



## Influence of user-generated content on tourist visit intention: a literatur review

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine how user-generated content (UGC) affects travelers' intent to visit, as well as how UGC affects travel choices and offers suggestions for efficient tourism marketing tactics. A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted across two reputable databases, ScienceDirect and Scopus, using specific keywords to locate relevant studies. 485 of the 556 articles were deemed relevant when the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. These papers were then thoroughly reviewed to generate a comprehensive study of the topic. The selection process, which included evaluating the titles and abstracts of every article located, produced a careful selection of 71 publications for full-text analysis. Ultimately, 26 papers were chosen for further analysis in this study. The findings from recent studies underscore the significant impact of user-generated content (UGC) on shaping tourists' intentions to visit destinations. This research shows that user-generated content (UGC) emotionally influences tourists' travel intentions, which is crucial for developing more effective and credible tourism marketing strategies.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Web 2.0 was first introduced in 2003 as a new era in the evolution of the Internet. This era is marked by the rise of social networks, improved interaction, and communication, along with significant changes in the types of content created by users. User-generated content (UGC) refers to data, information, or media produced by the general public rather than by professionals. UGC typically includes text, audio, video, and images (Kim, 2010). This content can be published through various platforms, such as social networks, digital content sharing, news aggregation, virtual gaming worlds, and virtual social worlds. Internet users in Web 2.0 can take on different roles: some are consumers who don't interact, some are participants who engage with content or other users, and others are producers who create and share their content online. (Shao, 2009). They can express their opinions and experiences on social, interactive platforms. (Filiari and McLeay,

2014), becoming content producers (Kietzmann et al., 2011) by exchanging their knowledge about products and experiences with other customers. (Gruen et al., 2006).

The influence of user-generated content (UGC) on tourism and visit intention represents a significant research gap in the field of tourism studies. Despite the growing body of literature that acknowledges the importance of UGC in shaping tourists' perceptions and decisions, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the mechanisms through which UGC affects visit intentions. (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Firstly, while several studies have explored the motivations behind sharing travel experiences on social media platforms, such as Instagram, the implications of these motivations for tourism marketing strategies are not fully understood. Daxböck et al. highlight that understanding tourists' psychological needs is crucial for refining marketing strategies, yet the direct correlation between these motivations and actual visit intentions remains underexplored. (Daxböck et al., 2021). Furthermore, the role of aesthetic elements in UGC, as discussed by (Marder et al., 2019) suggests that the quality of photographs can significantly influence decision-making, yet the nuances of how these aesthetic factors interact with tourists' intentions are still not clearly defined. (Marder et al., 2019).

Moreover, the existing literature indicates that while UGC is recognized as a powerful tool for enhancing tourist satisfaction and influencing pre-purchase decisions, the specific pathways through which UGC translates into visit intentions are inadequately addressed. Khan et al. emphasize the necessity for tourism marketers to leverage UGC to enhance customer satisfaction, but they do not delve into the mechanisms that link UGC to actual travel behaviors (Khan et al., 2022). Similarly, while Iglesias-Sánchez et al. acknowledge the potential of UGC in building destination images, they call for further exploration into its impact, indicating a clear gap in empirical research. (Iglesias-Sanchez et al., 2020).

Additionally, the theoretical frameworks currently employed to analyze UGC's influence on tourism are often limited. For instance, Liu et al (2020) propose the Tourism Information Diffusion Ecosystem (TIDE) to understand the roles of various participants in the diffusion of tourism information, yet the practical application of this framework in assessing UGC's impact on visit intentions remains to be fully realized (Liu et al., 2020). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), as applied by Wang, provides insights into how electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) influences tourists' intentions, but it does not comprehensively address the unique characteristics of UGC that differentiate it from traditional marketing content. (Wang., 2015).

Furthermore, the distinction between different types of UGC—such as reviews, photos, and videos—has not been sufficiently investigated. Li et al (2023) explore the varying impacts of different UGC types on travelers' attraction to destinations, yet the broader implications for visit intentions are still unclear (Li et al., 2023). This lack of differentiation poses a challenge for tourism marketers who seek to optimize their strategies based on the specific types of content that most effectively drive engagement and intention to visit. While the literature acknowledges the significance of UGC in the tourism sector, there remains a substantial research gap concerning the specific mechanisms through which UGC influences visit intentions. Future research should aim to bridge this gap by exploring the interplay between UGC characteristics, tourist motivations, and decision-making processes, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of how UGC can be effectively leveraged in tourism marketing strategies. The purpose of this study to investigate the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on tourists' visit intentions, exploring the mechanisms through which UGC influences travel decision-making and providing insights for effective tourism marketing strategies. A comprehensive literature review was performed on Scopus and Science Direct, including keywords including “user-generated content,” “travel content,” “tourist intention,” “visit intention,” “visit motivation,” and “tourist visit preference.”

## 2. BACKGRUOND OF THE STUDY

UGC is user-generated content, such as reviews, photos, videos, comments, or recommendations, that is usually shared through digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TripAdvisor, and YouTube. This content is considered more authentic and trustworthy than formal promotional materials created by marketers or destination managers. Direct experiences and recommendations from other travelers are often the factors that influence the perceptions and decisions of potential travelers.

Various studies have shown that UGC can influence tourists' perceptions of tourist destinations, increase destination attractiveness, and ultimately, influence interest in visiting. However, research results regarding the mechanism and level of influence of UGC on tourists' interest in visiting still vary. Some studies highlight the importance of engaging visualizations, such as photos and videos, while others place more emphasis on reviews or personal narratives.

Furthermore, the distinction between different types of UGC—such as reviews, photos, and videos—has not been sufficiently investigated. Li et al (2023) explore the varying impacts of different UGC types on travelