the few studies that investigate the usefulness of the information provided by Web 2.0 sites from the standpoint of travellers.

UGC may be categorised as blogs, social networking sites (like Facebook), collaborative projects (like Wikipedia), and content communities (like YouTube), according to Kaplan & Haelein (2010).

Online travel review (OTR) is UGC related to the travel industry and the prominent forms of travel-related consumer-generated media (O'Connor, 2010; Yoo, 2011; Fotis & Buhalis, 2010).

Opinions, information sharing through blogs and microblogs, images, videos, social bookmarking, and information/knowledge sharing through wikis are all examples of User Generated Content (Sigala, 2012).

User-generated content (UGC) is digital content that is developed and shared voluntarily by users of different social media platforms or websites, like videos, images, blogs, tweets, and posts (Fader, 2012).

According to Haigh et al. (2013), Blogs, Wikipedia articles, uploaded videos and images, and micro-blog postings on multiple platforms are User Generated Content (UGC)

User-generated content consists mainly of public-facing content shared among users' and excludes private interactions between users. On the other hand, UGC content shared on a social media platform, a forum, or any similar application is rarely exploited for marketing objectives. User-generated content consists mainly of public-facing content shared among users and excludes private interactions between users (Beal, Vangie, 2018).

2.4.1. Blogs

John Barger termed weblog (or blog) in 1997, comprising posts published chronologically in journal style. Visitors add a blog entry's comments. Text is used in blogs. Jenna Wortham(2007) & Pan et al. (2007) stated that travel blogs are rich and authentic customer feedback facilitated for destination marketers to improve travellers' experiences. Blogs are regarded as digital or online word of mouth since they are participatory. The actions of blogs and bloggers are known as the "blogosphere" (Schmallegger, 2008). Travel blogs are well-thought-out expressions of tourism consumption (Bosangit, 2009).

Del Chiappa (2011) showed that travel blogs are like Online Travel Agencies' websites with rating services, affect company image, and impact travellers' selections. Travel 2.0 apps are (tourism-related blogs, video-sharing, OTAs rating, tourism-related social networks, and microblogging). For holiday travel to unfamiliar destinations, travel blogs provide advice (Tan, 2012; Lee, 2014).

Travel blogs provide information for travellers and applications that facilitate travel countenance (John, 2015) .

Azucena (2020)said that travel bloggers and vloggers influence the impact on tourists' decision-making process during travelling. With the growing appeal of travel content posted on social media, users make their travel decisions from travel content they have read or seen online. YouTube as User-Generated Content (UGC) has grown in popularity, according to Pavich, N (2021) .Videos may be extensions of personal style blogs because they are peer-to-peer screen writings.

2.4.2. Microblogs

According to the definition, microblogs are "internet-based programs that allow users to communicate little bits of material such as brief sentences, individual images, or video links". Microblog programs accessible to travellers include popular microblogging sites Twitter and Weibo (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Jansen, 2009).

Reino & Hay (2010) surveyed hotel executives to discover more about how travellers use Twitter. Twitter is implemented to (a) destinations from other people as well as local organizations; (b) form groups of potential visitors to a destination who share information with new travellers; and (c) communicate between tourists and tourism service providers. Three factors influencing how Twitter users use travel-related information in tweets are source trustworthiness, competency, and decision-making engagement level (Zyl, 2015).

According to John Fotis (2015) , Microblogs should be evaluated primarily as providers of specialized travel information. Because of the digital environment and Web 2.0 capabilities, Zyl (2015) stated that tourist service providers have more opportunities and challenges than ever before. He sees social media, particularly Twitter, to engage tourist clients more integrated. Twitter is a source of information and for direct engagement with travellers.

Yan Weng (2021) investigated the impact of a tourism location's official microblog on tourist destination selection. Five elements in this study include the usefulness of official microblogs, tourist destination selection as dependent variables, and microblog use attitude mediating effect. Travellers' interest in choosing destinations and interactivity can indirectly influence willingness to choose

travel destinations through attitudes and perceived trust to select tourist destinations via attitudes.

2.4.3. Social Networking Sites

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) , web-based services enable users to access their list of connections formed by other users and a list of other users with whom they can share a connection. These links may have different names at different sites. The most widely used social media platform for sharing photographs online is SNS(Lo, 2011).

White (2010) employed content analysis and semiotics to investigate the role of travel photographs on Facebook in planning a trip. Photos to attract comments from friends more than others are likely. Travel comments of one traveller become part of another traveller's travel plans.

The effect of relationship between service of SNS tourist information quality and sharing the intention of SNS tourism information service quality has a positive thought on users' intention to share the information; DacYolmg Kwak (2017) suggests directions for the development of SNS tourism information service to service providers and information providers like tourism-related institutions and companies.

According to No & Kim(2015), personal blogs are pretty high compared to SNSs as online tourist information sources in this study, like blogs, public websites, corporate websites, and social media websites.

Naoto et al. (2021) worked on Detecting Focus of Tourism Posts, where users' photos and comments on social media sites regarding tourist attractions are used to categorize them into several focus areas depending on their awareness. The classifications are based on the focus of SNS postings regarding tourism attractions which generated an assessment dataset.

2.4.4. Content Communities

A community of content creators sees the viewing and posting of a photo or video as an "implicit vote" in support of or against the themes it depicts (Jin, 2010).

According to Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2009), videos in content communities are an essential tool for travellers' interest in the forms of fantasies that have not visited the destination and also give past trips' imaginations relief.

UGCs consist of a YouTube platform that attracts visitors. According to Bergman (2017), YouTube video has more viewers than television but vastly outnumbers Facebook and Netflix combinedly.

According to Roy et al. (2020), YouTube has become one of the most influential platforms like social media, allowing individuals worldwide to share their opinions and ideas through video sharing. Recently, on this massive social media platform, users have looked for travel-related videos the second most. Moreover, it gave a sense of how effective YouTube is as a promotional tool for businesses based on the cash it generates from advertising.

2.4.5. Consumer Review Websites

CRW, as a source of information not just before a trip, emphasizes the relevance in the content evaluation but after a trip and has reasons that cause travellers to leave reviews (Papathanassis, 2011).

Consumer review websites (CRWs) are UGC platforms that submit service reviews and ratings. For reviews of products and services, pricing comparisons, assessments, shopping, and other activities, CRW posts comments and images (John, 2015). Thus, integrating user-generated material such as CRW benefits tourism stakeholders.

Respondents firmly agreed that they pay attention to ads on Facebook, with official websites/blogs being the leading source, followed by travel guidebooks and travel magazines, leaving conventional media far behind. Implications and ideas for online communication programs may include social media in service marketing communications efforts (Kavoura, 2015).

2.4.6. Wikis

When developing a wiki, Ward Cunningham used the Hawaiian term "quick." In 1995, he created his first system**,** the "WikiWikiWeb" (Mattison, D, 2003). Wikis were described as a freely expanding collection of linked Web pages that function as a hypertext database for storing and editing information, with each page being easily editable by any user having a Web browser client that supports forms (Cunningham, 2001).

For free, Wikitravel is an online international travel reference and is the most famous wiki in the travel and tourism business. Over 62,000 entries covering 25,000 places have been published and revised by Wikitravel's 75,000+ "Wiki travellers" (Wikitravel 2011, 2014).

"Wikitravel Shared," a section of Wikitravel, allows users to add photographs and other media of places. A thorough search of Scopus and Google Scholar revealed no studies about the relationship between wikis (specific tourism-related wikis like Wikitravel) and travel and tourism. When a traveller feels puzzled, lost, terrified, fatigued, irritated, thoughtful, or helpful, the Travellers' tavern is the place for inquiries (Tan, 2012).

2.4.7. Internet Forums

Internet forums (IF) are virtual places users with similar interests start asynchronous discussions, submit comments, questions, or replies arranged in threads, and establish their subjects on the web (Poel, 2009; Laughlin, 2010).

Cassie L. Damewood (2022) claims that a forum moderator supervises the communication activities of an Internet forum.

Casaló, et. al. (2010) & Carbonaro (2011) talked about user engagement in online travel communities, which included OTA websites with customer review platforms and Internet forums.

2.4.8. Location-Based social media

Chong and Ngai's (2013) review rating, reviewer trustworthiness, and reviewer competence that impact users' acceptance of LBSM is the latest of all social media kinds.

Morais and Andrade (2014) observed that the relevance of advice submitted in LBSM changes between locals and visitors in a large-scale touristic event, with residents' suggestions being assessed to be more critical than tourists.

There were no other accrediting bodies found despite a thorough literature search (using terms like "location-based social media," "location-based content," "location sharing applications," "location-based social networking," "location-based media," and "social location-based services" (John Fotis,2015).

2.4.9. Concluding Thoughts

Munar and Jacobsen (2013) discussed several online platforms, such as wikis (Wikitravel), blogs (Travel blog), microblogs (Twitter), social networks (Facebook), multimedia sharing websites (YouTube, Instagram), and review websites based on the previous research (TripAdvisor).

John Fotis (2013) claims that social media is a word that encompasses for any online app to create and share user-generated content (UGC). Zhu and Chen (2015) propose a typology of current UGC services: connection, self-media, cooperation, and creative outlet. They explained how each category of UGC responded to basic human wants and social media marketing implications based on the need-congruence lens.

Approximately 20% of internet visitors who participate in tourism-related UGC are all internet travellers who contribute UGC to social media (Gretzel & Yoo. U, 2016).

Tourists get motivated to express convenience in sharing user-generated content on social media, an accessible way to communicate by storing content (experiences) online. The tourist enjoys sharing experiences and inviting others to see the experience. The tourists also share types of travel-related user-generated content while traveling (John, 2015).

The effect of user-generated content (UGC) in building social brand engagement (SBE) through user-generated content (UGC). Experiences, shared remains connected and updated are the critical motivating elements contributing to UGC's development, discussion, and consumption (Naeem, 2021). Potential travellers utilize social networking sites to discuss their experiences, which is an essential data source when making trip plans (Kitsios F, 2021).

2.5. UGC and Destination Image

The relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and destination image can improve the visitor experience and lead to travel intentions, impacting visitor behaviour. Travelers utilize different forms of UGC in their trip planning and communicate location qualities to tourists (Bulut & Karabulut, 2018).

Another study by Egger et al. (2022) indicated that UGC shared by tourists influences online users' perception of travel experience through destination image. Destination image formation is another significant aspect of the promotional tools, which further connects with the travel intention of the tourists and influences not just their pre-trip psychology but also the post-trip analysis of the content.

Jan Hruška, and Martina Pásková (2018), talked about the rising relevance of UGC in tourist destinations. This speaks about the style, intensity, and effectiveness of UGC use in destination marketing. The relevance of UGC in destination marketing has been highlighted by examining social media usage as an advantage, like Facebook's posting view for all subscribers.

Han Xu et al. (2021) claim that the emergence of social media has changed how travellers make decisions and behave. There is a connection between the perception of the place and the likelihood of returning.

UGC promotion focuses on how these factors affect visitors' loyalty and perceptions; Hsiu-Yuan (2012) claimed that travel blogs create destination images and tourists' value, which relates to UGC, like travel blogs and travel intention. Behavioural intention to travel influences perceived destination image and travel intention. This has offered a strategy to use its potential better to gauge tourist destination image.

2.5.1 Traveller’s Loyalty

Akroush et al. (2019) demonstrated that website qualities such as accessibility, information quality, user-friendliness, and entertainment positively influence satisfaction. Tourists' satisfaction mediates the link between accessibility and attitudinal loyalty.

According to Narangajavana et al. (2019), user-generated content (UGC) may improve visitor facts and behavioural intentions. The impact of UGC on destination loyalty is limited. User-generated content's influence on tourist satisfaction evaluation can bridge the gap between experience and expectations.

2.5.3 Perceived risk

Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002) said that UGC is a trustworthy resource that can assist traveller in reducing their perceived risk and uncertainty when travelling. With a detailed analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of travel choice research and the presentation of a conceptual framework for more accurately describing the travel decision-making process, this study laid the groundwork for developing a new and more comprehensive picture of travel decision-making.

Consumers increasingly depend on user-generated content (UGC) to make purchase decisions, according to Bronner & de Hoog (2010). Consumers seeking information might utilise user-generated content (UGC) to reduce purchasing apprehension and perceived risks by inferring product quality. Traveller uploads material to eWOM (electronic word of mouth) (Bronner & Hoog, 2010)

Filieri (2015) said that travellers planned their trips through the internet and websites. Travellers follow users' suggestions which are influenced by their trust in a UGC site and generate favourable word of mouth. Information quality also affects source trustworthiness, consumer happiness, and website quality.

By analysing positive and negative reviews, Jayathilaka et al. (2020) analyse inbound travellers' hotel experiences in Sri Lanka's five-star boutique hotels and evaluate how well hotels have met their customers' expectations. According to this study, all service quality factors had an equivalent impact on tourist behaviour from clients' perspectives. On the other hand, consumers are unsatisfied due to perceived quality differences. In order to maximize customer happiness, boutique hotels must rely on online reviews to obtain credible information from their consumers.

2.6. Tourism-Related Consumer Behaviour Models

2.6.1. Consumer Behaviour Model

Consumer behaviour in travel review is called "consumer behaviour models" or " models of consumer behaviour connected to tourism" and helps in the tourist decision-making process as "a five-stage process of travel buying behaviour" (Gilbert, 1991). Another term used is "foundational models of travel decision-making" (Hudson, 2000; Sirakaya, 2005).The researchers spoke about the decision-making processes for selecting tourist products based on tourist behaviour and coined the phrase "models of vacation decision-making" (Sirakaya, 2005).

The term "models of consumer behaviour adapted for tourism" necessitates the development of tourism-related models. Tourism products primarily involve high-risk decision-making processes (Swarbrooke, 2007).

The purchase-related decision-making is the most critical aspect of consumer behaviour; therefore, the phrase "decision-making model" is regarded as restrictive (John, 2015).

2.6.2. Tourism Related Cognitive Models of Consumer Behaviour

Information processing was the most crucial socio-psychological framework on which travel-related cognitive models were founded. A tourism consumer behaviour model of a tourist purchasing choice where expenditure involved was planned over a period (Decrop, 2006). A stimulus-response buyer behaviour model is a purchase choice in travel and tourism (Middleton, 2009; Victor Middleton, 2001).

2.6.3. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) & The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

A large portion of the success researchers have had in portending behaviour with attitudes can be attributed to the concept of an intention to behaviour towards travel factor. Two behavioural theories include the theory of reasoned action (TRA). Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) and its offspring, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). These ideas argue that while making behavioural judgments, people think about the consequences of their actions before acting.

Using an expected value approach, these models integrate the notion of compatibility with the process through which attitudes toward a behaviour emerge and anticipate that behaviour. The assessed attitude and conduct must be of the same specificity about the activity (taking a weekend vacation), the objective (to Yellowstone National Park), the setting (with family), and the time (Labour Day weekend) according to the concept of compatibility (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2001).

The fundamental requirements of TRA are that the activity is voluntary. However, regardless of desire, variables outside one's control influence most acts. In TPB, Ajzen (2001) solved this issue by incorporating a component, perceived behavioural control, that predicts both behaviour intention and behaviour.

TPB was proven to be effective by Ajzen and Driver (1992) in analysing the influence of variables on college students' leisure behaviour choices. TRA and TPB analyse attitudes and predict actions in various social science areas. These models, however, contain several flaws, according to academics.

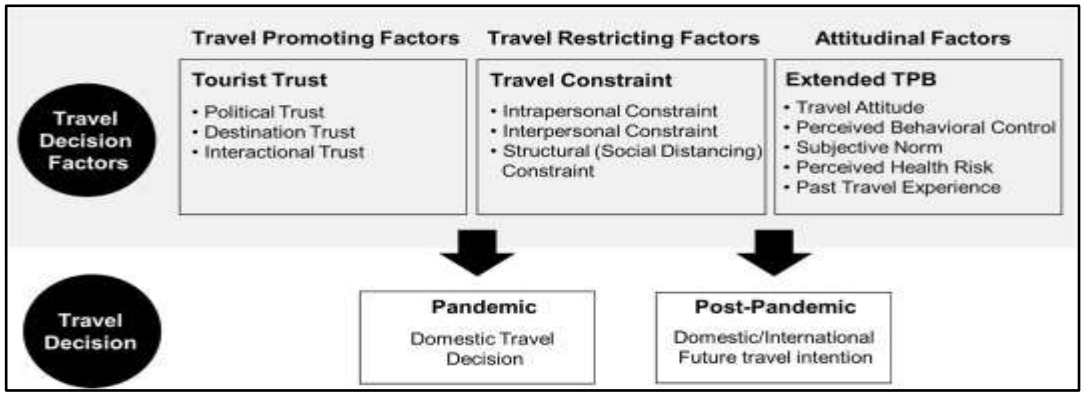
March and Woodside (2005) extended this approach to TPB and travel behaviour based on previous research in marketing on unexpected and spontaneous purchases. They discovered that actual money spent, duration of stay, activities completed, and sites have seen much higher than intended before the trip in a study of visitors to Prince Edward Island.

Unforeseen circumstances during a vacation influence whether the traveller conducts what he or she expected to undertake, according to the frameworks of TRA and TPB. These impact the volitional nature of the planned actions, an essential feature of behaviour research employing TRA as a framework and one of March's and Woodside's enlarged TPB principles. In models like TRA and TPB, a popular strategy is to forecast single travel behaviours rather than realising that, in most instances, people have various options for behaviours and destinations (Bowen, 2007).

In the theory of planned behaviour used to study travel behaviour, Kock et al. (2020) claimed the influence of previously assumed attitudinal elements on tourist decision-making behaviour was re-evaluated.

The influence of the theory of planned behaviours (travel attitude, perceived health risk, and prior travel experience) on travel decisions during and after was investigated by Hakseung Shin et al. (2022). The particular elements influencing pandemic travel decisions were whether to travel and how frequently; and post-pandemic travel intentions.

Figure 2.2. The impact of travel decision factors on travel decision.



Source: (Hakseung -Shin, 2022)

The suggested complete framework of tourist trust, constraint, and attitude constructions aid in comprehending travel processes during and after the epidemic (Hakseung -Shin, 2022).

2.7. Tourist Behaviour While Browsing User Generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) quantity and quality influenced customers' purchasing inclinations (Park & Han, 2007). Travellers see UGC for vacation locations, hotels, and tourism services as a valuable resource. User-generated content (UGC) is becoming more popular as travellers share their trip experiences and recommendations (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007).

Tourists may use UGC as researched travel options while making decisions on the web. Websites with user-generated content dedicated to the promotion of travel services. User-generated content speaks about travel information and travellers' views on various travel items (Litvin, 2008). The user-generated content (UGC) influences the purchase intent of the enhanced product with perceived popularity and usefulness (Park & Lee, 2008) .

Cheung, Lee, and Rabjohn (2008) examined how web-based technologies have opened up many new prospects for electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) sharing. This study examined how eager people are to accept and embrace online customer evaluations and what variables motivate them.

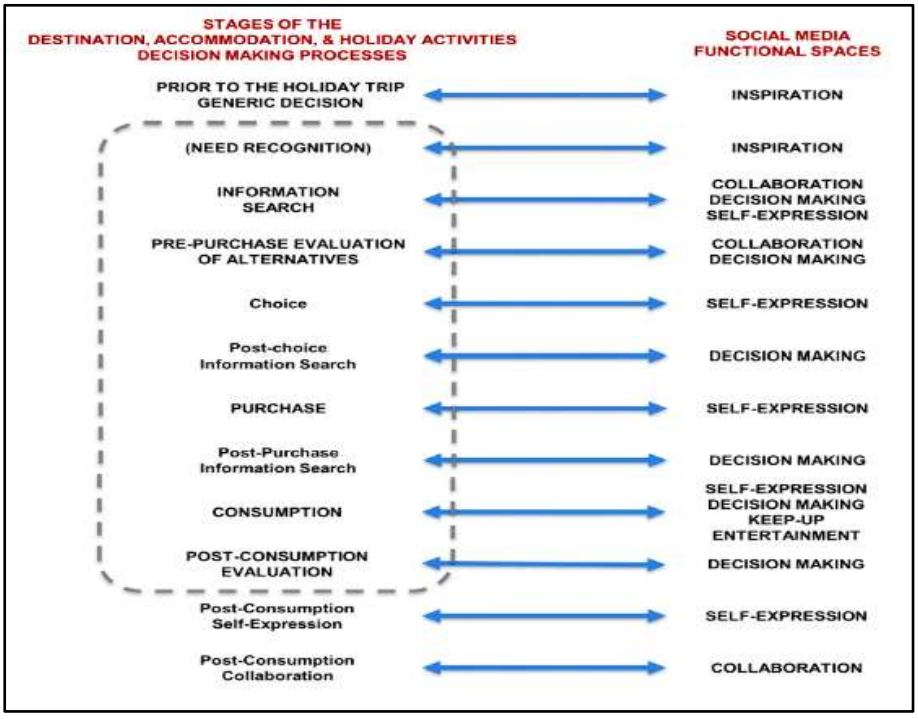
The prevalence and rising importance of online reviews for all types of consumer decisions, according to Papathanassis & Knolle, (2011), necessitates a greater understanding of their impact on the tourist environment. Holiday shopping

is not done in a vacuum and is certainly not based just on internet holiday evaluations. One must consider the simultaneous effect of other, more traditional holiday content components (e.g., images, verbal descriptions) and the relevant cognitive mechanisms for processing this information to achieve a comprehensive and accurate perspective. This exploratory-qualitative study reveals that internet reviews serve a secondary, supplementary role in vacation planning. The study talks about the access to UGC while planning a vacation empowers travellers.

The legitimacy and relevance of user-generated content as travel material is studied. Travellers use material from the UGC during their pre-travel planning and publish information on the UGC during and after their trip. Tourists have varying levels of expertise regarding UGC usage in decision-making (Amaral, 2014).

A UGC-based travel process model focuses on input from vacation travel-related interactions before and after the decision-making process. This observation is illustrated in the picture below, demonstrating that interactions about travel on UGC happen throughout the trip decision-making process (shown in figure 3). (John, 2015)

Figure2.3: Social media interactions before, during, and after the decision-making process.



Source: (John, 2015)

According to Edward C. Malthouse (2016), marketers use customers' created user-generated content (UGC) to communicate with customers and influencer purchases. This study shows that encouraging customers to develop UGC involves an accurate purchasing decision.

The link between user-generated content, visitor intents, and behaviour was examined by Bulut and Karabulut (2018). Travellers utilize different forms of UGC in their trip planning by communicating distinct location qualities to tourists.

User-generated content and online reviews are significant in the hospitality industry's buying decisions. The value of user-generated material in the form of images on online platforms talks about what potential customers seek in user-generated images, particularly on review websites (Oliveira, 2018).

Travellers rely on UGC to choose travel products in the tourism sector through online evaluations on specialized digital platforms. The influence of online reviews and ratings on customers' evaluation motivates people to share particular forms of user-generated content with emotional valence (Amatulli, De Angelis, & Stoppani, 2019).

Jihad (2020) talked about the growing significance of UGC in this study. It examined the indirect impact of UGC quality on online customers' brand engagement in a non-western culture through its functional and emotional components. User-generated content (UGC), along with UGC quality, UGC values, consumer behaviour, and brand interaction, is rising in popularity.

User-generated content (UGC) is becoming increasingly essential in destination marketing, according to Cheng (2020). International travel distribution via social media channels like review sites (RSS) and social networking sites is handled by the UGC behavioural characteristics of individual travellers. It also incorporates UGC and ideas on how people make travel decisions.

According to Han Xu, (2021), the emergence of UGC has transformed how visitors make decisions and behave. This research focuses on user-generated content (UGC) that impacts visitor loyalty behaviour by examining its publicity. User-generated content (UGC) indirectly influences tourists' opinions of the destination's worth, with an emotional UGC having a higher impact.

2.7.1. UGC and Travel intention

Servicing people and anticipating their needs have always been vital components of travel and hospitality, as well as how technology may be used to improve user experience. Individuals' behavioural travel intention represents their willingness to engage in or abstain from specific behaviour. A cognitive mechanism called travel intention transforms motivated behaviour into action. One's travel intention is an expression of their desire to travel (Ajzen, 1991).

UGC has the potential to have a direct impact on online travel intention through influencing decisions on travel destinations, modes of transportation, and housing. As a result, social media users help to create a brand's identity and image. UGC may positively or negatively impact online travel intention depending on its context and content (Skinner, 2018).

Previous research demonstrates that tourists' perceptions of a location through UGC positively and substantially impact their intentions regarding whether or not to vacation there (Reza Jalilvand & Yaghoubi Manzari, 2012).

When a blog is innovative, comprehensible, and fascinating, Chen et al. (2014) found that UGC can influence travellers to visit a location in the form of a travel blog Many travel blogs where individuals may share and learn about their travel experiences. As a result, it is a fascinating study subject to see what quality travel blogs draw travellers' attention and impact their intention. The findings suggest that blog material freshness, understandability, and interest influence behavioural intention via blog usage delight.

Travelers gather a plethora of knowledge about the destination before they go there. The quantity and kind of outside information sources will directly or indirectly impact the receiver's intention to travel. Assessing how much professional advice and advertising affected all the information sources was simple. Tourism marketing will inspire a positive view of the area, promote preference for the area, and increase traveller intention to visit the advertised destination (Kwak, 2017).

When travellers use UGC to plan trips, Filho (2022) says that informative aspects (i.e., argument quality, source credibility, information framing, and information consistency) are influenced since they seek information related to their travel intention.

Travel blogs that provide emotive impressions of a location are significant to tourists because they excite and intrigue readers by arousing empathy and attraction. This is supported by Wang's & Alasuutari's (2017) investigation of the link between travel blogs and the intention to visit a specific location. UGC-like travel blogs can affect a Traveller's intention to go when the blog is engaging, easy to read, and new (Cheng, 2020).

The travel-related intention is a sign of preparedness to engage in a particular behaviour and is thought to come before actual behaviour. Visitors travel to a destination may vary depending on the opinions of others who have signed up for the tourists. A person's normative opinions regarding why such influential people consider his or her decision to perform make up the subjective norm (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017).

User-generated content can affect travel intentions and attitudes toward travel sites. Marketers have increased the influence of UGC on travel intention through additional promotional tactics. Social media platforms are a means of information exchange and communication, even for visitors and travellers, according to (Rathore, 2020).

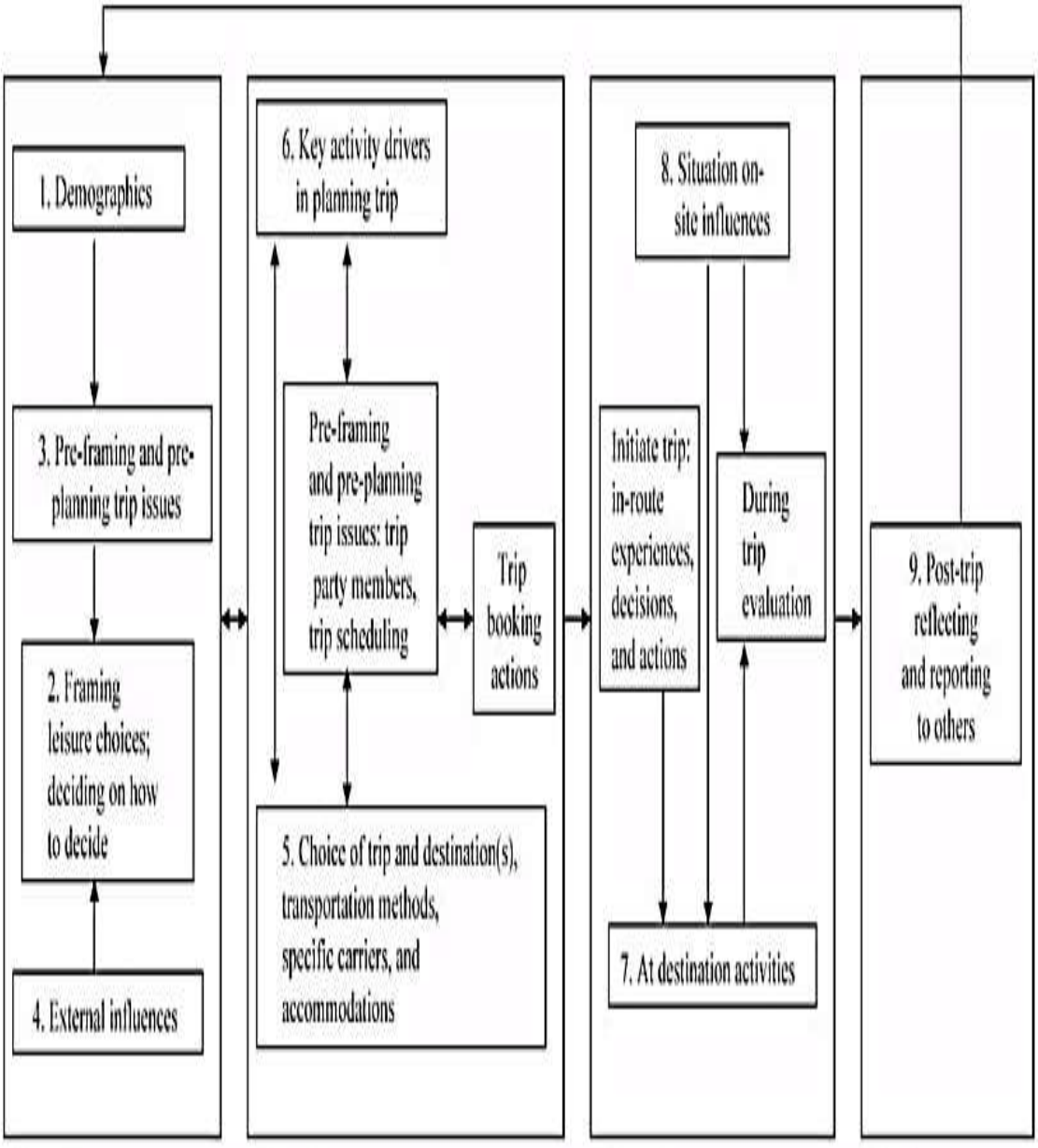
The areas discussed include the mode of travel, lodgings, destinations, activities, and other crucial information that aided in developing the travel intention. Therefore, the impact of user-generated content aids tourists in India in making travel plans. Travel information is obtained through user-generated website content (Rathore, 2020).

UGC, like YouTube videos, is demonstrative and educational. The purchase intention is boosted by UGC traits such as indirect experience, transparency, and connection, especially for demonstrational films; demonstrative UGC has the best impact when correctly perceived, and misclassification decreases the relationships that help in the promotion (Rajamma & Spears, 2020).

2.8. UGC as Promotional Tool in Travel Process

Martin (2012) explains how sub-decisions are synced with planning aspects before and after various process stages. This model includes complex decision-behaviour dynamics, including visitors' unconscious and conscious travel-related behaviour.

Figure 2.4 Modeling of leisure decision-making structures travel behaviour and



Source (Martin, 2012)

UGC is expected to influence the travel business significantly, particularly in the vacation travel category. The focus is on social media's role and influence in travel-related decisions or the travel-planning process (Fotis & Rossides, 2011). Since this study was focused on leveraging UGC throughout the travel process, the pre-, during-, and post-trip methods must be thoroughly outlined (Werthner & Ricci, 2004; Manrai, 2011; MacKay, 2012).

Fotis et al. (2010).speak about before the pre-trip stage in a travel process. UGC's role and impact on the planning process, including the level of influence before, during, and after the trip and holiday plans. Furthermore, user-generated content is more reliable than official tourist websites and travel brokers.

Liu, Norman, and Pennington-Gray (2013) researched how travellers use social media as a tool to obtain knowledge on tourism before departure. Users' travel choices are influenced by the tourist experiences posted in UGC images.

According to Fotis (2015) , the trip stage starts with the journey and finishes with the traveller expressing his or her experiences when he or she returns (both in the actual and virtual worlds). The pre-trip process begins with deciding to take a vacation and ends with departure.

According to Nezakati et al. (2015), UGC has altered communication in the tourism sector through social media, such as UGC. The decision-making process for tourists, encompassing pre-travel, travel, and post-travel, is impacted by the information sharing from UGC during the pre-traveling phase.

UGC is a source of information for travellers to review travel items and places, create travel plans, and help with travel decisions in the pre-trip stage (Wang & Alasuutari, 2017).

According to Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, (2018), UGC is used in the pre-travel and post-travel stages of the trip, making consumer evaluations more accessible. The study found that UGC's influence on traveller reviews impacted travellers' assessments and decisions.

In their 2019 study, Narangajavana et al. (2019) centered on the effects of user-generated content (UGC) on tourist satisfaction during the planning and travel phases. The influence of UGC sources on tourists’ satisfaction and expectations has an indirect effect.

Despite studies on predicting tourist behavioural intention, Huang et al. (2021) claim a lack of wide-ranging relationships between the factors (i.e., from pre-trip to post-trip). An integrated model on the impacts of motivation (pre-trip) and involvement in tourist activities is to assist in understanding this process. The findings support previous research on the links between perceived worth, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. Satisfaction is the best predictor of behavioural intention in terms of overall effects, followed by perceived value and drive.

User-generated content and social media are advantageous for the hospitality industry. During and after their journey, travellers frequently post reviews, remarks, or judgments on hotel accommodations on websites that facilitate hotel reservations. This study investigates the variables affecting consumers' confidence in the information given about travel through social media or travel websites. Tourism management can increase the information about travel on social media and their websites' enjoyable and satisfying features (Fotis Kitsios & Eleftheria Mitsopoulou, 2022).

According to Scholl-Grissemann et al. (2020), Web 2.0, such as UGC, has dramatically transformed how customers plan and book vacations. User-generated content mediated expectations, circumstances, and attitudes about the location to know tourists' reactions to actual user-generated material.

2.7.1 Concluding Thoughts

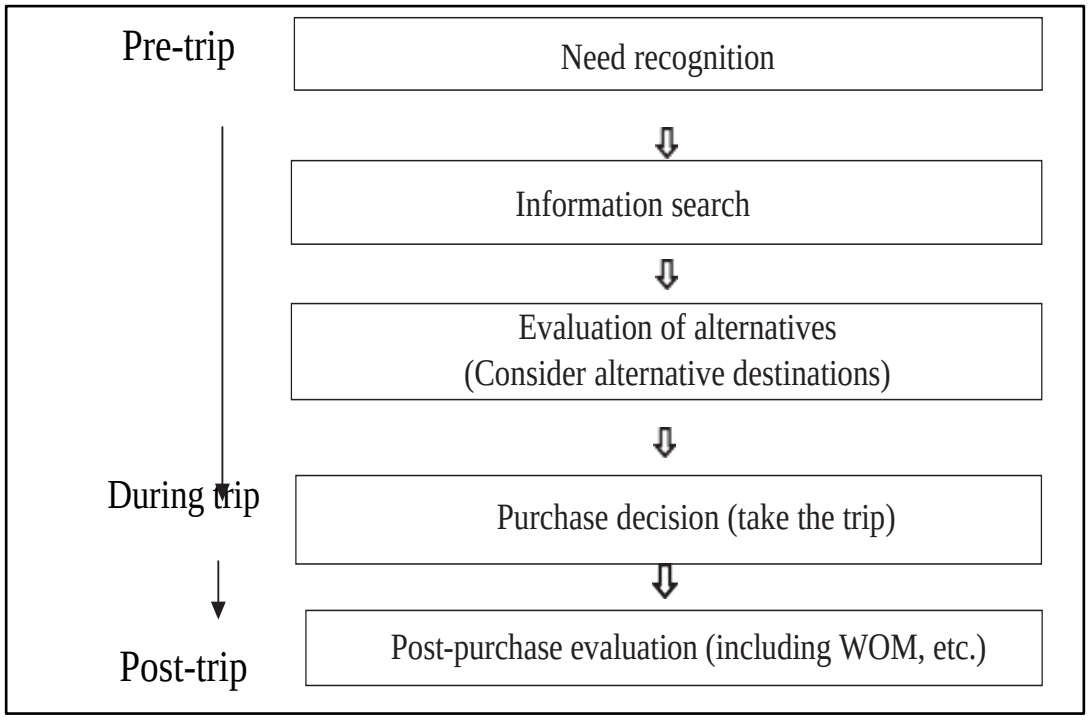
User-generated content (UGC) is developed by the public and disseminated mainly through the Internet (Daugherty, 2008). User-generated content (UGC) considerably impacted traveller decision-making (Zeng, 2014).

Kar et al. (2021) aimed to uncover elements that influence by analysing UGC comments. This study found and analysed 7,91,804 tweets after deleting bogus. User-Generated Content (UGC) is considered a reliable data source for travellers, managers, and academics.

2.9. UGC As Travel Plan Tool

UGC influences users' travel planning processes. The consumer decision-making model has tended to guide choosing a trip location or organizing a leisure vacation at different stages (Engel, 1990; Philip Kotler, John Bowen, James Makens, 2003).

Figure 2.5: Travel planning process



Source: (Engel, 1990; Woodside, 1989; John, 2015)

The usage of mass media affects the future use of information sources for tourist trip planning. Traveller uses different UGC sources for making a travel plan in the pre, during, and post-stages (Choi, 2012; Cláudia Seabra, 2016; Fesenmaier, 2006).

Internet travel reviews have affected pleasure trip planning behaviour. The most common source of information is user-generated content on online travel review sites. The key findings indicated that the reviewer's dependability is determined by their previous travel experience (Gretzel U. Y., 2007).

According to Pan et al. (2007), user-generated content affects travel planning. Travel blogs are examined as an expression of travel experience and provide in-depth coverage of all aspects of a visitor's vacation.

UGC sites are often used as a supplement by travellers in their information search. Most travellers feel that adding user-generated content (UGC) capabilities to existing travel sites would be beneficial. There is support and advocacy for user-generated content (UGC) effects on travel customer usage in the past and future (Cox & Carmine & Buultjens, 2009).

UGC usage varies amongst travellers during the trip experience (e.g., pre-, during, and post-trip), which helps the overall travel planning process. UGC is a method for finding tourism-related information from tourist experiences and generating new sites for tourism experiences (Yeongbae Choe, 2017).

Holiday trip decision is divided into a sequence (before purchase, during purchase, after purchase, after arrival at destination) with options. The information utilization over travel planning validates situational decision-making (Choi, 2012).

UGC promote and motivate users to thoughtfully disseminate content in travel-related online social network to boost social engagement and travel plans. They established and maintained connections, a predictor of traveller loyalty and trust. Therefore, online social networks engage in information sharing for travellers, support travel planning, and play a crucial role as information sources (KhaldoonKhalNusair, 2012) .

No & Kim (2015) claim that internet-based tourism information has affected travellers' planning before and after their trips. The traveller uses UGC information to understand visitor preferences.

Terttunen (2017) spoke on the effects of Instagram on travel planning and destination selection and the possibilities of Instagram marketing in the tourism sector. Traveller's value visual elements while planning trips, and women mainly use Instagram as a source of travel ideas and knowledge. Information search behaviour and Instagram usage differed by gender and age. Friends are the most valuable and reliable source of information in UGC. User-generated material on social networking sites and websites is visible on Instagram and utilized as a marketing tool.

The publicly available information in UGC may be used to create more specific and well-targeted advertising that influences travel decisions, even though UGC offers significant economic benefits. User-generated content may influence how consumers evaluate goods and make choices in the travel sector. The significant impact of user-generated information on travel planning activities was a topic of conversation between the World Bank Group and TripAdvisor (Salem, 2018).

UGC share their travel experiences, according to Anh T (2019) .This activity aids other travellers in making their trip arrangements more convenient. Very little research has been done on how travellers see the use of travel-related materials. The following channels indirectly impacted user-generated content's perceived utility (PU) (Anh, 2019).

According to Luca Zamparini (2021), tourism trip planning is the significant activity that distinguishes the anticipation phase of each vacation experience. The implication of user-generated content resulting from new technologies has been influential in tourism trip planning (Zamparini, Luca, 2021).

According to Fardous, J et al. (2021), UGC is significant travel material for searching for and planning a group vacation. The data reveal regarding social media that travellers favoured known relationships on social media, while other visitors sought information from known contacts and user-generated content (Fardous, 2021).

Zhou & Xue (2021) focused on user-generated content (UGC) forms for trip planning. This study looked at the effects of UGC format and interaction on travellers' perceptions. These characteristics were then utilized to assess trip planning to boost perceived enjoyment of travel-related UGC. UGC, like Instagram, helps process travel planning content (Zhou & Xue, 2021).

The expanding prominence of user-generated content influences each phase of travel decision-making which mediates the trust impact throughout the journey. Tourism marketers use UGC to enhance travel tools for travellers to get information about their next trip (Rebeka-Anna Pop, 2021).

2.10. Conclusion & Research Gap:

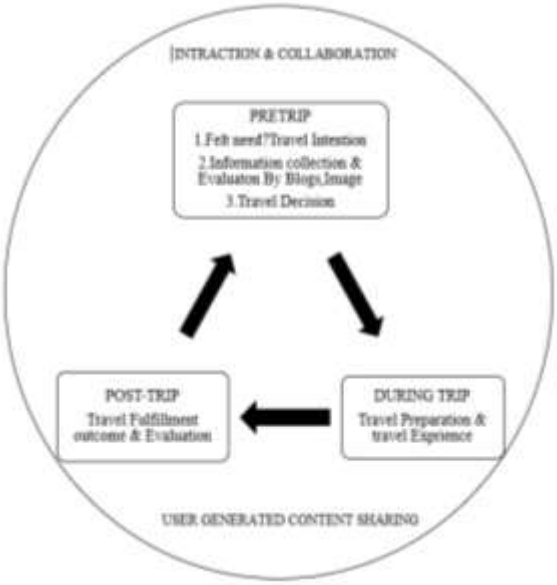
Using user-generated content to gather information about the testimonials and experiences of consumers influences the consumer decision-making process (Oliveira, 2018). Osei and Abenyin (2016) found that travellers use social media in all stages of planning a trip but predominately use it at the awareness stage, which is the pre-trip stage. International tourists most utilize social media like UGC.

Usually, there was a significant affiliation between UGC usage and background features like age and other demographics. However, a significant gap exists in the comparative analysis of UGC's influence on the travel intentions of the individuals' pre- and post-trip.

Additionally, it is unclear what content companies are using as a promotional tool to gather customers' satisfaction levels and if the content is authentic and genuine or is just being used to direct the travellers to their preferred destinations. Okazaki and Taylor (2013) & Munar (2014) informed that UGC has not been thoroughly researched, especially in destination management. The need to interpret and understand UGC for understanding consumers' perceptions to improve managerial action has also been suggested by Lu & Stepchenkova (2015). They also state that "UGC is now considered an alternative mode for monitoring destination image and reputation" (Okazaki, 2013; Ana María Munar, 2014; Akehurst, 2009; Stepchenkova, 2015).

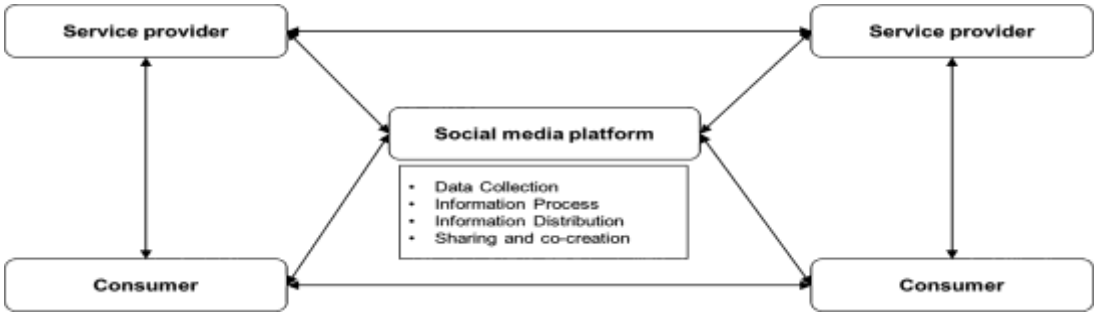
Furthermore, research on the effects of gender and age in online travel reviews has demonstrated that travellers trust user-generated content (UGC)(Assaker, 2020).

Figure2.6: UGC Sharing Process during trips



The expansion of UGC had an impact before, during, and after the traveller's trip. The influence exercised by UGC in hospitality and tourism is at different levels (Mehraliyev, 2021). Therefore, through the undertaken research work, the existing research gap was bridged, and the influence of UGC on pre-and post-trip travel intention of tourists was identified.

Figure 2.7: Social Media Platforms in the Flow of Online Travel Information.



Source: (Mehraliyev, 2021)

2.11. Scope of This Research

Almost all known research attempts to define the function and impact of User Generated Content on travel intention in the Delhi NCR. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate UGC's real impact and function equally focused on each stage of the trip plan. Following is a comprehensive examination of each category of User Generated Content. Existing studies that characterize the influence of each form of User Generated Content on aspects of travel intention are examined and analysed critically.

The chapter closes by noting a gap in the literature. This research aims to raise awareness about the importance of using user-generated content (UGC) when planning to manage one's online reputation. The research is intended to be utilized by those in charge of managing and marketing a site or a tourist company, focusing on the travel industry.

After considering the research gap and objectives of the study following six hypotheses have been drawn for the current study.

H1: There is a significant mean difference in browsing among the gender groups

H2: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups

H3: UGC has a positive impact on travel intentions

H4: UGC has a positive effect on travel plans

H5: There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intentions

H6: Travel intention mediates the relationship between UGC and travel plan

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1 Overview

The general strategy adopted to proceed with the research work is research methodology. The chapter's objective on research methodology was to discuss the many integrated research techniques for analysing how user-generated content impacts travellers' travel plans. The chapter introduces the research onion by Saunders and explains the practical research philosophy for the work. The chapter also explains the research problem, which adds to the justification for proceeding with the study. The study setting and unit of analysis are also discussed to deliver an idea of the study background.

Further on, the research design, i.e., quantitative research approach, was explained and justified, followed by a description of the research instrument, i.e., questionnaire. The chapter also includes the description of the different steps of the research process, i.e., sampling, data collection, and data analysis, explaining what was applied and justifying why it was applied. The chapter concludes with the ethical considerations of the study.

3.2. Problem Statement

As people consume more and more UGC content on the internet through blogs and various web platforms, people are likely to get attracted to content that shows exciting and beautiful places, perceived risk, UGC brand engagement, visit intention, and tourist destinations (Rather, 2021). Companies are using the content of the travel websites to check the traveller’s perception and satisfaction with various destinations. Authentic user-generated content (UGC), showing the content creator's intent, provides a new option for decision-makers to achieve the potential target market, which remained primarily untapped by many firms. This has reduced the influence of tourism marketers and enterprises on potential travellers (Xu, 2022).

Current research has shown that travellers rely heavily on online content when deciding where to visit. However, this reliance can have negative consequences if the online content is biased or inaccurate. According to the research study, there is a gap in how UGC affects travellers.

The topic for this doctoral paper, "The Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions: A Pre and Post Analysis of Tourist Behavior with Special Reference to Delhi-NCR Region," was chosen due to a gap in the literature and the researcher's interest in the studied region.

This problem statement seeks to investigate the effect of UGC on traveller decision-making, and the following research objectives are raised for the current study.

3.3. Research Objectives

The study's objectives are outlined as follows.

Objective 1: To examine if gender and age influence the way user-generated content is browsed.

Objective 2: To examine the Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions.

Objective 3: To examine the moderating effect of Promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention.

Objective 4: To examine the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan

3.4. Research Hypotheses

After considering the research gap and objectives of the study following six hypotheses have been drawn for the current study. The literature review suggested transparent relationships among the survey variables, so no exceptions have been marked as null hypotheses.

H_1: There is a significant mean difference in browsing among the gender groups

H_2: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups

H_3: UGC has a positive impact on travel intentions

H_4: UGC has a positive effect on travel plans

H_5: There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intentions

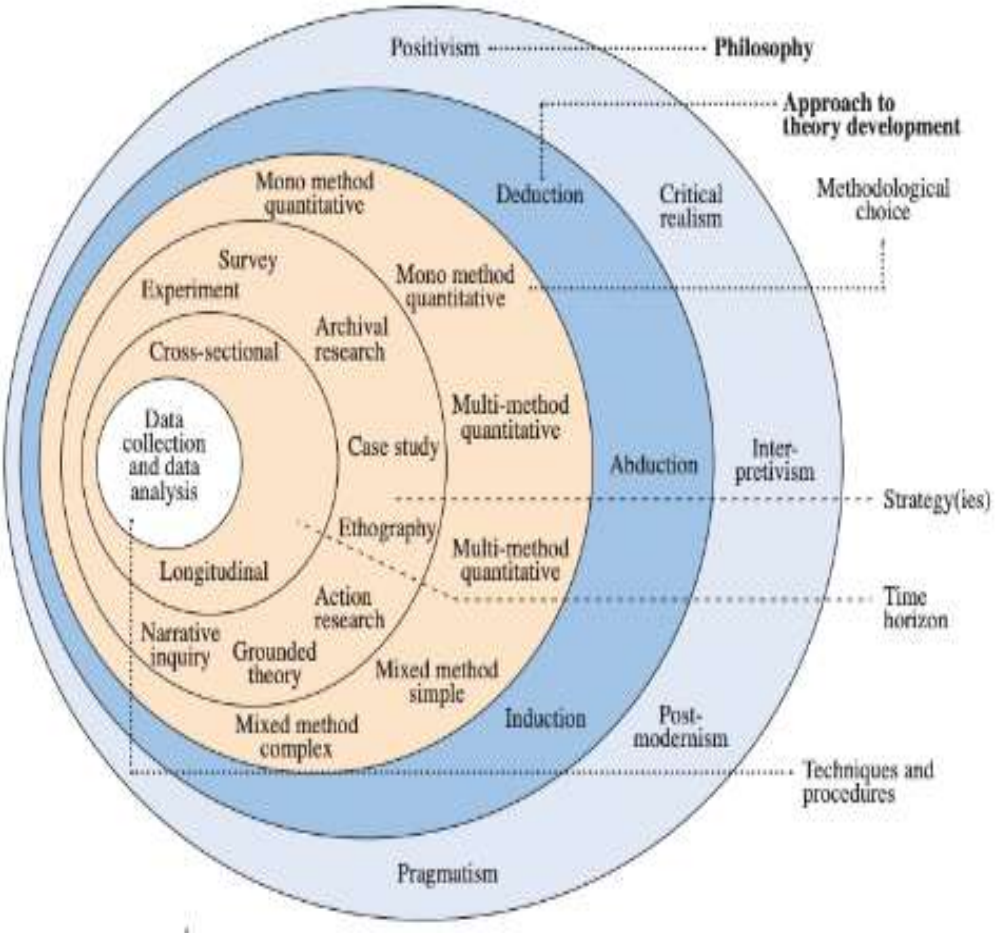
H_6: Travel intention mediates the relationship between UGC and travel plan

3.5. Research Philosophy – Positivism

The concept of research philosophy can be defined as the belief or the notion about how the data for the research work should be collected, analysed, and used. Saunders et al. (2016) concluded in their work that there are different levels in the research process and all of them require making decisions.

A visual illustration of the number of steps a researcher must take when performing the research is provided by Saunders' research onion, as seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Research Onion



Source: Adopted from (Saunders, 2016)

Identifying the appropriate research philosophy is the initial step in doing research. As seen in Figure 3.1, different research philosophies can be used to conduct the research. Melinkovas (2018) explains that research philosophy forms the basis of the research through three different aspects, which can be identified as an ontology – nature of reality, epistemology along with the facts and axiology – consisting of values, beliefs, and ethics revolving around the research study.

Developing a research methodology is required in business studies – the "research onion" model, which tells about the appropriateness of this model for future studies through a systematic approach.

The research philosophies are selected based on their practical implications for the study and can be identified as positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, and realism. Figure 3.2 gives a brief idea about the research philosophies and the differences that lie between them.

Figure 3.2: Research Philosophies

	Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism	Realism
Ontology	Reality exists and it can be studied, captured and understood	Reality is created by individuals	Truth is anything that is useful	There exist inequalities and injustice in the society
Epistemology	Reliable tools should be used to uncover the hidden reality	The underlying meaning of the events and activities should be discovered	Injustice can be uncovered, and citizens can be empowered	Problem solving methods are the best
Methodology	Experimental or survey research can be implemented	Grounded theory approach is most useful	Mixed methods	Critical discourse
Method	Quantitative, which includes sampling, questionnaires, focus group interview	Qualitative, which includes observation, qualitative interview, case study	Combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques	Open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended observations

Source: (Saunders, 2016)

The most commonly used philosophies to conduct the research are positivism and interpretivism, as either the existing reality is to be studied – positivism or the reality created by the individuals is to be identified (Berryman, 2019). Positivism is the research philosophy gained through observations that can be trusted.

Dudovskiy (2022) mentions that the positivism research philosophy allows the researcher to collect and present the objective data without hindrance or influence of the emotions in the study.

Zukauskas et al. (2018) emphasized that positivism analyses focus on society's impact on individuals and how individuals grow under societal influences. On the contrary, interpretivism permits the researcher to evaluate and comprehend the individuals' perceptions and gain insights into their lives.

As the undertaken study is on user-generated content's impact on travel intentions, it is more about the influence of societal norms and rules.

Park et al. (2020) highlighted in their work that the positivism approach helps in identifying causal relationships. The concentration on the facts under the application of positivism philosophy was beneficial in fulfilling the research objectives like the impact of age and gender on the travel intentions of the individuals and also travel intentions' mediating effect between UGC and travel plan.

3.6. Research Approach

The integration of the positivism approach allows the researcher to gather data either in a quantifiable manner through a questionnaire-based survey or in in-depth textual form using focus group interviews.

However, the inability of the qualitative approach to gather data on a large scale makes it limited for specific and targeted studies and not for generalizability.

According to Ragab and Arisha (2018), applying the quantitative research approach is useful when the researcher desires to test hypotheses based on the response of the participants.

Table 3.1 presents the differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches as well as lists the benefits and limitations of each.

Table 3.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

	Quantitative	Qualitative
General Framework	Seeks to confirm the hypotheses revolving around the phenomena Highly structured methods are used for conducting the research like surveys, questionnaires, and structured observations	Seeks to explore the phenomena itself Semi-structured methods are used for conducting the research, including in-depth interviews and participant observations.
Analytical Objectives	Quantification of the variation Prediction of the causal relationships Description of the population characteristics	Description of variation Description and explanation of relationships Description of the individual experiences Description of the group norms
Format of Question	Close-ended	Open-ended
Format of Data	Numerical data was obtained by assigning numerical values to the response	Textual data obtained through recordings and videotapes
Study Design and Flexibility	Stable study design with no influence on the response based on the question flow There is no impact on the sequence of the questions based on how and what the participants deliver as their responses.	Semi-flexible study aspects like the addition or exclusion of specific interview questions or response words The sequence of questions is affected by the participant's response
Benefits	Rapid data collection and analysis Facilitation of comparison Minimum personal judgment	Ability to probe and extract underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions Open-ended inquiry makes it feasible to throw light on the issues that the participants are most concerned about
Limitations	Possible misinterpretation of the question No discussion of the interpretation	Time-consuming An important issue may be overlooked. Interpretation is based on the researcher, which may lead to bias.

The table presents a detailed analysis of the two research approaches that can be adopted to conduct the study. In addition to differences across different factors, the two research approaches have benefits and limitations.

The evaluation of these benefits and limitations leads to the understanding that while the quantitative study can facilitate the rapid collection of data, it is only through the qualitative approach that the underlying values and beliefs can be probed.

Concerning the undertaken work, rapid data collection and comparison of the situation were to be achieved, which is why the quantitative approach was found to be more suitable.

Dzwigol (2020) highlights that the integration of the qualitative approach leads to the representation of only a tiny sample of the population, which restricts the applicability of the research outcomes. Additionally, the limitation of the qualitative approach regarding the time required and possible manipulation during interpretation made the quantitative method the preferred choice.

As the study focused on analysing the impact of age and gender as well as the impact of UGC on travel intentions, the quantification of data was required (Nardi, 2018). Quantitative data can help the researcher to collect information in numbers, and therefore a large amount of information can be collected(Distel, 2022).

The study mentioned that using a quantitative approach for research helps identify dependent and independent variables while presenting the information in numerical form. Information about this study's research design is provided in the following subsections.

3.6.1. Research Design

A research design is a framework for carrying out a marketing research study. It describes the steps necessary to get the needed information. Its goal is to create a study design that will either test the desired hypothesis or identify potential responses to predetermined research questions, eventually providing the data required for decision-making. The study mentioned that a quantitative approach for research was used.

Correlational design measures a specific change's impact on existing norms and assumptions. It is essential to use qualitative data to gain insights into the participants. Variables and hypotheses in quantitative research designs are typically

well-defined before data collection, making them more fixed and deductive(Nardi, 2018) .

3.7. Research Setting

The study's environment forms the research setting and incorporates the physical scenario. and the social and cultural features of the environment. The work by Clarsen and Bahr (2014) concluded that the amalgamation of environmental considerations like the place, time, and circumstances of the study leads to the understanding of under what circumstance the study was conducted.

User-generated content (UGC) has made available a range of data that has made it easier for travellers to select the best destination and, consequently, has improved travel intentions. The influence of UGC on travellers' decision-making is primarily investigated in the Delhi-NCR region in this study.

The study will look at how UGC affects traveller decision-making and provide information on how different types of UGC affect traveller behaviour. The impact of the research setting on data collected and the way results are interpreted is an essential prospect of the research process. The undertaken learning was steered in Delhi /NCR, as the study focused on the tourist behaviour exhibited in Delhi and NCR.

3.8 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis of a research study refers to the entity being studies. According to Sedgwick’s (2014) research, to prevent any information from being misinterpreted, the unit of analysis should be made clear at the start of the study.

The unit of analysis for the undertaken study was the individual tourist from the Delhi NCR region. The tourists were segregated based on age and gender, as the study wanted to analyse how UGC is browsed by males and females and people of different age groups (Assaker, 2020).

The research was therefore conducted in the defined setting using the tourists as the unit of analysis under the application of research design as discussed in the following sub-section.

3.9. Types of Tests

Calculating variable frequencies and variances between variables are included in quantitative data analysis.

Finding evidence to confirm or disprove any ideas developed during the research process will be easier with a quantitative approach. The discussion presented by Maxwell (2019) highlighted that the objective study helps analyse a large sample, which is why the quantitative approach is used for testing hypotheses.

Conclusively, the study was conducted using the quantitative approach to quantifying the numerical data collected using a defined research instrument. A quantitative approach to data collecting and analysis incorporates closed-ended questions, mean, mode, and median calculations, as well as correlation and regression methods.

This research was planned to be quantitative. Quantitative methods are applied because of the high standardization of quantitative methods to make comparisons of findings easy.

3.10. Variable of the Study

The study is supported by theoretical concepts that are practically validated. Identifying the indicators and items for each construct and variable was important.

After consulting experts and studying pertinent literature, this has been tried. Academics, guests, and stakeholders comprise the vast majority of the experts.

The experts were approached personally. A brief collection of constructs, indicators, and variables is provided below.

Table 3.2 Constructs, Indicators, and Variables			
Theoretical construct	Indicators/Items	Scale	Adopted from
User Generated Content	Social Networking Sites OTA's websites Travel Service Providers eWOM Travel Blogs Reviews in UGC Travellers' loyalty Product quality Perceived risk Destination Image Travellers' confidence Information quality UGC websites UGC sources	A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree	(Del Chiappa, 2011; O'Reilly, 2005; John, 2015; Schmidt, 2011; Naab, 2016; Bigne, 2020; Litvin, 2008; Vasant Dhar & Chang, 2009)
Travel Intention	Content communities Travel attitude Perceived risk UGC usage UGC sources Planning process		(Decrop, 2006; John, 2015; Han Xu, 2021; Roy, 2020; Jayathilaka, 2020; Nardi, 2018; Hakseung Shin, 2022)

	Travel decisions		
Promoting Tool	UGC sites		(MacKay, 2012; Fotis & Buhalis, 2010; Nezakati, 2015; Hakseung Shin, 2022; Kwak, 2017; Mendes-Filho, 2022)
	UGC information		
	UGC experience		
	UGC sites comparison		
	Travel decision making		
	UGC communications		
Travel plan	UGC posts		(Choi, 2012; Salem, 2018; No & Kim, 2015; Terttunen, 2017; Anh, 2019; Fardous, 2021; Fotis & Rossides, 2011; Narangajavana Kaosiri, 2019)
	Online travel reviews		
	Travel intent		
	UGC websites		
	Travel services		
	UGC as facilitator		
	Travel destination info		
	UGC services		
	Travel amenities at destination		

3.11. Instrument Design – Questionnaire

An instrument is needed to help collect, measure, and analyze data in the research process. According to the conclusions drawn by Bastos et al. (2014), the selection of the research instrument is most important, and it requires the consideration of reliability, validity as well and the potential compatibility of the data collected. A questionnaire is one of the most suitable research instruments for quantitative data collection.

Bernard (2013) stated that the questionnaire is a set of questions developed around the research topic, with respondents given a choice of answers. The narratives for education researchers who are using data from international research participants are told by international scholars.

The survey-based questionnaires allow the researcher to collect meaningful data guiding their decision-making process (Robb & Shellenbarger, 2020). The feasibility of the questionnaire is based on the fact that the participants can fill it at their convenience without any pressure hovering over them.

The study concluded by Bernard (2013) also mentioned that when the participants are interviewed, they feel burdened and are often intimidated unintentionally by the researcher.

Therefore, questionnaire-based surveys are most appropriate for data collection, mainly when it is to be collected for a large number of participants. The survey was done through a structured questionnaire. They are looking onward to categorize the traveller, as mentioned earlier, according to three perspectives regarding user-generated content before and after the travel: those who prefer to review travel websites, who prefer User Generated Content, and even those travellers. The latter does not use user-generated content in general.

3.11.1. Construction of the questionnaire

The data was collected using an objectives-oriented questionnaire built on an extensive literature review. The questionnaire will be divided into three sections.

1. Social Demographics of the traveller
2. User-generated content usage for travel intention & choices
3. The impact of UGC influence on the travel plan.
4. Moderating effect of promotional tool on UGC
5. Mediating effect of travel intention on UGC and travel plan.

Thus, the research revolving around the impact of UGC on travel intentions with an analysis of the pre-and post- tourist behaviour was taken forward through a questionnaire. The development of the questionnaire was built on the elements and factors that were extracted through the literature review existing on the subject.

Taherdoost's (2018) work highlighted that surveys are conducted by businesses and researchers to uncover answers to specific and essential questions, which is why they need to be created while considering the identified issues and aspects that need to be evaluated. Based on the research objectives developed, the questionnaire was developed.

To achieve the objectives of the current study, a five-point Likert scale, spanning from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was utilised in the questionnaire (Huang & Kichan Nam, 2017; Tsegaye, 2021). Thus, the participants' demographic details were obtained through the questionnaire considering the research objectives. Further questions were developed that could bring forth the relationship between UGC and the travel intentions of the tourists.

Collecting data from participants through questionnaires is the most extensively used tool. It is also a possibility that the participants do not entirely understand the questions asked and therefore leave some of them unanswered (Taherdoost, 2016).

Large sample size is required to select the filled questionnaire responses while filtering out the rest to obtain straightforward answers. Therefore, incorporating the questionnaire led to responses that could be evaluated directly.

3.12. Sampling

To proceed with the research work after identifying the philosophy and approach, it becomes crucial to identify the sample for the study and determine the sample size suitable for obtaining desirable outcomes.

Berndt (2020) asserts that there are two types of sampling techniques: probability sampling, where each representative of the population has an equal chance of being included in the study, and non-probability sampling, where there is no justification for or belief that each participant has a chance to be represented in the sample.

Therefore, sampling comes into the process, and a defined number of individuals are identified and selected for the study.

3.12.1. Sampling Method

As the undertaken research work focused on the impact of UGC on tourists, probability sampling was considered the suitable type of sampling method. The work by Etikan and Bala (2017) highlighted that probability sampling permits every single item from the universe to be a part of the study.

The researchers chose a subset of a population since the probability sampling includes an endless number of individuals.

Berndt (2020) emphasized that because every member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen, simple random sampling is a suitable approach for examining people with diverse interests. The procedure is simple and seen as just because anybody can be chosen. Using the simple Random sampling method, the researchers can gather detailed data and obtain information that can be relied upon.

The survey was conducted to understand user-generated content's impact on travel intention: before and after the travel using a questionnaire. Secondary information from the literature and earlier studies was examined to support the hypothesis (Maxwell, 2019).

3.12.2. Sample Size

Proper sample size should represent the sampling population (Neuman, 2000) (Teddlie, 2009) (Creswell, 2009). In social science research, a sample size of a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 500 is suggested by (Roscoe, 1975).

This study employs structural equation modeling (SEM), for which a sample size of a minimum of 100 to 150 is suggested by Kline (2005) and 200 is suggested by (Harris, 1990).

In order to determine the sample size for an unknown population based on the required level of accuracy, degree of variability, and confidence level, Cochran (1977) proposed a formula. Confidence level, which is the expected possibility of samples, is included, considering the actual parameter of the sample population, and is also influential in determining the Z value.

The formula is given below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$$

Wherein,

n is the sample size

e is the desired level of precision (margin of error)

p is the degree of variability

q is 1-p

In this study, the inflow of foreign and domestic tourists is unknown. Therefore, assuming maximum variability of 50 percent, with ± 5 percent of precision and a Z value of 1.96 (at 95% of confidence level) results in a sample size of 385 (Cochran, 1977).To choose a study's sample size, it is also a good idea to consult comparable earlier research. As a result, the following are some references used to estimate the sample size.

Table 3.3: Sample size in Research Papers

Researcher	Geographical Extent	Sample Size
Rathore (2020)	Udaipur India	309
IITM (2017)	Pan India	2351

This study's sample size of 470 was chosen after considering all the above-mentioned factors. Applying the Simple Random sampling process led to collecting 470 responses for the research study. However, the filtration of the responses was based on the factors like completion of the entire question set. Moreover, the extent of the complete answers written in the paper led to the final count of a sample size of 461.

The determination of the sample size in a quantitative study is based on the ability of the researcher to obtain completed responses for the survey questionnaires and is not limited in nature. Additionally, it does not help in accomplishing the

advanced objective of precisely determining the magnitude of such impacts in planned research (Norouzian, 2020).

3.12.3. Theoretical Population and Study Population

The entire group being researched is referred to as the population or universe, depending on the objective of the research. The population required to conclude the hypothetical population is the theoretical population. A population known as the study population is accessible to a researcher.

Individual Population

All tourists who use UGC make up the study's theoretical population. The study's theoretical population consists of all UGC users. The research population comprises travellers who visited Delhi/NCR and utilized UGC. Several academics have used field surveys in their user-generated content studies to learn how travellers perceive users and their effects. The people who reply are about to wrap up their tour of the Delhi-NCR region.

Tourists were invited to answer a structured questionnaire on their opinions of various UGC offers and their attitudes and plans for using UGC. Respondents from all types of tourists across the Delhi-NCR region will be shortlisted for data collection, and past trends and expert opinions will be considered. The study's population also consists of tourists in the Delhi-NCR region who have taken at least one tour during the last 12 months and are Internet users.

3.13. Data Collection

3.13.1. Content analysis and Pilot testing

Academicians and industry persons who are experts in the field reviewed the questionnaire's content. The experts consulted on the measurement scale and variables for their insightful opinions (Naab, 2016). This activity helped to enhance the questionnaire's content. A thorough questionnaire was developed after doing a content analysis and was then pilot tested on 50 visitors in Delhi/NCR.

Before each respondent filled out the questionnaire, researchers spoke with them to explain the importance of the study and the need for feedback to ensure accurate responses. The process needed 10 to 15 minutes to complete the whole questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, the respondents were asked for their thoughts and comments. The questions' layout, subject matter, and arrangement were generally praised. The content analysis and pilot study results were positive

and gave the researcher a plethora of information. They were also a great way to assess how well the research tool might be used.

3.13.2 Main data collection

The simplest method of collecting data is the use of online portals and conducting a survey that allows the researcher to spread the study to a large section of the population and collect their ideas and response on the study topic. Two data collection methods categories, primary and secondary used in this study.

Primary Data Collection Methods applied in this study are quantitative data collection methods. As discussed in work by Ikart (2019), the data collection process requires a reliable platform that the participants can access without any essential formalities. Individual respondents were contacted to collect data from the primary source, and data were collected using a well-designed and well-tested questionnaire. Individual tourists who visited Delhi/NCR were contacted for the study.

Individual tourists who visited Delhi/NCR were contacted for the study. At various tourist destinations in Delhi and the National Capital Region, respondents who had taken at least one trip during the allotted period were approached. Some responses to the survey were gathered directly by sending it out to travellers using UGC. A survey made in Google Form was used for internet distribution. Furthermore, a pilot test was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the survey questionnaire before it was collected.

Secondary data collection techniques were employed since they had already been published in books, newspapers, magazines, journals, web portals, etc. Secondary data from the literature and earlier studies were also examined (Maxwell, 2019).

3.13.3. Data Collection Tool

Google Forms is a tool that can be used to create survey forms and is accessible to all individuals who have Google accounts. The tool offers collaborative features and has been used to build a new form. Therefore, using Google forms was suitable and convenient for collecting the data in this case. The basic details of the participants were identified in the first part of the online survey, and then they were taken to the more severe and specific part of the questionnaire. The online survey used for data collection provided the potential participants with a brief about the study and why it was being conducted.

In the beginning, the outcome of the brief was that the participants interested in the study topic were filtered so that rich data could be obtained. However, different days of the week were chosen, and the surveys were given in popular tourist destinations such as the National Museum of India Red fort, Goutam Buddha Park, Alwar City Palace, and other tourist attractions of Delhi NCR to improve the sample's randomization in hand. Travellers who spent at least 24 hours in Delhi /NCR participated. The participants were supplied with information about their voluntary participation and a consent form at the start.

The survey link shared with the participants allowed them to fill out the questionnaire when they felt comfortable. There was no pressure of time or influence of other participants on each other, which made the overall process smooth and unbiased. Etikan and Bala (2017) concluded in their study that online surveys form the smoothest form of the data collection process, as there is no interference from others, and it allows the collection of non-objected and non-pressurized data.

However, it is necessary to ensure that the responses submitted through an online survey are only considered if all of the questions have been addressed since doing otherwise would introduce bias (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The participants sent their answered questionnaires by using the upload link of Google forms. Then the data, which was quantified, was used to present the outcomes through the data analysis process.

3.14. Sample area

The whole Delhi/NCR region was included in the sampling area, as specified in the sample design. The Delhi NCR region has been included in the sample area, and all of the significant tourist and tourism circles there will be considered for the sampling. Significant coverage areas have also been added to get the most excellent replies. These regions include tourism-specific places like historical monuments, heritage sites, tourist attractions including tourist villages, national parks, and commercial districts.

The Delhi/NCR region was chosen for statistical purposes since it has the most tourist availability; due to the more significant number of tourist attractions and inflow, Delhi and Rajasthan received the majority of replies. Professional judgment and current historical trends have both been taken into account. The circles for collecting data were also created.

Table3.4: Sample Size of the survey

Sub-Region	Districts / Circles	Valid responses
Haryana	Faridabad, Gurugram, Nuh, Rohtak, Sonepat, Rewari, Jhajjar, Gurugram, Panipat, Palwal, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Mahendragarh, Jind, and Karnal (fourteen districts)	51
Uttar Pradesh	Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Bulandshahr, Baghpat, Hapur, Shamli, and Muzaffarnagar (Eight districts).	52
Rajasthan	Alwar and Bharatpur (two districts).	75
Delhi	The whole of NCT of Delhi.	283
	Total	461

In total, 461 valid responses had gathered after the data collection in the sampling area.

3.15 Data Analysis

3.15.1. Statistical Tool

For confirmatory factor analysis, route analysis, and structural equation modeling, there is a new SPSS module called AMOS, which stands for analyzing moment structures in statistical software. The data were statistically analyzed using SPSS AMOS version 22.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)(Taskin, 2010).

3.15.2. Data Analysis technique adopted

The profile comprised tourists of different age groups, sex, educational qualification, community, marital status, occupations, income, and travel types across Delhi NCR, which will help to know their sociodemographic status. Negative responses to particular scale items may be previously reversed for data purification.

After identifying the data's outlier answers, the normality of the data was assessed using the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. Then, all constructs cleaned using procedures comprising exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The final data cleansing outcomes following CFA.

In analysing data, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis [EFA and CFA] were adopted. EFA allows for identifying underlying factor structure, whereas

CFA verifies the factor structure identified for a set of observed variables. EFA helped as the first step in the identification of the factors that impact the travel intentions of the tourists, and these factors were confirmed further using CFA. Therefore, using EFA and CFA, the impact of UGC on travel intentions was analyzed using the collected data.

3.15.3. Statistical Techniques Used

Exploratory Factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis makes it possible to determine if a given item is a good fit for its construct or has a strong association with other construct-related items. Prior to doing confirmatory factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis was completed. The principal component analysis technique was adopted to conduct exploratory factor analysis. Principal Component analysis (PCA) was used when the objective of the factor analysis was to summarize the information in a more extensive set of variables into fewer factors (Aaker, 2000).

Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

A statistical method called analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of several samples. It may be viewed as a multigroup application of the t-test for two independent samples. The variances are analyzed to assess whether there are appreciable variations in class means. Two independent estimates of the population variance are compared in the ANOVA test of the hypothesis (Douglas C. Montgomery & George C. Runger, 2018) Therefore, Inferential statistics, such as the T-test and one-way ANOVA, have also been used to test hypotheses and analyse mean differences between age groups and gender (Assaker G., 2020) .

The study included a T-test and an ANOVA to analyze the findings further to conclude the results of objective 1. The statistical difference between the various sections was determined using the T-test. An ANOVA analysis was used to examine the differences between more than two strata created throughout the data gathering procedure.

Levene's test, which uses deviations from Midway et al. (2020) , believes that the lack of ability to compare group means with ANOVA precisely has long been known. A sub-field of multiple comparisons tests began to develop by the middle of the 20th century, is a less sensitive test to the normality assumption (a

more robust test). Utilizing Leven statistics, the homogeneity of variances was tested. Leven statistics were significant at 95%, indicating differences between the groups. The equal variance was not assumed since the Leven Statistics is considerable. The equal variance was not assumed since the Leven Statistics is considerable. In order to examine the variations between the age groups,

Dunnett's T3 post-hoc comparison test was employed. Post hoc comparisons (or post hoc tests, multiple comparison tests) are evaluations of the statistical significance of differences between group means computed following ("post") the completion of an ANOVA that reveals an overall difference, according to Ostertagová & Ostertag (2013). It was intended to study differences between specific pairs of means using multiple comparison approaches.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis aids in evaluating a construct's validity and reliability and testing the observed data for typical technique bias (CMB). In this study, CFA is performed using SPSS AMOS (Analysis of a Moment Structures) also represents the below-mentioned criteria.

3.15.4. Test of Reliability and Validity

Structural Equation Modeling [SEM]

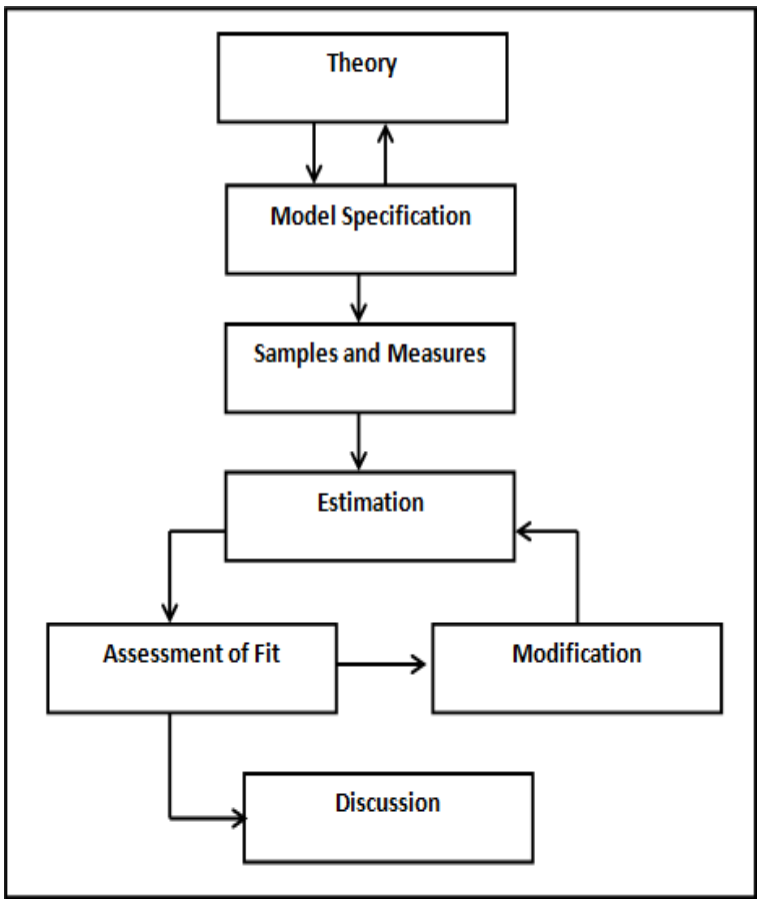
For conducting preliminary analyses of the differential validity and reliability of measuring equipment over a wide variety of demographic groups, structural equation modeling (SEM) approaches are excellent tools. Reliability and validity must be considered in quantitative research while planning processes, designing a study, and reporting findings. Research quality was evaluated using the reliability and validity tenets. They show how well a technique, strategy, or test measures a problem (Tahredoost, 2018).

Thus, Structural Equation Modeling [SEM] was adopted to analyze the data collected using a survey-based questionnaire wherein 461 responses were collected. SEM is a collection of statistical techniques that can be beneficial in testing the relationship between latent (unobserved) factors and manifested (observed) factors to test hypotheses and construct parameters (Andrews, 1976).

Hence, structural equation modeling has gained popularity in various domains, including tourism studies. Many researchers have employed SEM in tourism studies (Byon, 2010; Fotis Kitsios & Eleftheria Mitsopoulou, 2022). The

conclusions drawn by Ullman and Bentler (2012) highlighted that SEM is also referred to as causal modeling, as it helps evaluate the cause-and-effect relationship between different factors. Correlation and regression methods are applied to analyze the extent and the nature of relationships between different variables (Byon, 2010). The standard approach to structural equation modeling used in this work is illustrated graphically in Figure 3.1 and is typically used in the social and behavioural sciences.

Figure 3.1 Convention approach to SEM



Source: (Kaplan, 2010)

The conventional approach to structural equation modeling in the social sciences can be described in five steps: "(1) a model is specified and considered to be a relatively close instantiation of a theory, (2) measures are gathered, (3) the model is estimated, (4) then typically modified, and finally (5) the results are related to the original question" (Kaplan, 2010). As the study wanted to understand the impact of UGC on travel intentions along with the mediating effect of travel

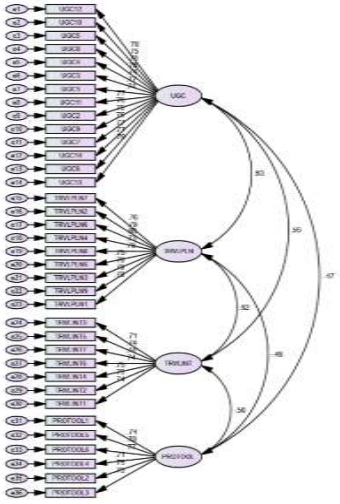
intention and the moderating effect of a promotion tool, the use of multiple regression analysis was beneficial.

3.16. Introduction to the model- Model specification

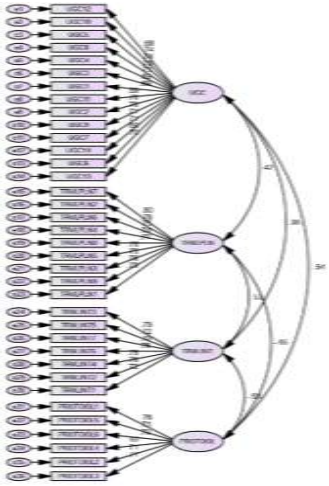
A model for UGC and Travel Intention was developed based on a literature review, and its fundamental structural element is depicted in Figure 3.2 below. The suggested structural model comprises four latent components; User Generated Content. Travel Intention, Promotional Tools, and Travel Plan.

Figure 3.2 Full structural model

Before Travel

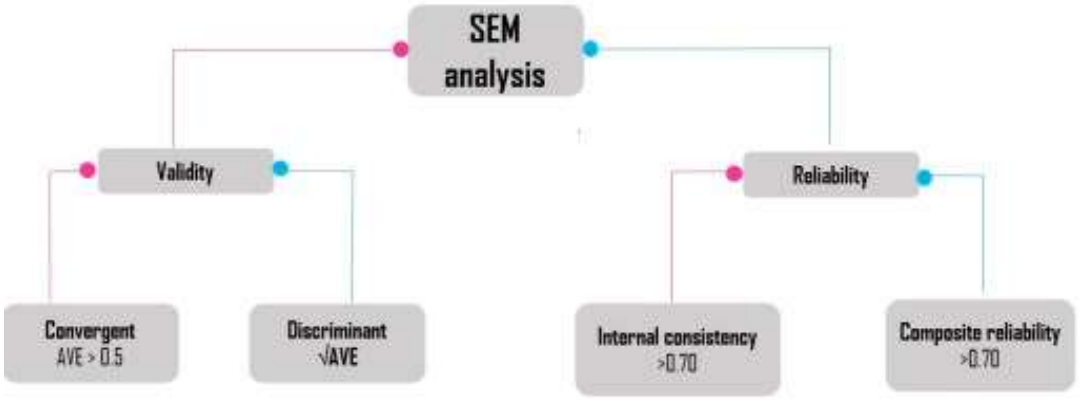


After Travel



Thirty-Six observable variables assess the four latent constructs. The effects of CFA and EFA are these twenty observed variables. Large circles are used to represent latent structures, whereas rectangles are used to represent observable variables. Each of the little circles, labelled e1 to e36, stands for a measurement error, and it refers to an observed component to show that part of the observed variable measures something different from the latent variable. Hypothetical relationships connect the four constructs examined in this study. Single-headed arrows in SEM "reflect the influence of one variable on another, and double-headed arrows the covariances or correlations between pairs of variables" (Byrne, 2010).

Figure 1. SEM Analysis



Source: (Jain, 2021)

It is essential in any research work that the research outcomes can be identified as reliable and valid. According to Dudovskiy (2022), the research outcomes' reliability refers to the range to which the use of the same instruments yields the same answers. Similarly, the validity of the research is identified based on the research methods employed to conduct the research and if they all followed the requirements necessary for scientific research processes. Different techniques can then be used to examine the validity and reliability of the study findings.

Composite reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct validity calculations were used to establish the measurement model's goodness of fit (Hsu, 2008; Lim, 2015).The researcher used the internal consistency reliability approach to identify and measure the study outcomes' reliability.

Therefore, the repeated testing of the results confirmed that the integration of defined data collection and analysis methods was appropriate for the study. The study's time frame was made clear, its components were described, and the optimal sample size and approach were applied to validate the application of the research methodologies.

The definition of reliability is the consistency of outcomes measurement. Therefore, as Dudovskiy (2022) indicated, the validity measure of the research work consisted of face validity, construct validity, and sampling validity.

However, to further enhance the validity of the research work, the researcher can incorporate criterion-related validity that can compare the quantitative study outcomes with the results. User-generated content engagement and all its

antecedents and outcomes will be recorded Cronbach alpha value and composite reliability above the threshold criteria, thus, establishing the reliability and validity of the data(Dudovskiy, John, 2022).

Convergent validity is the correlation of results from several variables used to evaluate the same construct. The presence of variables linked to the latent construct being assessed is ensured by convergent validity in this study. Factors should strongly correlate with the latent construct (Jain, 2021) .

Furthermore, average extracted variance and factor loadings are used to assess the convergent validity of the concept ((Fornell, 1981). Average extracted variance (AVE) must be more significant than 0.50, and factors must load with a value greater than 0.60 (Jain, 2021).

The creation of a latent variable instrument must include a discriminant validity test. Divergent validity, also known as discriminant validity, is the validity that helps to show how one concept differs from another. In most cases, the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) and the correlation of constructs were used to assess the discriminant validity of the instrument (Fornell, 1981).

However, it was criticized by numerous studies (Henseler, 2015; Fornell, 1981); and was not considered an appropriate measure of discriminant validity. The convergent validity and discriminant validity confirm construct validity (Hair Ringle, 2011).

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio should be utilised to evaluate the construct discriminant validity, according to Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt's (2015) recommendation. Less than 0.85 should be the HTMT ratio (Henseler, 2015; Benitez, 2019). Thus, the HTMT ratio is used in the study. This study has two ways to measure how reliable a construct is.

Internal consistency

Continuity within Data consistency in findings across tests is portrayed by reliability in this study. The dependability technique establishes how test factors relate to other elements (Hajjar, 2018). The most used internal consistency metric is the Cronbach alpha coefficient. It is said to be the most often used indicator of consistency when utilizing the Likert scale. Each construct had a Cronbach's Alpha better than 0.70 (Hair, 2014; Jain, 2021).

Composite reliability

The composite reliability of underlying constructs in structural equation modeling is measured. Confirmatory factor analysis illustrates constructs' dependability in SEM (CFA). Composite reliability is used to gauge a construct's dependability. Factor loading analysis determines composite dependability (Fornell, 1981). According to (Liu,2016), the cut-off point for composite dependability is more significant than 0.70 (Jain, 2021; Liu & Wang, 2016).

Model Fit Indices

CFA will develop a measurement model, verifying the model fit. Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008) suggest that although AMOS presents many models fit indices, researchers need not report all the model fit indices and should avoid mentioning only those model fit indices that reflect the best values (Hooper, 2008).

The goodness of model fit can be measured through different model fit indices such as Chi-Square ($\chi 2$), Relative Chi-Square ($\chi 2/df$), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) good model fitness as per the recommended thresholds of previous studies (Hair, 2014; Montini, 2014).

These indices are used in the current study to check the goodness of fit for the measurement and structural models. The next chapter depicts all the fit indices meeting the threshold criteria.

Table 3.5 Fit indices

Index	Recommendedcut-off	Source
CMIN/DF	3 to 1	Byrne (2010)
Comparative fit index (CFI)	> 0.90	Kline (2005)
The goodness of fit (CFI)	> 0.90	Hooper (2008)
Root mean square residual (RMR)	< 0.80	Hair & Ringle (2011)
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.06	Hair & Ringle (2011)

Kurtosis and skewness

Kurtosis and skewness are used to examine whether or not indicators adhere to normalcy assumptions (Kline, 2005). In order to determine if a curve is normal or

abnormally curved, kurtosis measures must be taken into consideration. A leptokurtic normal curve has a considerably arched mean and short tail. Conversely, platykurtic curves are flatter than normal curves, with a smaller apex and longer tails. Positively or negatively skewed curves are considered skewed. Positively skewed curves have a concentration of scores below the mean, whereas negatively skewed curves exhibit the inverse. Both of these curves produce a normal uneven curve.

Descriptive statistics can be used to assess both skew and kurtosis. When using SEM, acceptable skewness values are between 3 and + 3, while acceptable kurtosis values are between 10 and + 10 (Brown, 2006). SEM is a reasonably robust analytical method; therefore, minor deviations may not imply serious breaches of assumptions if they lie outside these limits. Using Structure Equational Modelling (SEM), the influence of antecedents on user-generated content engagement and its direct and indirect effects on its various outcomes are examined (Jain, 2021).

Path analysis

The scientist Sewall Wright developed path analysis approaches for structural equation modeling. Since route analysis uses observable variables, it is analogous to multiple regression. Therefore, the path analysis is similar to multiple regression as it is done in this study with observed variables (Taskin, 2010).

Multivariate analysis

The research model was further investigated through structural equation modeling. The hypothesis of the study was further tested through multiple regression analysis. UGC is an explanatory variable, while travel is a dependent variable. Travel Intention is a mediator, while the promotional tool has a moderating role in this study. The multiple regression and moderation results obtained through AMOS and SPSS Hayes process macros are discussed hereafter.

Mediation Analysis

According to David et al. (2007), mediation analysis can explain how a third variable can impact the relationship between two variables. Psychological constructs are one type of mediating variable that can be calculated. To put it differently, the presence of a mediator—a variable in the middle—affects the direct impact of an independent variable on the dependent variable. The relationship may change when the mediator is brought in. The introduction of a mediator can change the

relationship between dependent and independent variables in three ways (Hayes, 2004; Igartua, 2021) :

1. Complete mediation: After the mediator was introduced, the independent variable's direct impact on the dependent variable was insignificant. Now, the independent variable indirectly impacts the dependent variable through the mediator.
2. Partial Mediation: Despite changes, the independent variable directly affects the dependent variable. On the other hand, the mediator's indirect influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is equally significant.
3. No Mediation: Even with the addition of a mediator, the direct impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable does not change.

A moderator analysis is utilized to evaluate if the connection between two variables depends on (is moderated by) the value of a third variable. An interaction variable added to a multiple regression equation serves as the moderator in a moderator analysis. The theory and the following hypotheses accompanying this statistical test distinguish it as a moderator analysis (Igartua, 2021).

As a result, the study also used a mediator and moderator for the data analysis in order to fulfill the objectives of objective 3 and objective 4, respectively, which both focused on analysing the moderating effect of the promotion tool and the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC, travel intention, and travel plan.

3.17. Hypothesis Testing

The study included a T-test and an ANOVA to analyze the findings further to conclude the results. The impact of determinants on user-generated content interaction and their direct and indirect impacts on the content's various outcomes are researched using Structure Equational Modelling (SEM).

The type of associations between two selected variables will be determined via correlation analysis (Byon, 2010). The test was applied based on the research objectives, as follows.

1. To examine if gender and age influence the way user-generated content is browsed. T test and ANOVA (Maria Karatsoli ,2020).
2. To examine the Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions. SEM (Fotis Kitsios, 2022); (Igartua, 2021).

3. To examine the moderating effect of promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention. SEM Moderation Analysis. (Igartua, 2021).
4. To examine the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan, SEM Mediation Analysis (Igartua, 2021).

To conclude the result outcomes, the study integrated a T-test and ANOVA to analyze the results further. Using the T-test, the statistical difference between the different strata was identified, and ANOVA helped analyze the statistical differences between more than two strata formed in the data collection process. Correlation and regression methods are applied to analyse the extent and the nature of relationships between different variables.

The testing of hypotheses about the moderation of mechanisms; and reporting different types of analyses. In order to achieve its objective of analysing the moderating impact of promotion tools and the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC, travel intention, and travel plan, respectively, the study also employed a mediator and moderator to analyze the data. As a result, mediation assisted in identifying the correlation between the independent and dependent variables, and the moderator assisted in understanding the factors that influenced the nature and strength of the relationship between the variables (Igartua, 2021).

3.18. Data Presentation

To presents an overview of the research methodology highlighting the elements that formed the critical part of conducting the research and obtaining the results to the defined research objectives.

A step-by-step inclusion of different aspects of the research process is depicted in tabular form. Text, tables, and visuals will be included in the results section. The narrative in the text will interpret the information that has been provided. Textual information will be provided in simple data sets with a few categories.

Table 3.6: Review of Research Methodology

Research Methodology	Methods selected
Research Philosophy	Positivism approach (Melinkovas, 2018)
Research Approach	Quantitative approach (Dzwigol, 2020); (Nardi, 2018) : (Distel, 2022)
Research Design	Correlational design (Nardi, 2018).
Data Collection	Survey Method (Ikart, 2019).
Sampling technique	T-test and an ANOVA; Simple Random Sampling (Douglas C. Montgomery & George C. Runger, 2018) ; (Tahredoost, 2018)
Sample Unit	Tourist (IITM, 2017)
Sample Area	Delhi NCR Region
Sample Size	461 (Lam, 2020) (Kline, 2005)
Data Analysis	Structural Equation Modelling (Hayat & Al Mamun A, 2022) (Fotis Kitsios & Eleftheria Mitsopoulou, 2022)

Thus, it can be said that the positivist concept served as the foundation for the straightforward approach of data collecting and analysis for the intended investigation.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

In research studies involving human participants, certain ethical aspects must be considered. The discussion initiated by Barnard (2021) highlights that the participants should be aware of the importance of their consent, the freedom to exit the study whenever they feel uncomfortable, and the confidentiality that would be maintained throughout the research study.

The research was undertaken with 461 participants, maintained the anonymity of the participants, and proceeded with their participation only when informed consent was obtained from them. The participants were not pressured or burdened with the study process and were not forced to answer all the questions from the question set. The researcher simply screened out the questionnaires that had incomplete answers.

Burles and Bally (2018) mentioned in their work that the quantitative study undertaken by the researchers requires effective management of the data collected, and there should not be any commercial use of the same.

Thus, the researcher ensured that the collected information remained anonymous and was integrated only into the study process. The researcher also did not manipulate any information, and any fabrication of the collected data was not done to maintain the genuineness of the research outcomes (Burles, 2018).

3.11 Significance and Limitation of Study

The undertaken research work collects data around the analysis of the impact of UGC on travel intentions. The gathering and analysis of information on travel intentions are helping to fill in the gaps in our knowledge and comprehension of the factors that influence visitors' behaviour.

The extension of the study results from the social media platforms or specific social media types like review websites and information search before the trip or the decision-making process to the content shared by the users after their trip across different platforms will help the tourism industry to consider the importance of UGC.

While the study results benefit the tourism industry and potential tourists, the study is limited to the quantitative data obtained and analyzed. The lack of emotional involvement of the participants and their contribution is missing from the study outcomes. The insights from the tourists, both potential and existing, could have added to the overall study outcomes positively. Therefore, future research can focus on a qualitative approach and further study the concept. It would also help validate the study's results using a quantitative approach.

3.12 Summary

To summarize, the chapter on research methodology throws light on how the research was conducted to evaluate the impact of UGC on travel intentions. The chapter compared the two most dominant research philosophies, i.e., positivism and interpretivism, highlighting society's role in individual thoughts and actions.

The chapter identified positivism as the practical research philosophy for the undertaken study suggesting that social norms can be influential in case of travel

intentions. The study is set in Delhi/NCR, and the actual data was collected in one go, with participants forming the unit of analysis.

The chapter further evaluated qualitative and quantitative approaches and concluded that quantifying the data was more suitable for the research. The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives, and the reviewed literature was identified, using which 461 responses were collected for analysis. The data analysis was executed using structural equation modelling, leading to the study's relationships between dependent and independent variables.

The chapter also highlights anonymity and confidentiality as ethical considerations. It indicates that despite the results adding value to studies associated with tourism, the qualitative study can add value to the findings. The following chapter tells the discussion of the findings.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussions

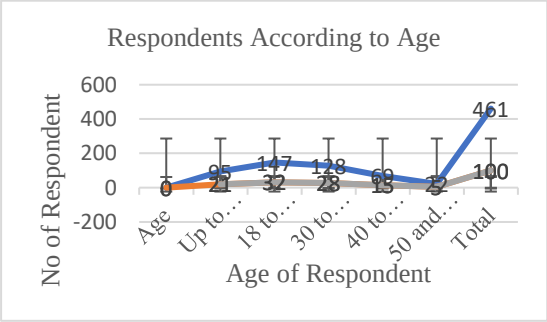
4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses numerous statistical tests that were used for analysis. First, a percentage-based socio-demographic profile of the responding tourists is provided. The second section depicts descriptive statistics results for various constructs considered in the study using percentage, mean score, standard deviation, and ranks. In the third section, demographic characteristics of the individual respondent and the role of User generated content in travel intention are analysed using one-way ANOVA and SEM. The following section then shows the results of validity and reliability and the output of factor analysis. Finally, hypotheses are tested using SEM and multiple regression techniques, and results are presented and interpreted.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of tourist

Age, gender, nationality, employment, and monthly yearly income are the socio-demographic characteristics of each visitor to Delhi/NCR. Respondents' responses to these questions were then noted and examined using SPSS percentile analysis.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents According to Age



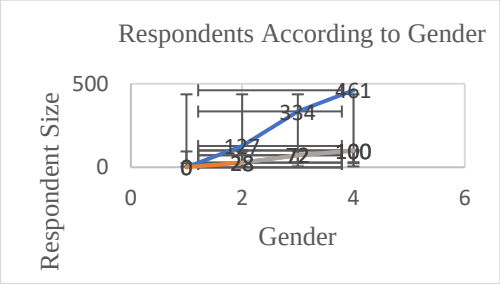
Age	N	%
Up to 18 Years	95	21
18 to 30 Years	147	32
30 to 40 Years	128	28
40 to 50 Years	69	15
50 and above	22	5
Total	461	100

Summary:

In Table 4.1: The participants of this study were categorized into five age groups. About 21% (n = 95) of respondents have aged less than 18 years of age. A significant proportion (n = 147, 32%) of respondents have age between 18 – 30 years. In the age ranges of 30 to 40 years, there were 128 respondents (28%), and in 40 to 50 years, there were 69 respondents (15%). There were 22 respondents (5%) who were 50 years old or older. Therefore, the table1 is a clear depiction of how the 'Age Group -18

to 30 Years' was the most depicted traveller using UGC. Overall, the percentage of persons in each age group found that young adults make up the largest group, suggesting that young people are more drawn to using UGC for travel-related activities.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents According to Gender

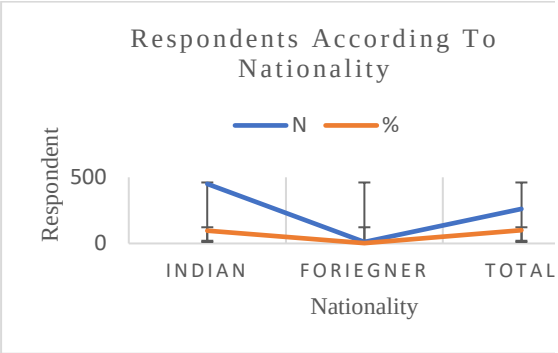


Gender	N	%
Female	127	28
Male	334	72
Total	461	100

Summary

Table 4.2 shows the gender distribution of respondents' Male were 72 Percent (n = 334) of the respondents' females comprised 28 percent (n = 127) out of the total respondents (n = 461), showing that more percentage of males than females participated in the study. This demonstrates that male visitors are more active on UGC than female travellers and emphasizes the equally significant role both genders play as travellers.

Table 4. 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Nationality

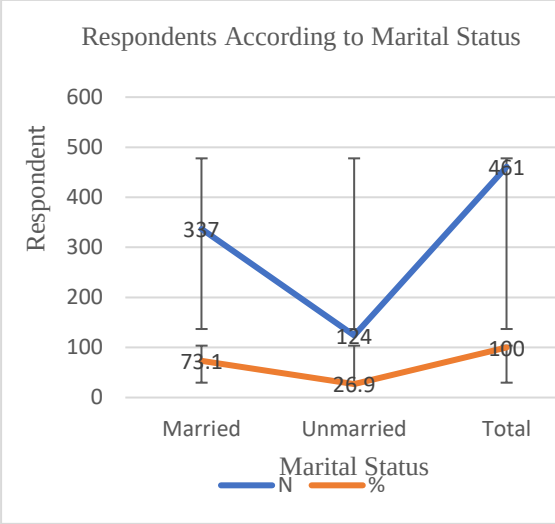


Nationality	N	%
Indian	450	97.6
Foreigner	11	2.4
Total	261	100

Summary

The distribution of respondents by nationality is seen in Table 4.3. 97.6% of respondents who have visited Delhi/NCR as a tourist were Indian, while 2.4% were foreigners. The ratio of Indian and international visitors considered for the study is virtually evenly distributed in the table. This 450 also indicates that, even though international travellers still favour other countries as travel destinations, India is currently opening up for domestic tourism.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status

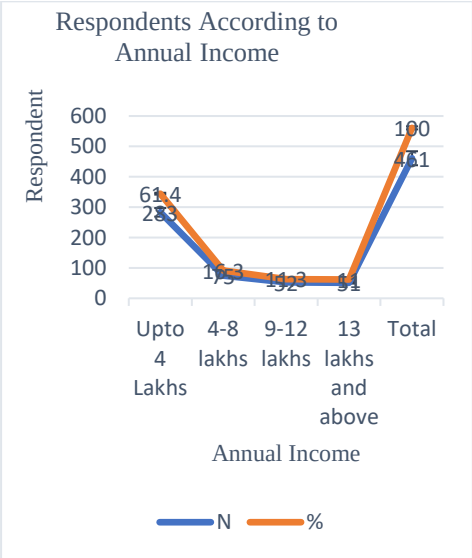


Marital Status	N	%
Married	337	73.1
Unmarried	124	26.9
Total	461	100

Summary

In Table 4.4, The marital status showed that married respondents (n= 337, 73%) were more significant than unmarried (n= 124, 27%), which depicts the gender distribution of respondents showing that unequal percentages of males and females participated in the study. This demonstrates that men and women travellers play equally vital roles while also demonstrating that they are not equally engaged on UGC sites.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Respondents According to Annual Income

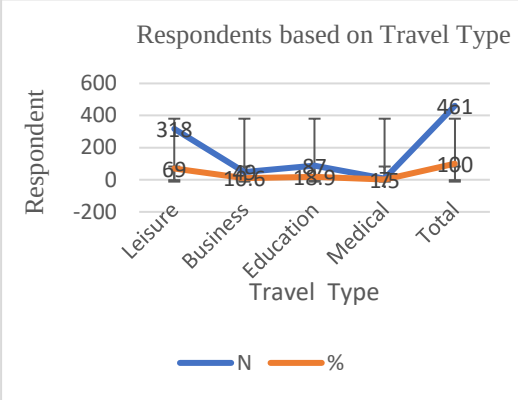


Income/ Annum in lakhs Rupees	N	%
Up to 4 Lakhs	283	61.4
4-8 lakhs	75	16.3
9-12 lakhs	52	11.3
13 lakhs and above	51	11
Total	461	100

Summary

In Table4.5: The household annual income statistics revealed that 283 (61.4 %) of participants have an income less than 4 lakhs, 75 (16.3%) have 4 – 8 lakhs, and 103 (22.3%) have an income higher than 9 lakhs. This indicates that travellers from affluent and low-income groups—who have diverse incomes and are impacted by UGC—prefer to visit Delhi/NCR.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Respondents based on Travel Type

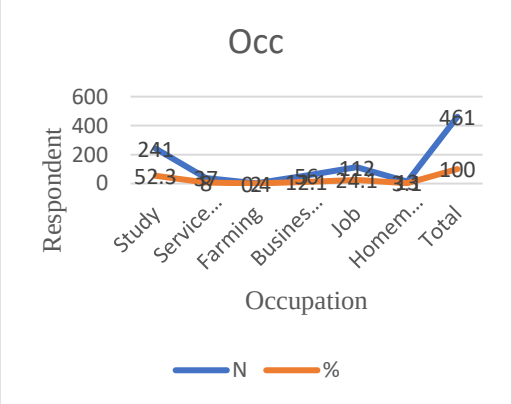


Travel Type	N	%
Leisure	318	69
Business	49	10.6
Education	87	18.9
Medical	7	1.5
Total	461	100

Summary

In table 4.6 most of the respondents travelled for leisure (n=318,69%) followed by education(n=87,18%) business (n=49,10.6%) and lastly medical purpose (n=7,1.5%)

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents based on Occupation

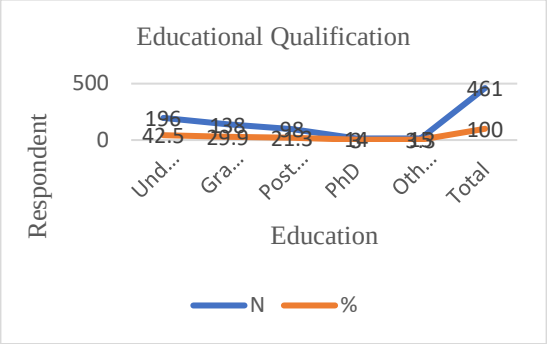


Occupation	N	%
Study	241	52.3
Service Class	37	8
Farming	2	0.4
Businessman /Professional	56	12.1
Job	112	24.1
Homemaker	13	3.1
Total	461	100

Summary

In Table 4.7: According to employment status information, mostly the participant of the study were students (n= 241, 52.3%). The working participant was 37 (8%). Respondent who does farming is negligible (n= 2 ,0.45%) Businessman or professional (n= 56 ,12.1%) Rest were having job (n= 112 ,24.1%) and 13 (3.1%) are homemaker.

Table 4.8: Distribution of Respondents based on Education

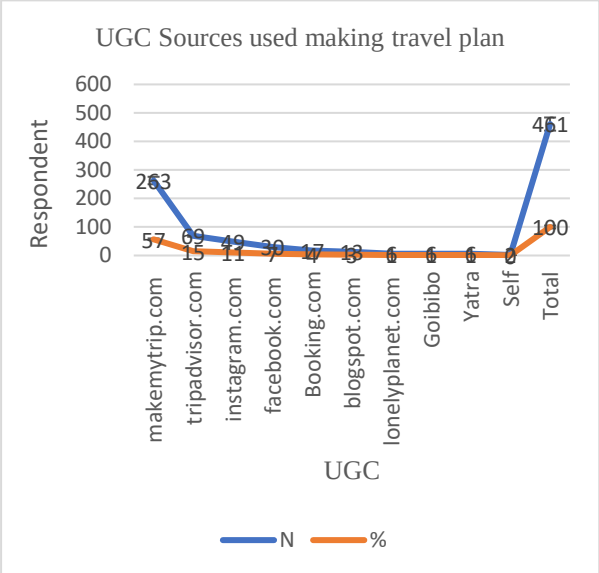


Occupation	N	%
Under Graduate	196	42.5
Graduate	138	29.9
Post Graduate	98	21.3
PhD	14	3
Others	15	3.3
Total	461	100

Summary

In Table 4.8, 196 (42.5%) participants were under-graduated. Respondents having graduation and postgraduate qualification were 138 (30 %) and 98 (21 %), respectively. Respondents having Ph.D. were 14(3%) and others 15(3,3%), respectively.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Respondents based on UGC usage



UGC source	N	%
makemytrip.com	263	57
tripadvisor.com	69	15
instagram.com	49	11
facebook.com	30	7
Booking.com	17	4
blogspot.com	13	3
lonelyplanet.com	6	1
Goibibo	6	1
Yatra	6	1
Self	2	0
Total	461	100

Summary

The percentage of respondents who used content from various UGC sources before and after travel is shown in Table 4.9. It indicates the majority of the tourist got the information about Delhi/NCR through MakeMyTrip com comprised (n=263,57%) of respondents in a total of 461. The following source appeared to be travel social websites like Trip Advisor, which comprises (n=69, 15%) of respondents, followed by Instagram.com (n=49,11%), Facebook, etc. with (n=30,7%) respectively. The least preferred tourist sources were tourism websites, with 10 percent followed by self. This implies that UGC is a more popular source through online sources like travel social sites and pure social media sites like Facebook, etc.

4.3. Research Objectives

Objective 1: To examine if gender and age influence the way user-generated content is browsed.

Objective 2: To examine the Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions.

Objective 3: To examine the moderating effect of Promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention.

Objective 4: To examine the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan

4.4. Objective wise Analysis

O1: To examine if gender and age influence the way user-generated content is browsed. The T-Test is applied. Here, shown the comparison of gender and age differences in User Generated Content (UGC) before travel.

Table 4.10: Gender has different behaviour toward User-generated content (Before Travel)

MUGC				**Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**		**t-test for Equality of Means**		
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**F**	**Sig.**	**T**	**Df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Female	127	3.039	1.058	26.953	0.000	-7.142	189.074	0.000
Male	334	3.786	0.837					

Summary

H_1: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the gender groups (Before Travel)

This was examined whether there was a statistically significant difference in UGC between the gender groups using an independent t-test. Based on gender, the participants were split into two groups (Male and Female). Table 4.10 contains the results of the independent t-test. Independent studies' findings revealed a gender difference for user-generated material that was statistically significant (t-stat = -7.142, p 0.01).

Leven statistics are used to test of Homogeneity of variances. Leven statistics was significant at 95%, so variances among the groups were not homogeneous. Since the Leven Statistics is significant, the equal variance was not assumed.

The findings revealed that males (Mean = 3.786, Std. Dev = 0.837) have higher level of user generated contents usage as compared to females (Mean = 3.039, Std. Dev = 1.058). The males' average responses were higher than the females for the data collected (Before Travel). Hence the results approved hypothesis 1(Before Travel).

2. Comparison of age groups differences in User Generated Content (UGC) Usage (Before Travel)

Table 4.11a: Age groups have different User generated contents UGC (Before Travel)

Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levent Statistic	Sig.	F	Sig.
Up to 18 Years	95	3.256	1.092				
18 to 30 Years	147	3.293	1.053				
30 to 40 Years	128	3.781	0.725	16.473	0.000	15.84	0.000
40 to 50 Years	69	4.071	0.613				
50 and above	22	4.185	0.598				

Table 4.11b: Posthoc test for User generated contents UGC (Before Travel)

(I) Age in years	Dunnett T3	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Up to 18 Years	18 to 30 Years	-0.03785	0.142	1.000
	30 to 40 Years	-.52505*	0.129	0.001
	40 to 50 Years	-.81579*	0.134	0.000
	50 and above	-.92943*	0.170	0.000
18 to 30 Years	Up to 18 Years	0.03785	0.142	1.000
	30 to 40 Years	-.48720*	0.108	0.000
	40 to 50 Years	-.77794*	0.114	0.000
	50 and above	-.89158*	0.154	0.000
30 to 40 Years	Up to 18 Years	.52505*	0.129	0.001
	18 to 30 Years	.48720*	0.108	0.000
	40 to 50 Years	-.29074*	0.098	0.033
	50 and above	-0.40437	0.143	0.073
40 to 50 Years	Up to 18 Years	.81579*	0.134	0.000
	18 to 30 Years	.77794*	0.114	0.000
	30 to 40 Years	.29074*	0.098	0.033
	50 and above	-0.11364	0.147	0.996
50 and above	Up to 18 Years	.92943*	0.170	0.000
	18 to 30 Years	.89158*	0.154	0.000
	30 to 40 Years	0.40437	0.143	0.073

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Summary

H_2: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups (Before travel).

The hypothesis that there is a significant difference in UGC between the age groups was investigated using the one-way ANOVA test. Five age categories were used to group the individuals. Table 4.11a contains the results of the one-way ANOVA test. One-way ANOVA test results revealed a significant difference in the UGC between the gender groups (F = 15.84, p 0.01).

In Table 4.11b: Leven statistics are used to test of Homogeneity of variances. Leven statistics was significant at 95%, so variances among the groups were not homogeneous. Since the Leven Statistics is significant, the equal variance was not assumed.

The differences between the age groups were examined using Dunnett's T3 post-hoc comparison test. Each group's mean scores were compared to those of other groups. Dunnett's T3 group's comparison results are reported in table 2b. It found that user generated content has higher average values in higher age groups. The test indicated that the average score for age group 30 to 40 Years (Mean = 3.781, Std. Dev = 0.725), 40 to 50 Years (Mean = 4.071, Std. Dev = 0.613) and 50 & above years (Mean = 4.185, Std. Dev = 0.598) have significant difference between from 18 years and below. The age categories of 18 to 30 and 30 to 40 exhibit considerable differences from those of 40 to 50 and over 50, respectively. The results approved hypothesis 2 (Before Travel).

2.2. Comparison of gender differences in User Generated Content (UGC) after travel

Table 4.12: Gender has different User generated contents usage (After travel)

	MUGC			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**F**	**Sig.**	**T**	**Df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Female	127	3.453	1.021	0.412	0.521	-0.703	459.000	0.483
Male	334	3.525	0.973					

Summary

H_1: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the gender groups (After travel)

In Table No 4.12: It was determined whether there was a statistically significant difference in UGC between the gender groups using an independent t-test. The participants were divided into two groups based on gender (Male and Female). Table 4.12 presents the results of the independent t-test. Independent studies' findings revealed a substantial difference between gender groups regarding the consumption of user-generated content (UGC) (t-stat = -0.703, $p > 0.01$).

Leven statistics are used to test of Homogeneity of variances. Leven statistics was insignificant at 95%, so variances among the groups were homogeneous. Since the Leven Statistics is insignificant, an equal variance was assumed.

The findings revealed that males (Mean = 3.525, Std. Dev = 0.973) have no difference about user generated contents UGS as compared to females (Mean = 3.453, Std. Dev = 1.021). The males' average responses were almost no different than the females for the data collected after a trip. Hence The results approved hypothesis 1 (After Travel).

2.3. Comparison of age groups differences in User Generated Content (UGC) (After travel)

Table 3.12a: Age groups have different User generated contents UGC (After travel)

Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene Statistic	Sig.	F	Sig.
Up to 18 Years	95	2.971	1.123				
18 to 30 Years	147	3.537	0.910				
30 to 40 Years	128	3.761	0.834	6.208	0.000	10.872	0.000
40 to 50 Years	69	3.580	1.008				
50 and above	22	3.873	0.739				

Table 4 .12. b: Posthoc test for User generated contents UGC (After travel)

(I) Age in years	Dunnett T3	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Up to 18 Years	18 to 30 Years	-.56599*	0.137	0.001
	30 to 40 Years	-.78917*	0.137	0.000
	40 to 50 Years	-.60828*	0.167	0.004
	50 and above	-.90195*	0.195	0.000
18 to 30 Years	Up to 18 Years	.56599*	0.137	0.001
	30 to 40 Years	-0.22319	0.105	0.296
	40 to 50 Years	-0.04230	0.143	1.000
	50 and above	-0.33596	0.174	0.451
30 to 40 Years	Up to 18 Years	.78917*	0.137	0.000
	18 to 30 Years	0.22319	0.105	0.296
	40 to 50 Years	0.18089	0.142	0.893
	50 and above	-0.11277	0.174	0.999
40 to 50 Years	Up to 18 Years	.60828*	0.167	0.004
	18 to 30 Years	0.04230	0.143	1.000
	30 to 40 Years	-0.18089	0.142	0.893
	50 and above	-0.29367	0.199	0.773
50 and above	Up to 18 Years	.90195*	0.195	0.000
	18 to 30 Years	0.33596	0.174	0.451
	30 to 40 Years	0.11277	0.174	0.999
	40 to 50 Years	0.29367	0.199	0.773

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

H_2: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups (After travel)

The hypothesis that there is a significant difference in UGC between the age groups was investigated using the one-way ANOVA test. Table 4.12a presents the results of the one-way ANOVA test. One-way ANOVA test findings revealed a significant difference in the UGC across the age groups (F = 10.872, p 0.01).

The mean scores of each group were compared with other groups. Dunnett's T3 group's comparison results are reported in table 4.12b. It found that user generated content has higher average values in higher age groups.

The test indicated that the average score for age groups 30 to 40 Years (Mean = 3.761, Std. Dev = 0.834), 40 to 50 Years (Mean = 3.580, Std. Dev = 1.008), and 50 & above years (Mean = 3.873, Std. Dev = 0.739) have significant difference between from 18 years and below for data gathered after the trip; however, there is no significant difference between age groups of 18 to 30 and 30 to 40 years and 40 to 50 years and above 50 years, respectively. Hence, the results support H_2(After Travel).

4.5. Structural Equation Modeling

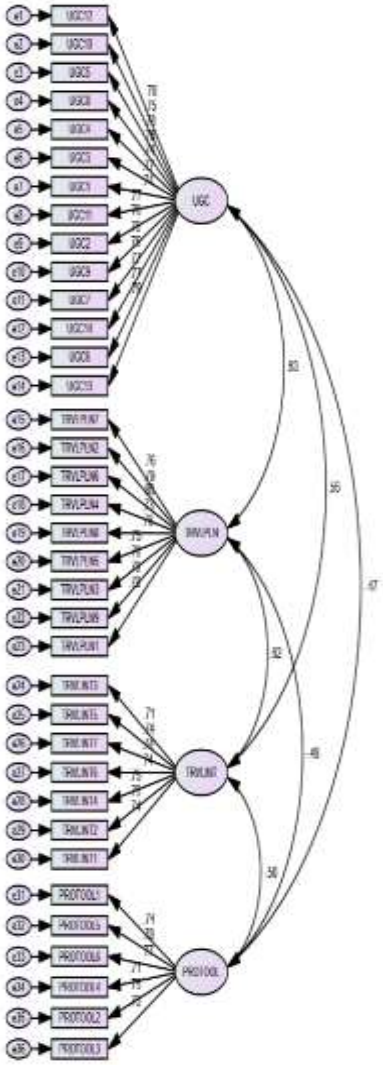
This analysis from objective 2 to objective 4 made use of the AMOS 22 version (Taskin, 2010).

4.5.1. Path Analysis Models

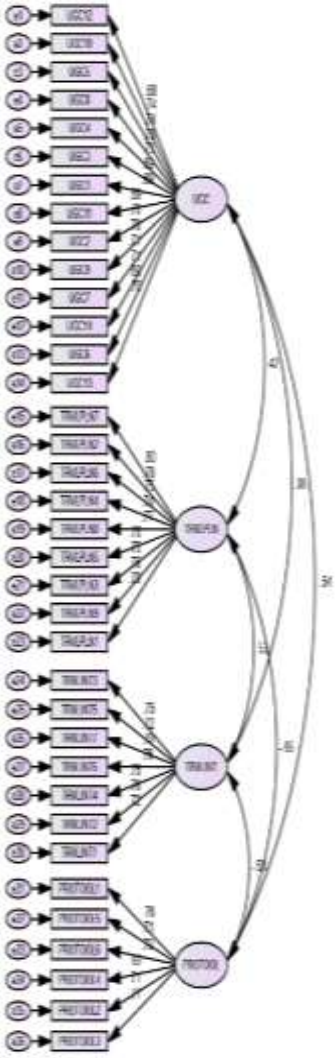
A scientist named Sewall Wright created path analysis models for structural equation modeling (Taskin, 2010). As the path analysis uses the observed variables shown below, it is similar to multiple regression.

Figure 4.3: Measurement Model

Before Travel



After Travel



Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out prior to performing confirmatory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the principal component analysis approach.

The KMO evaluates sampling adequacy, which assesses whether the responses provided with the sample are adequate or not. This value must be near 0.5 for factor analysis to proceed satisfactorily.

The first results show the KMO and Bartlett's Test (table 4.9.2). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value is 0.968. For the goodness of fit, it should be higher than 0.7

Table 4.13.1: KMO and Bartlett's Test (Before travel)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.968
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10535.731
	Df	630
	Sig.	.000

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed that approximated Chi-Square value is 10535.731 with 630 degrees of freedom before travel. Bartlett's test was significant at 5% (p-value < 0.01), which indicates the data was suitable for factor analysis.

The first results show the KMO and Bartlett's Test (Table 4.9.2). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value is 0.958. For the goodness of fit, it should be higher than 0.7.

Table4.13.2: KMO and Bartlett's Test (After Travel)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.958
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9416.586
	Df	630
	Sig.	.000

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed that approximated Chi-Square value is 9416.586 with 630 degrees of freedom. Bartlett's test was significant at 5% (p-value < 0.01), which indicates the data was suitable for factor analysis.

The average variance retrieved and factor loadings are used in this study to assess the convergent validity of the concept (Fornell, 1981). Average extracted variance (AVE) must be more significant than 0.50, and factors must load with a value greater than 0.60 (Hair, 2014).

Table 4.14a: Factor Loadings, CR, AVE, and Sqr. AVE (Before Travel)

Predictor	Outcome	Std Beta	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
UGC	UGC12	0.775	0.951	0.582	0.396	0.951
	UGC10	.753 ***				
	UGC5	.781 ***				
	UGC8	.758 ***				
	UGC4	.736 ***				
	UGC3	.768 ***				
	UGC1	.737 ***				
	UGC11	.773 ***				
	UGC2	.763 ***				
	UGC9	.752 ***				
	UGC7	.746 ***				
	UGC14	.771 ***				
	UGC6	.771 ***				
	UGC13	.793 ***				
TRVLPLN	TRVLPLN7	0.758	0.928	0.591	0.396	0.929
	TRVLPLN2	.786 ***				
	TRVLPLN6	.796 ***				
	TRVLPLN4	.725 ***				
	TRVLPLN8	.778 ***				
	TRVLPLN5	.748 ***				
	TRVLPLN3	.760 ***				
	TRVLPLN9	.787 ***				
	TRVLPLN1	.776 ***				
TRVLINT	TRVLINT3	0.715	0.895	0.548	0.389	0.895
	TRVLINT5	.739 ***				
	TRVLINT7	.739 ***				
	TRVLINT6	.740 ***				
	TRVLINT4	.749 ***				
	TRVLINT2	.755 ***				
	TRVLINT1	.745 ***				
PROTOOL	PROTOOL1	0.737	0.886	0.564	0.251	0.887
	PROTOOL5	.783 ***				
	PROTOOL6	.771 ***				
	PROTOOL4	.714 ***				
	PROTOOL2	.745 ***				
	PROTOOL3	.753 ***				

Summary

In Table 4.14a: The items loading ranged from 0.714 to 0.793 (> 0.60) and the AVEs for all constructs were between 0.548 and 0.591 (> 0.50). Therefore, the instrument's convergent validity was unaffected. MaxR (H) and the mean shared values (MSV) met the threshold requirements.

Table 4.14b: Validity Analysis (Before Travel)

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	UGC	TRVLPLN	TRVLINT	PROTOOL
UGC	0.951	0.582	0.396	0.951	**0.763**			
TRVLPLN	0.928	0.591	0.396	0.929	0.629***	**0.768**		
TRVLINT	0.895	0.548	0.389	0.895	0.565***	0.624***	**0.740**	
PROTOOL	0.886	0.564	0.251	0.887	-0.471***	-0.476***	-0.501***	**0.751**

Summary

So, every construct had a Cronbach's Alpha better than 0.70 (Hair,2014). Therefore, the summarised table shows that there are no validity concerns here.

Table 4.15a: Factor Loadings, CR, AVE, and Sqr. AVE (After travel)

Predictor	Outcome	Std Beta	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
UGC	UGC12	0.677	0.933	0.5	0.292	0.934
	UGC10	.735 ***				
	UGC5	.736 ***				
	UGC8	.727 ***				
	UGC4	.735 ***				
	UGC3	.691 ***				
	UGC1	.694 ***				
	UGC11	.691 ***				
	UGC2	.705 ***				
	UGC9	.702 ***				
	UGC7	.711 ***				
	UGC14	.708 ***				
	UGC6	.693 ***				
	UGC13	.696 ***				
TRVLPLN	TRVLPLN7	0.797	0.927	0.587	0.428	0.928
	TRVLPLN2	.778 ***				
	TRVLPLN6	.746 ***				
	TRVLPLN4	.744 ***				
	TRVLPLN8	.767 ***				
	TRVLPLN5	.763 ***				

	TRVLPLN3	.752 ***				
	TRVLPLN9	.753 ***				
	TRVLPLN1	.793 ***				
TRVLINT	TRVLINT3	0.751	0.902	0.568	0.285	0.903
	TRVLINT5	.723 ***				
	TRVLINT7	.793 ***				
	TRVLINT6	.763 ***				
	TRVLINT4	.761 ***				
	TRVLINT2	.762 ***				
	TRVLINT1	.720 ***				
PROTOOL	PROTOOL1	0.755	0.865	0.517	0.428	0.866
	PROTOOL5	.712 ***				
	PROTOOL6	.731 ***				
	PROTOOL4	.687 ***				
	PROTOOL2	.712 ***				
	PROTOOL3	.715 ***				

Summary:

In Table 4.15a: The items loading ranged from 0. 677 to 0.797 (> 0.60) and the AVEs for all constructs were between 0.50 and 0.587 (> 0.50). Therefore, the instrument's convergent validity was unaffected. MaxR (H) and the mean shared values (MSV) met the threshold requirements.

As a result, convergent validity can be shown in the comparison of Model 1 (Before Travel) and Model 2 (After Travel). The difference between the X2 values of Models 1 and 2 is significant to prove convergent validity.

Table 4.15b: Validity Analysis (After travel)

	CR	**AVE**	**MSV**	**MaxR(H)**	**UGC**	**TRVLPLN**	**TRVLINT**	**PROTOOL**
UGC	0.933	0.500	0.292	0.934	**0.707**			
TRVLPLN	0.927	0.587	0.428	0.928	0.417***	**0.766**		
TRVLINT	0.902	0.568	0.285	0.903	0.378***	0.533***	**0.754**	
PROTOOL	0.865	0.517	0.428	0.866	-0.541***	-0.655***	-0.534***	**0.719**

Summary

So, every construct had a Cronbach's Alpha better than 0.70 (Hair,2014). Therefore, the summarised above table shows that there are no validity concerns here.

4.5.1. Construct Discriminant Validity

Table 4.16a: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Before Travel)

	UGC	TRVLPLN	TRVLINT	PROTOOL
UGC				
TRVLPLN	0.627			
TRVLINT	0.565	0.623		
PROTOOL	0.472	0.475	0.501	

Summary

The study's constructs' HTMT ratios ranged from 0.472 to 0.627 (or 0.85 to 0.85, see (table 4.16.a). That further supported the discriminant validity.

Table 4.16b: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (After Travel)

	UGC	TRVLPLN	TRVLINT	PROTOOL
UGC				
TRVLPLN	0.419			
TRVLINT	0.377	0.535		
PROTOOL	0.536	0.655	0.534	

Summary

The study's constructs' HTMT ratios ranged from 0.419 to 0.655 (or 0.85 to 0.85, see table 4.16.b). That further supported the discriminant validity.

Therefore, in the case of Pre-trip and Post-trip, it confirmed the presence of an HTMT ratio less than 0.85 establishing discriminant validity.

4.5.2. Structural model goodness of fit

In the structural equation modeling literature, a two-stage process consisting of a measurement model and a structural model is most typically employed to judge the accuracy of the conceptual model. To confirm the validity of the posited relationship, the goodness of fit of the structural model was also assessed.

The goodness of a model's fit can be evaluated using a variety of model fit indices, such as the Chi-Square (2), Relative Chi-Square (2/df), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI).

Table 4.17a: Model Fit Indices (Before Travel)

	Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	CMIN	729.834	--	--
DF	DF	588.000	--	--
Relative Chi-Square (χ2/df) (CMIN/DF)	CMIN/DF	1.421	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	CFI	0.986	>0.95	Excellent
Square Root Mean Residual (SRMR)	SRMR	0.031	<0.08	Excellent
Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA)	RMSEA	0.023	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	PClose	1000	>0.05	Excellent
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	NFI	0. 933	>0. 90	Excellent
TLI	TLI	0. 986	>0. 90	Excellent

Summary

Table 14a lists the model goodness-of-fit scores. The results for the model fit indices (See Table 4.17a) were determined to be within the acceptable ranges, with excellent model fit values being CF1 = 0.986, NFI = 0.986, and TLI = 0.986. In line with the suggested criteria of other investigations, RMSEA = 0.023 and SRMR = 0.031 also showed high model fitness ((Hair, 2014). All fit indices meet the threshold requirements. As a result, the structural model appears to have the proper fit and may be utilized for inferential statistics going forward.

Table 4.17b: Model Fit Indices (After Travel)

	Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	CMIN	775.337	--	--
DF	DF	588.000	--	--
Relative Chi-Square (χ2/df) (CMIN/DF)	CMIN/DF	1.319	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	CFI	0.979	>0.95	Excellent
Square Root Mean Residual (SRMR)	SRMR	0.034	<0.08	Excellent
Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA)	RMSEA	0.026	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	PClose	0.621	>0.05	Excellent
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	NFI	0. 920	>0. 90	Excellent
TLI	TLI	0. 978	>0. 90	Excellent

Indicators of the model's quality of fit are shown in table 4.17b. The values for the model fit indices fell within the acceptable ranges, with good model fit values being CF1 = 0.979, NFI = 0.920, and TLI = 0.978. Similar to this, according to the suggested criteria of other studies, RMSEA = 0.026 and SRMR = 0.034 showed high model fitness (Hair, 2014). All fit indices meet the threshold requirements.

As a result, the structural model for the before travel and after travel periods seems to fit well and may be applied to inferential statistics in further study.

4.5.3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Table 4.18a: Descriptive statistics and Correlation analysis (Before travel)

	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	UGC	TRVLPLN	TRVLINT	PROTOOL
UGC	3.58	0.962	-0.928	-0.163	**0.763**			
TRVLPLN	3.44	1.014	-0.721	-0.611	0.629***	**0.768**		
TRVLINT	3.42	0.981	-0.673	-0.592	0.565***	0.624***	**0.74**	
PROTOOL	3.56	0.981	-0.893	-0.240	-0.471***	-0.476***	-0.501***	**0.751**

To examine the relationship between the variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were obtained. Table 4.18a presents the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis findings. According to the descriptive data, the average responder score for UGC is 3.58 (Std Dev = 0. 962). TRVLPLN's average response is 3.44 (Standard Deviation = 1.014). The mean value of TRVLINT is 3.42, and the standard deviation is 0.981. The overall average for PROTOOL responses is 3.56 (Std Dev = 0.981).

UGC and TRVLPLN had a positive and substantial connection (r = 0.629, p 0.001). According to the correlation study, UGC has substantial positive links with TRVLINT (r = 0.565, p 0.001) but negative relationships with PROTOOL (r = -0.471, p 0.001). TRVLPLN showed a substantial correlation with TRVLINT (r = 0.624, p 0.001) and PROTOOL (r = -0.476, p 0.001).

Additionally, there was a strong correlation between TRVLINT and PROTOOL (r = -0.501, p 0.001). The independent variables, in particular, exhibit weak to moderate correlations with the explanatory factors. The lack of multi-collinearity among the independent variables was thus established. The diagonal values represent AVE's square root.

The square root of AVE values being bigger than correlations across variables suggests that there is no problem with the discriminant validity of the instruments as well. Table 4.18a lists the skewness and kurtosis results. Skewness readings ranged from lowest -0.928 to high -0.673 and were within the accepted limits. On the other hand, Kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of normalcy, from -0.611 to -0.163. It demonstrated that the data was dispersed as expected.

Table 4.18b: Descriptive statistics and Correlation analysis (After Travel)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	UGC	TRVLPLN	TRVLINT	PROTOOL
UGC	3.51	0.986	-0.901	-0.262	**0.707**			
TRVLPLN	3.47	1.018	-0.793	-0.535	0.417***	**0.766**		
TRVLINT	3.59	1.002	-0.865	-0.343	0.378***	0.533***	**0.754**	
PROTOOL	2.50	0.981	0.759	-0.491	-0.541***	-0.655***	-0.534***	**0.719**

To examine the relationship between the variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were obtained. Table 4.18b presents the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis findings.

According to the descriptive data, respondents gave a UGC average score of 3.51 (Std Dev = 0.986). TRVLPLN receives an average response of 3.47 (Std Dev = 1.018). The mean value of TRVLINT is 3.59, and the standard deviation is 1.002. The average PROTOOL answer score is 2.50 (standard deviation: 0.981). UGC and TRVLPLN had a positive and substantial connection (r = 0.417, p 0.001). According to the correlation study, UGC has substantial positive links with TRVLINT (r = 0.378, p 0.001) but negative relationships with PROTOOL (r = -0.541, p 0.001). There was a strong correlation between TRVLPLN and TRVLINT (r = 0.533, p 0.001) and PROTOOL (r = -0.655, p 0.001).

Additionally, there was a strong correlation between travel intention (TRVLINT) and promotional tool (PROTOOL) (r = -0.534, p 0.001). Table 4.18b lists the skewness and kurtosis results. Skewness readings fell within the acceptable limits, ranging from -0.901 to 0.759. On the other hand, Kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of normalcy, from -0.535 to -0.262. It demonstrated that the data was dispersed as expected.

4.5.4 Multivariate analysis and Hypothesis Testing

To further analyse the research model, structural equation modelling was applied. Through the use of multiple regression analysis, the study's hypotheses were further evaluated. While TRVLPLN is a dependent variable, UGC is an explanatory variable. In this study, PROTOOL is a moderating factor, while TRVLINT acts as a mediator. The findings of multiple regression and moderation using AMOS and SPSS Hayes process macros are discussed in the following sections.

O2: To Examine the Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions'. Path Analysis is adopted.

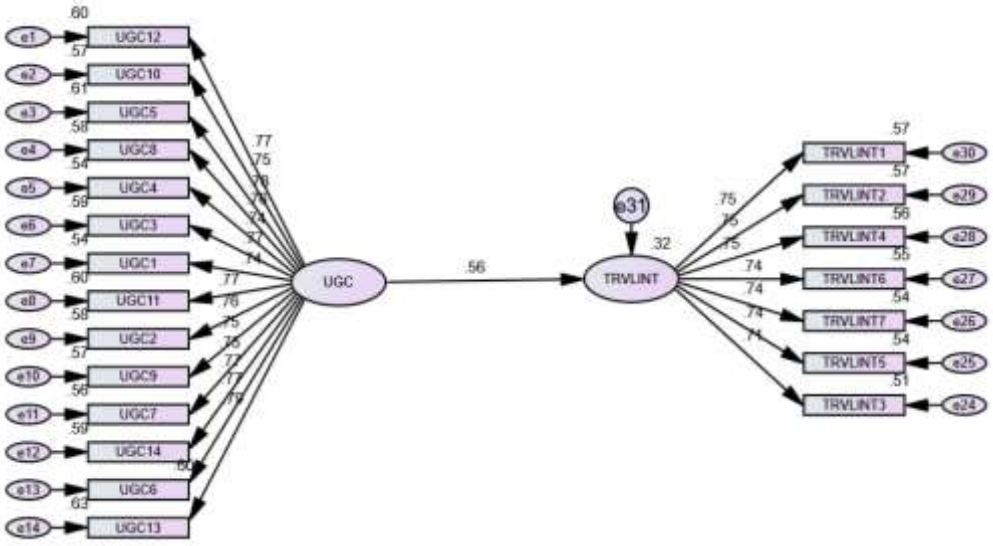


Figure 4.2a: Direct Effect of UGC on TRVLINT (Before Travel)

Table 4.19a: Regression Results (Before Travel)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	**R-Square**
TRVLINT	<---	UGC	.56	.048	10.332	***	0.32

Summary

H_3: UGC has a positive impact on travel intentions (Before Travel).

UGC influences travel intention before travel in a favourable and significant way. The direct impact of UGC on TRVLINT is investigated in the first SEM model (figure 4.2a).

According to the data shown in table 5a, UGC significantly (= 0.56, 0.01) positively influences TRVLINT. This model's R-square was 0.32. This demonstrates that UGC accounts for 32% of the variation in TRVLINT. As a result, accept the H3.

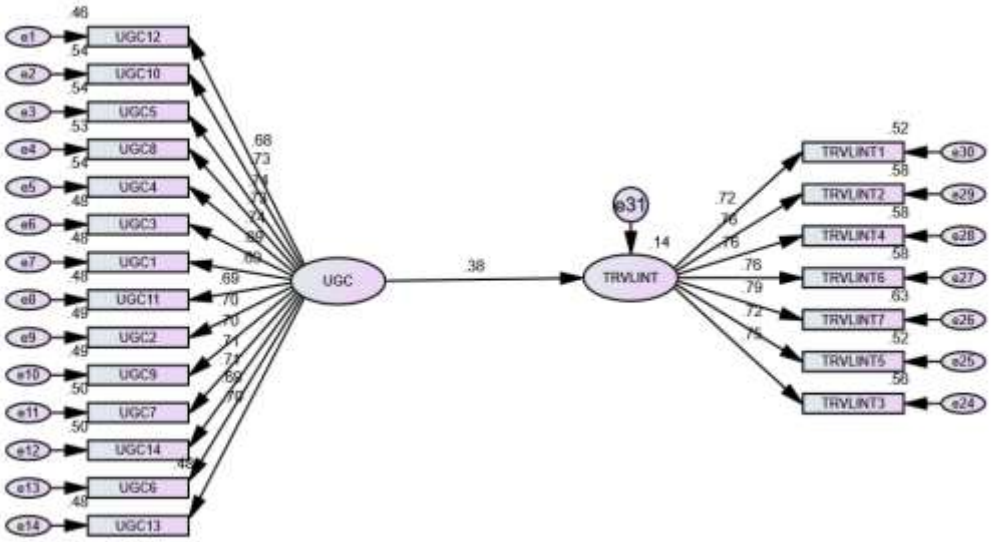


Figure 4.2b: Direct Effect of UGC on TRVLINT (After Travel)

Table 4.19b: Regression Results (After Travel)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R-Square
TRVLINT	<---	UGC	.38	.061	7.032	***	0.14

Summary

H_3: UGC has a positive impact on travel intentions (After Travel).

UGC has a favourable and substantial effect on future travel intentions, according to hypothesis 3 also. The direct impact of UGC on TRVLINT is investigated in the first SEM model (figure 4.2b).

According to table 4.19b, UGC significantly (= 0.38, 0.01) positively influences TRVLINT. This model's R-square was 0.14. This demonstrates that UGC accounts for 14% of the variation in TRVLINT.

As a result, accept the H_3. Further, from the above interpretations, the UGC impact on travel intentions before the travel is considerably higher than the after the travel scenario.

To examine the impact of UGC on Travel Plan – path Analysis is adopted

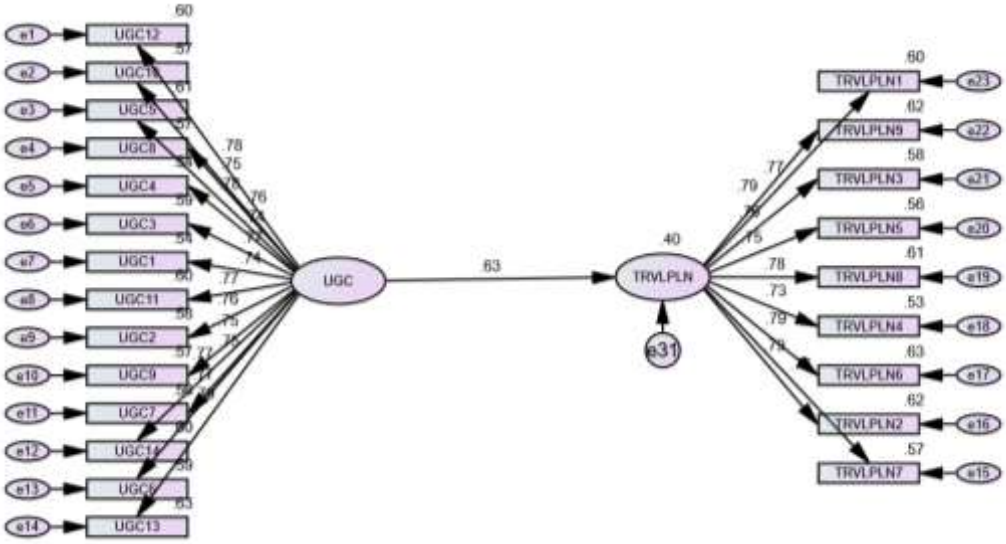


Figure 4.3a: Direct Effect of UGC on TRVLPLN (Before Travel)

. Table 4.20*a*: SEM Model 2 without PA (Before Travel)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R-Square
TRVLPLN	<---	UGC	.63	.052	11.918	***	0.40

Summary

H_4: UGC has a positive effect on travel plans

The direct impact of UGC on TRVLPLN is investigated in the first SEM model (figure 4.20a). The reported results in table 4.20a indicated that UGC has significant ($\beta = 0.623$, $p < 0.01$) positive influence on TRVLPLN in table 4.20a. UGC has a positive effect on travel plans before travel. This accepted the H_4.

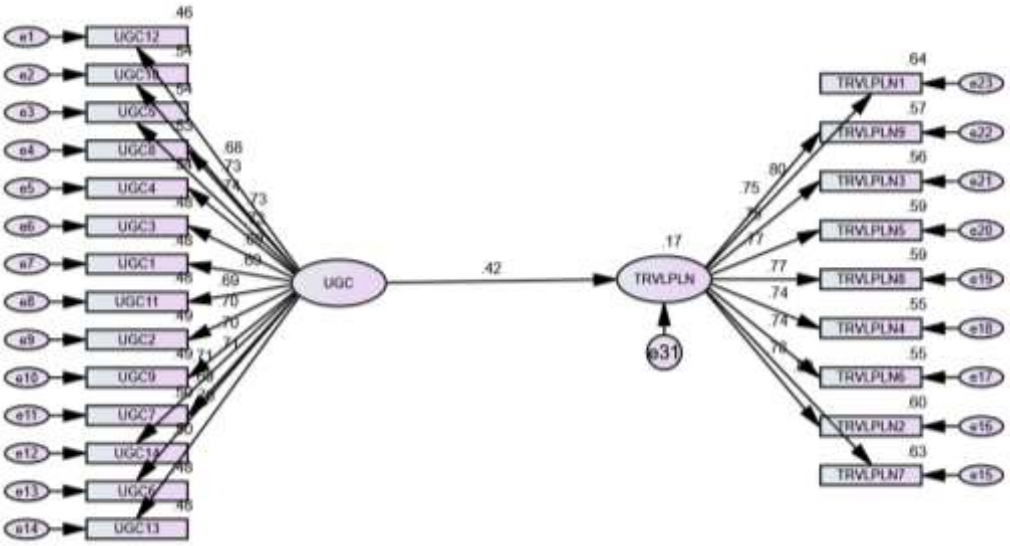


Figure 4.4b: Direct Effect of UGC on TRVLPLN (After Travel)

Table 4.20b: SEM Model 2 without PA (After Travel)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R-Square
TRVLPLN	<---	UGC	.42	.069	7.876	***	0.17

Summary

H_4: UGC has a positive effect on travel plans

The direct impact of UGC on TRVLPLN is investigated in the first SEM model (figure 4.4b). According to the provided results in table 4.20b, UGC significantly (= 0.42, 0.01) positively influences TRVLPLN. UGC has a positive effect on travel plans after travel. Therefore, H_4 is accepted. This model's R-square was 0.40. This demonstrates that UGC accounts for 40% of the variation in TRVLPLN in the pre-trip situation. This model's R-square was 0.17. This demonstrates that UGC accounts for 17% of the variation in TRVLPLN in the post-trip scenario. Thus, UGC affects travel plans far more favourably before a trip than after.

O3: To examine the moderating effect of promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention. Moderation Analysis is applied.

The moderation Effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intention before travel is shown below (Before and After Travel). The moderating role of PROTOOL between UGC and TRVLINT is examined using Hayes process model 1 in SPSS. The results are reported in table 4.21a and 4.21b.

Table 4.21a: Moderation Effect of PROTOOL between UGC and TRVLINT (Before Travel)

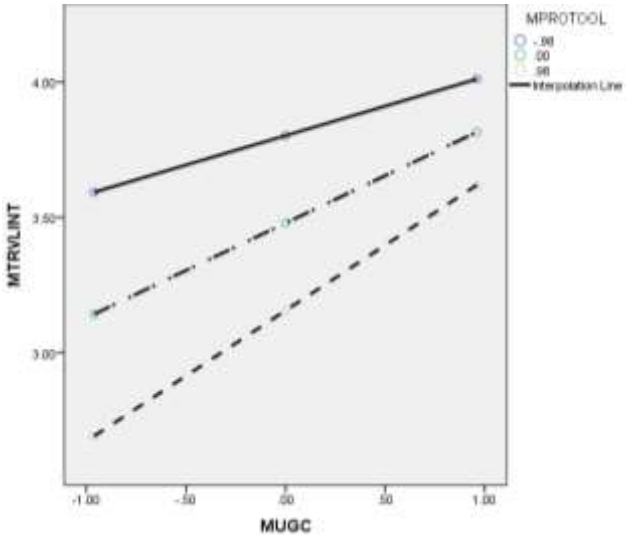
	Coeff	SE	T-value	P-value	R-Square	
Constant	3.479	0.043	81.010	0.0000	R-sq	0.3408
MUGC	0.350	0.049	7.150	0.0000		
MPROTOOL	-0.329	0.048	-6.911	0.0000	R2-chng	0.0096
MUGCxMPROTOOL	0.135	0.053	2.575	0.0103		

Summary

H_5: There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intentions (Before Travel).

There is a significant moderation Effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intention before travel.

Integrating PROTOOL as a moderator showed that UGC has a favourable and substantial (= 0.350, 0.01) influence on TRVLINT. A negative and substantial PROTOOL direct effect on TRVLINT is (= -0.329, 0.01). (= 0.135, 0.05) The moderation relationship measure in terms of the interaction term (UGCxPROTOOL) has a favourable and substantial impact on TRVLINT. The whole model has an R-square of 0.341. PROTOOL's moderating influence made the change in the R-square of 0.0096 significant.



Graph 10a: Moderation Effect of PROTOOL between UGC and TRVLINT

This also confirms that PROTOOL moderates the relationship between UGC and PROTOOL. Moderation graph 10a represents similar findings.

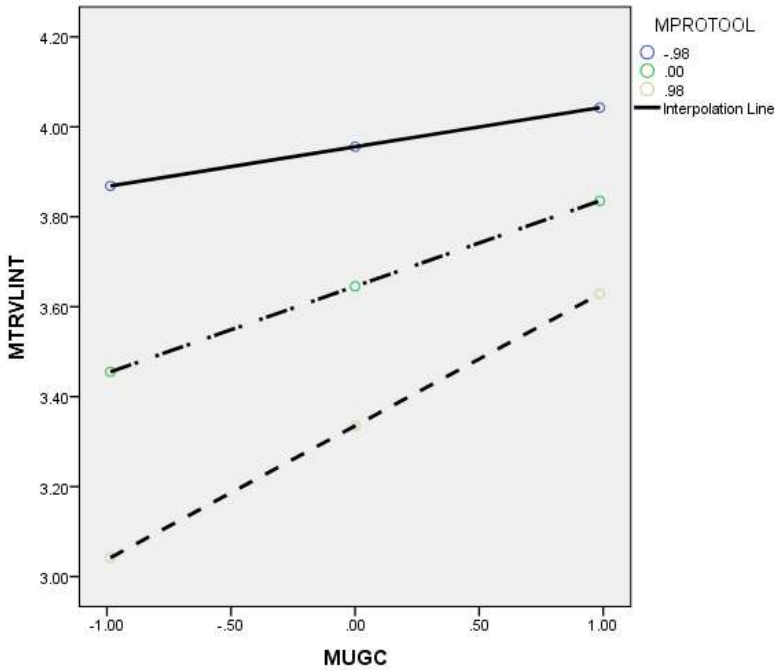
Table 4.21b: Moderation Effect of PROTOOL between UGC and TRVLINT (After Travel)

	Coeff	SE	T-value	P-value	R-Square	
Constant	3.645	0.046	79.792	0.0000	R-sq	0.275
MUGC	0.193	0.054	3.585	0.0004		
MPROTOOL	-0.316	0.050	-6.325	0.0000	R2-chng	0.0106
MUGCxMPROTOOL	0.107	0.041	2.587	0.01		

Summary

H_5: There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intentions (After travel).

The results indicated that UGC has a positive and significant ($\beta = 0.193$, $p < 0.01$) impact on TRVLINT by incorporating PROTOOL as a moderator. The PROTOOL direct influence ($\beta = -0.316$, $p < 0.01$) on TRVLINT is negative and significant. The moderation relationship measure in term of interaction term (UGCxPROTOOL) has positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.107$, $p < 0.05$) on TRVLINT. The R-square of the overall model is 0.275. The change in R-square 0.0106 was significant due to moderating effect of PROTOOL.



Graph 20b: Moderation Effect of PROTOOL between UGC and TRVLINT

This also confirms that PROTOOL moderates the relationship between UGC and PROTOOL. Moderation graph 10b represents similar findings.

Summary

Using SPSS's Hayes process model 1, the moderating effect of PROTOOL between UGC and TRVLINT is investigated. The findings are presented in Table 21. and 21. b, indicate that the moderation relationship measure, which considers the interaction between UGC and PROTOOL, has a more favourable and significant impact on TRVLINT before a trip than after one. Therefore, $H_{5\ is}$ accepted.

O4: To examine the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan – Mediation Analysis is adapted.

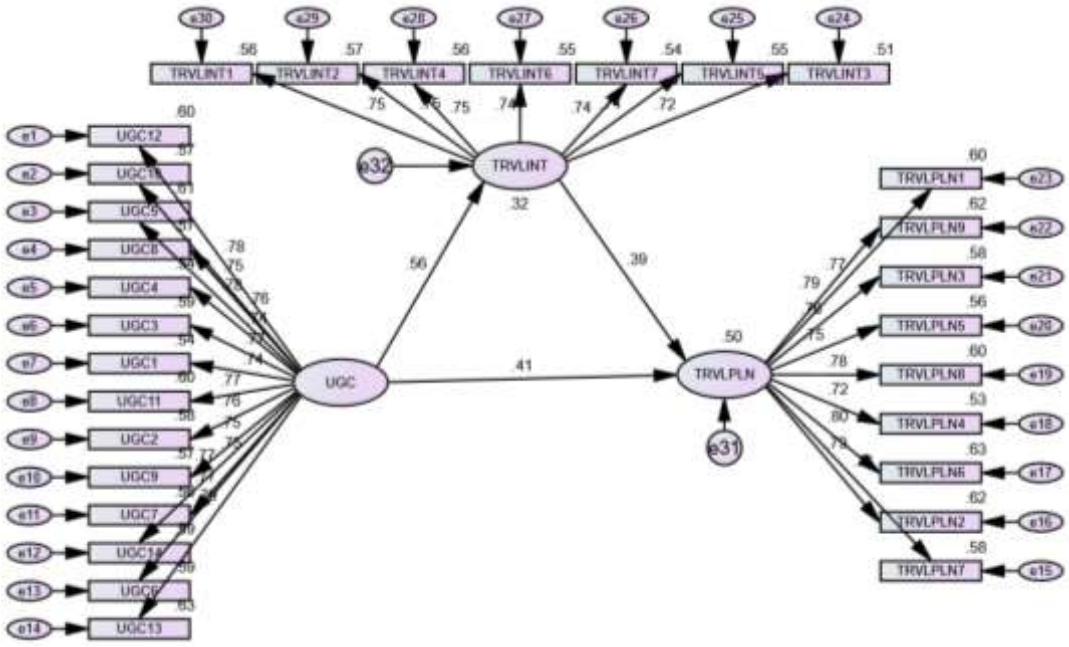


Figure 4.4a: Mediating effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN (Before Travel)

The second SEM model (figure 4) shows the mediation effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN.

Table 4.22a: Mediating effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN (Before Travel)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R-Square
TRVLINT	<---	UGC	.56	.048	10.361	***	**0.32**
TRVLPLN	<---	UGC	.40	.051	7.886	***	
TRVLPLN	<---	TRVLINT	.41	.060	7.349	***	**0.50**

The results from table 4.22a indicated that UGC positively influenced (β = 0.569, $p < 0.01$) the TRVLINT. TRVLINT have direct positive significant (β = 0.40, $p < 0.01$) effect on TRVLPLN. UGC have direct effect positive and significant (β = 0.41, $p < 0.01$) on TRVLPLN. The R-square of this model is 0.50. By incorporating TRVLINT as a mediator, R-square improves.

Table 4.22a. User-defined estimands: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
UGC→TRVINT→TRVLPLN	.221	.143	.311	.001

Summary

H_6: Travel intention mediates the relationship between UGC and travel plan (Before Travel)

The mediation effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN was examined using Hayes process macro. The indirect effect UGC to TRVLINT to TRVLPLN was significant (β = 0.22, $p < 0.01$). It confirmed the mediating role of TRVLINT. Thus, H_6 is accepted. There is partial mediation since UGC has a significant direct effect on TRVLPLN.

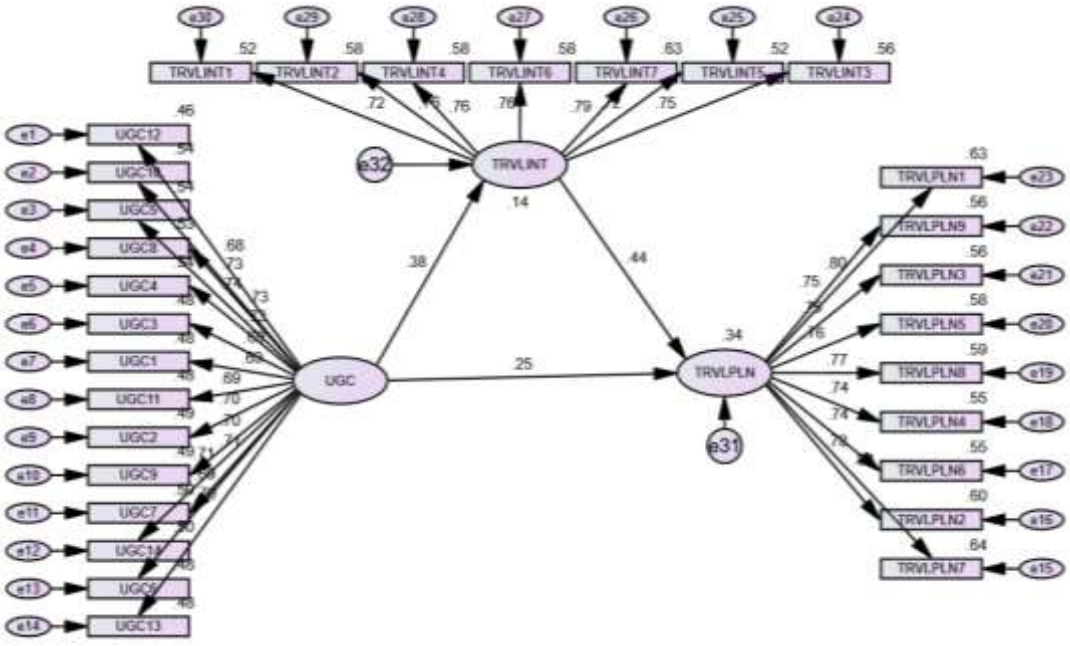


Figure 5.4b: Mediating effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN (After Travel)

The second SEM model (figure 4) shows the mediation effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN.

Table 4.22b Mediating effect of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN (After Travel)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R-Square
TRVLINT	<---	UGC	.38	.061	7.035	***	**0.14**
TRVLPLN	<---	UGC	.25	.063	5.158	***	
TRVLPLN	<---	TRVLINT	.44	.060	8.340	***	**0.34**

Summary

H_6: Travel intention mediates the relationship between UGC and travel plan (After Travel)

The results from Table 4.22b indicated that UGC positively influenced (β = 0.38, $p < 0.01$) the TRVLINT. TRVLINT have direct positive significant ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$) effect on TRVLPLN. UGC have direct effect positive and significant ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$) on TRVLPLN. The R-square of this model is 0.34. By incorporating TRVLINT as a mediator, R-square improves significantly, showing a partial mediation of travel intention between UGC and travel plan in a post-trip stage.

Table 4.22b User-defined estimands: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
UGC→TRVINT→TRVLPLN	.215	.136	.305	.001

Summary:

Using a Hayes process macro, the mediation impact of TRVLINT between UGC and TRVLPLN was investigated. UGC had a substantial indirect influence on TRVLINT and TRVLPLN (p = 0.215, p 0.01). It validated TRVLINT's mediating function. 6b can be considered true. There is some partial mediation since UGC significantly affects TRVLPLN directly. Thus, H_6 is accepted.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings, hypotheses, conclusions, and recommendations. The conclusions of the quantitative analysis were given in this chapter. The outcomes are first explained. The key findings of this research study are summarised in the first section, followed by a description of the outcomes of the hypothesis tests. Then, based on the results, each hypothesis is expanded, and depending on the evidence found in earlier literature, each hypothesis is either supported or refuted. The second section gives detail regarding conclusions grounded on the key findings of the study, and different recommendations are offered to different parties. Then, the section is concluded by drawing inferences. Finally, the outcomes are summarised. Furthermore, it also includes directions for future research in the field to help other researchers explore and investigate further and further.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings and Discussion

This study's stated objectives were to examine how user-generated content (UGC) influenced travellers' travel intentions and the role that promotional tools played as an intermediate. Additionally, the mediating role of travel intention in influencing both UGC and travel plans is examined.

The study also examined the associations between age and gender in the browsing behaviour of the UGC. All the postulated six hypotheses were accepted. The results have shown a significant favourable influence of UGC on travel intention and travel plans before and after the travel. Besides, the travel intention is found to mediate between the UGC and the travel plan before and after travel.

Moreover, a significant interaction between the UGC and the promotional tool positively influenced travel intention. Furthermore, this signified the promotional tool moderating the relationship between the UGC and the travel intention before and after the travel. Furthermore, significant differences were observed with different age groups and gender groups in the browsing pattern of the UGC.

The Objectives for the Study are: -

Objective 1: To examine if gender and age influence the way user-generated content is browsed.

Objective 2: To examine the Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions.

Objective 3: To examine the moderating effect of Promoting Tool between UGC and Travel Intention.

Objective 4: To examine the mediating effect of travel intention between UGC and Travel Plan

5.2.1. Type of UGC used and purpose of Usage of UGC at Different Stages of Travel

The research results in this study show that Facebook is the most popular social media site used by respondents to share their travel experiences, photos, reviews, etc., with others, followed by WhatsApp, Instagram, and travel social sites. This implies that social media sites that do not focus primarily on travel sites like Trip Advisor, Make My Trip, etc., are used more by travellers for sharing their travel experiences, photos, etc.; in contrast, to travel UGC sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.

UGC focuses on means for interacting with travellers (Zeng, 2014). The research result also indicates prospective traveller's sense that reviews on UGC are a proper way to evaluate substitutes and lessen risk regarding traveling to a new destination.

The result concludes that User-generated content (UGC) usage on tourist behaviour in the pre-and post-travel stages has been empirically investigated, despite the possibility that UGC might enhance the tourist experience and eventually result in the desired trip intention and plan (Xu, 2022). By mining and adapting from social media, where user-generated content creators' purchase intent was represented, UGC may also target potential customers. Travellers rely on the online reviews from UGC posted by other travellers who have already stayed at the destination and provide further help on the impact of gender and age in online travel reviews (Assaker, 2020).

5.2.2 Demographic Characteristics and Impact of UGC on Respondent Age

Individuals in young adulthood are more attracted to using UGC for traveling purposes. According to the one-way ANOVA results, the influence of UGC on vacation planning varies significantly according to the age group.

In the study it was found that user-generated content has higher average values in higher age groups. Regarding pre-trip, the age categories of 18 to 30 and 30 to 40 significantly differ from those of 40 to 50 and above 50, respectively. In post-trip analysis, it was discovered that user-generated content has greater average values in older age groups.

5.2.3. Demographic Characteristics and Impact of UGC on Gender

Regarding gender, it was found that male tourists are more active over UGC and play an important role in travel decisions than females. The result of T- test it was revealed that the difference is significant. The males' average responses were higher than the females for the data collected before the travel.

The findings revealed in after travel those males (Mean = 3.525, Std. Dev = 0.973) have no difference about user generated contents UGS as compared to females (Mean = 3.453, Std. Dev = 1.021). The males' average responses were almost no different from the females for the data collected after the travel. Since the Leven Statistics is significant, the equal variance was not assumed.

H_1: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the gender groups

The findings suggest that gender; it was found that male tourists are more active over UGC and play an important role in travel decisions than females. The result of T-test it was revealed that the difference is significant. The males' average responses were higher than the females for the data collected before the travel.

Travelers commonly depend on reviews posted online by other visitors, which increases the impact of gender and age in travel reviews. UGC, like Instagram, is a resource for travel information and inspiration. By gender, there were differences in Instagram usage and information search behaviour. UGC's most valuable and trustworthy source is a confidante (Assaker, 2020).

The findings revealed post-trip that males are more active over UGC. The males' average responses were almost no different from the females for the data collected after the travel. Since the Leven Statistics is significant, the equal variance was not assumed. As a result, there is a sizable mean difference between the travellers' gender groups. **H_1** is therefore approved.

H_2: There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups

According to the one-way ANOVA results based on the study, the influence of UGC on vacation planning varies significantly according to the age group. It found that user-generated content has higher average values in higher age groups. In the case of pre-trip, the age groups of 18 to 30 years and 30 to 40 years differ considerably from 40 to 50 years and individuals above 50 years, respectively.

It is found that user-generated content has higher average values in higher age groups post-trip. The finding is in line with the study's findings, which suggested that early adults are particularly drawn to utilizing UGC for travel-related purposes. The Internet uses user-generated content from websites and social network sites as a promotion plan (Assaker, 2020). Therefore, **H_2** is accepted.

H_3: UGC has a positive impact on travel intentions

The findings suggest that the UGC significantly and positively affects travel intention. The user-generated content impacts the revisit intention of the travellers after travel and could also give appropriate signs to other fellow beings aspiring to visit such places.

It can be understood that UGC also encourages other visitors to neglect or visit places by creating powerful perceptions about the posted places. The finding is in line with the study's findings, which suggested that the emotional UGC is shown to have a more significant impact on the attachment behaviour of tourists, increasing their intention to revisit. (Xu H, 2021). The UGC has not only factual information (cognitive content) about places but also contains emotional content when the travellers either express what they felt or share their experiences. This is also supported by the research (Amaral, 2014), which revealed that UGC effectively shapes the cognitive picture of the destination's image. These pieces of evidence from the literature support the present research findings.

Moreover, research conducted by Kim and Stepchenkova (2015) denoted that the UGC posted about a tourist place in Russia has created a negative perception that restricted travellers from visiting the spot. In this case, the UGC after travel has affected the behavioural intentions of the travellers. (Stepchenkova, 2015) Also, the research result follows the findings of Alcazar et al. (2014), which had shown that the UGC affected the tourists' behavioural intentions.

From the research conducted to investigate the attractiveness of Instagram for generation Y to share their visual word after travel, Lindgren (2021) found that UGC played a significant role in developing a positive perception of the destination and enhanced the visiting intentions. (Alcazar, 2014) Therefore, it is visible that the perceptions of the UGC and the intentions to travel go hand in hand. (Nassar, 2015)
The direct impact of UGC on travel intention is examined.

The results indicated that UGC significantly positively impacts travel intention. Further, from the above interpretations, the UGC impact on travel intentions before the travel is considerably higher than the after-travel scenario. Hence, the prevalence of a positive association between the UGC and travel intention is witnessed. Thus, **H_3** is confirmed.

H_4: UGC has a positive effect on travel plans

The result of the study identifies a significant favourable influence of UGC on the travel plan. It could be understood that travellers would start planning their travel if they find some favourable opinions shared by past travellers on social media, customer review sites, travel agency sites, or travel blogs.

This result follows the findings of Ukpabi and Karjaluoto (2018), which revealed that the extent to which the user finds the travel data useful shapes travel planning and denoted that a positive UGC increases the chances of planning for a visit. They also disclosed that 80 percent of the tourists plan a trip only based on UGC, and 50 percent of the tourists who searched for UGC drop the travel plan if they do not find any reviews about the concerned place. This evidence explains how the pre-visitor perspectives have affected travel plans (Ukpabi, 2018).

Thus, UGC is found imperative in making travel plans nowadays. The results of the mean scores of the UGC aids' measuring scales and items have demonstrated the effect on decisions about travel. The survey's overall high mean score justifies the respondents' favourable opinions on social media on user-generated content and travel information. They view this information as valuable and beneficial for organising their travels in the pre-trip phase. It was also possible to conclude from the findings that deciding based on the experiences of individuals who have already visited the area would lessen the danger for first-time travellers.

Consequently, if the users find pleasant views of a particular place of choice, this would strengthen his/her attitude in visiting the place, eventually leading the person towards making a travel plan. This is consistent with the views of Singh and Srivastava (2019), which stated that potential visitors find UGC as a risk-reducing phenomenon that increases the tourists' confidence and offers them projected expectations (Singh, 2019).

Usually, travellers tend to collect and review appropriate information about the tourist place ahead of the travel decisions. From a study conducted to analyse the role of UGC in the travel planning of tourists, Cox et al. (2009) pointed out that tourists consider UGC as one of the informational sources than seeking it as the only source during the data searching phase of the travel plan (Cox & Carmine & Buultjens, 2009). However, it can be understood that UGC is instrumental in driving the travel plan. Hence, the positive association between UGC and travel plans is apparent. Thus, **H_4** is confirmed.

H_5: There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intentions

Studying the moderating effect of promotional tools on UGC and travel intention reveals that pre-trip rather than post-trip travel intention is more positively and significantly influenced by the moderating association measure between UGC and promotional tools.

Tourism destinations are promoted through various UGC platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These are common as tourists have become content creators' influencers and promote destinations. (Kumar, 2022). The results indicate the

moderation effect of promotional tools between UGC and travel intention before travel, along with its significance. Hence **H_5** is accepted.

H_6: Travel intention mediates the relationship between UGC and travel plan

From H_3 and H_4, it is evident that UGC has a significant positive influence on travel intention and travel plans. The present study also shows that travel intention has a significant positive correlation with a travel plan. Although UGC has a direct positive relationship with travel plans, the results indicate that the introduction of travel intention between UGC and travel plans has increased its significance.

Additionally, user-generated content impacts the mediating effect of realistic expectations, destination circumstances, and attitudes about the location. The insinuations show the inevitability of practical destination marketing communication techniques. The research helps to understand better how tourists react to actual user-generated material.

Furthermore, UGC significantly influences travel intention, and intention to travel directly impacts the plan to travel. Consequently, the travel intention partially mediates between UGC and the travel plan. Therefore, the given **H_6** is accepted.

Thus, all the hypotheses are accepted depicted in the table below.

Table 5.1 Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	Results
H_1	There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the gender groups	Supported
H_2	There is a significant mean difference in browsing UGC among the age groups	Supported
H_3	UGC has a positive impact on travel intention	Supported
H_4	UGC has a positive effect on travel plans	Supported
H_5	There is a significant moderation effect of the promotional tool between UGC and travel intention.	Supported
H_6	Travel intention mediates relationship between UGC and travel plan	Supported

5.3. Conclusions

A summary of the conclusions drawn from the study's findings is given in this section. The four primary objectives were the sole focus of the discussions. All six hypotheses were accepted, and many pieces of literature supported them. UGC can influence the pre-travel and post-travel choices of tourists.

UGC impact on travel intentions before the trip is much high than the post-trip scenario. Travelers feel that UGC has a bearing when making travel decisions, consequently impacting travel intentions, so UGC has become added path in which travellers can use and share vibrant travel information.

In this digital era, data generated by users add more value to the pursuers. In this respect, the content created by the travels would influence the decisions about other people's travel plans. Travel-related content about visited places posted after the travel with pictures, videos, and text is of immense use for making travel choices. Because these photos can stimulate cognitive formation, they would create a destination image. Consequently, a positive image enhances travel intentions, and a negative image deteriorates travel intentions. Therefore, communicating an exciting and positive vibe is necessary for stimulating the visiting intentions.

The study reveals that UGC sites are considered a supportive and dependable basis for gathering travel information. It shows that interaction with travelers through the UGC platform has been recognized as a reliable source in travel planning in recent years. UGC as a Promotional tool is influential in creating travel intention.

Furthermore, the study has also attempted to compare the online review travel decision and visitors' experiences. The results demonstrated that travellers agreed that their experience matched the online reviews on social media sites. Conclusively, it can be thus comprehended that user-generated contents on social sites provide reliable information to prospective travelers, help them make better choices, and reduce the risk and uncertainties of making wrong choices regarding travel. UGC is these days serving as a very playful and easy way to decide one's travel planning.

5.4. Scope For Future Research

This research study is beneficial to study the impact of UGC on traveller's behaviour and the decision-making process relating to travel procurement. So, this study examines the role played by UGC in persuading decision-making during the pre-travel and post-travel phases within the tourism sector. Future research may examine the impact at all stages of the trip process, including the pre-, during-, and post-travel phases.

As this study only uses a quantitative approach to evaluate the influence of UGC on travellers' behaviour, future research may emphasize case studies focusing on the qualitative argument over the impact of UGC on tourist behaviour. This study shed light on how travellers have benefited from user-generated content on social media. However, there is still room to demonstrate to companies the future financial advantages of social media.

Future studies might examine how DMOs and travel agencies utilize social media as a marketing tool and how they use user-generated material (UGC). Moreover, this research must be ongoing because fast development in web 4.0 platforms and high use of mobile technology among travellers with easy internet access may increase their user-generated content usage for travel purposes with more posts, reviews, comments, blogs, and content sharing.

5.5. Recommendation to travellers

Research results showed that UGC is the most reliable source online to gather information relating to travel; it can be said that travellers should use UGC to enquire about particular destinations from the UGC sites to get consistent information before planning any trip.

UGC is a very operative and easy way to decide on travel planning. UGC users are requested to post impartial and authentic reviews. UGC is the most reliable source, whether using an offline technique or an online one; thus, it is encouraged that travellers use social media to question their social circle on social media sites about specific areas in order to acquire trustworthy information before planning any trip. They should share their travel understanding without biases and avoid putting fake reviews to benefit anyone; this will help prospective travellers and increase UGC's reliability.

5.6. Recommendation to industry

The travel industry can enhance its reputation through positive UGC by travellers by posting/ uploading and sharing such blogs and reviews on social media sites and their websites. These can be an operative tool that can impact the prospective traveller's decision.

The most popular UGC platforms for sharing travel-related content with consumers are Facebook and Instagram; thus, travel companies should make an effort to develop a significant presence on these platforms.

Accessing tourism-related products and services via these social media platforms might increase company growth by giving travel agencies a unique chance to reach more travellers.

The travel industry can expand its packages, product, and services by spending more time on social media. By analysing comments and reviews posted on UGC travel sites Trip Advisor, Travelocity, etc., travel agencies and tour operators can understand traveller's demands and desires and deliver improved facilities and services to their clients.

Travel companies and tour operators should be highly active on UGC. They will be able to provide information on updates, deals, and discounts by maintaining solid two-way communication with travellers. They may enhance their reputation by creating, uploading, and distributing such blogs, reviews, and other user-generated content (UGC) on social media platforms and their websites, which may be a valuable tool for influencing the decision of future travellers.

5.7 Directions for Future Research

The results of this study help us comprehend how UGC influences travellers' intentions and the decisions they make while making vacation plans. Thus, this study explores the impact of social media on pre-travel decision-making in the tourism sector. Future studies may investigate the impacts at every stage of the travel process, including the pre-, during-, and post-travel phases.

This study must continue because there may be an increase in the quantity of posts, reviews, comments, blogs, and content sharing on social media for travel-related purposes as a result of the rapid development of web 4.0 platforms and the widespread use of mobile technology by people who travel and have internet access.

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APPENDICES

Graphical Abstract Submission Form

Title of the thesis: The Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions: A Pre and Post Analysis of Tourist Behavior with Special Reference to Delhi-NCR Region

Authors name: (scholar, supervisor, co-supervisor (if any), additional name can be added with supervisor's consent)

Name of Scholar: Indrajit Chaudhury Registration Number: 418005552

Program Name: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY In Tourism Management

Name/ UID of Supervisor: Dr. Hafizullah Dar

Summary of graphical abstract:

The impact of UGC on the tourism sector has been increasing rapidly in recent years. They can be used to engage potential tourists and promote destinations, products and services. UGC are a great way to get feedback from potential tourists about any destination or product. Tourists have direct access to a pool of information that is freely available on different platforms in the form of blogs, forums and websites. Travellers rely heavily on UGC to make their travel decisions, in fact, the whole travel process - pre-trip, during trip and post-trip is extensively influenced by UGC. Therefore, its depicted with objectives, Conceptual Model. Demographics. Research Methodology and Hypotheses tested in graphical abstract.

Graphical abstract:

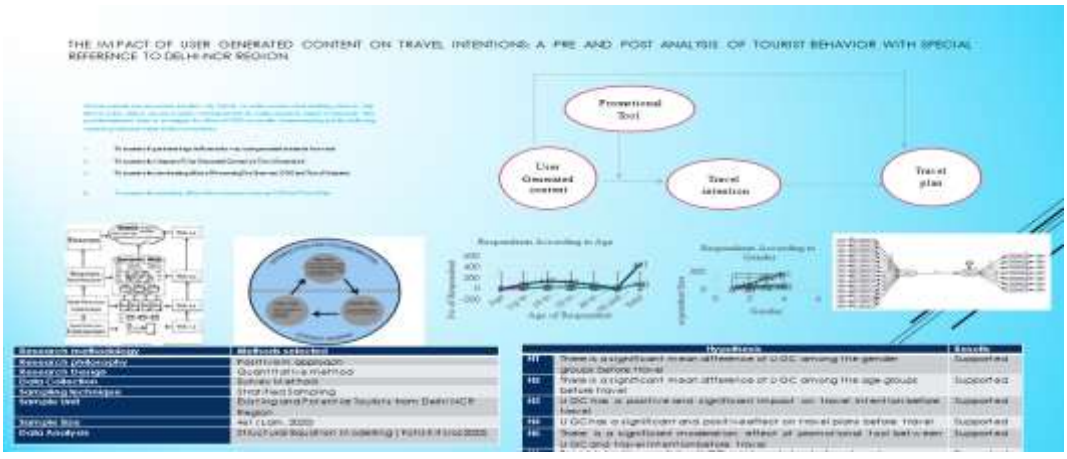

Figure: The Impact of User Generated Content on Travel Intentions: A Pre and Post Analysis of Tourist Behaviour with Special Reference to Delhi-NCR Region

Name and signature of all authors: Indrajit Chaudhury

Signature of Guide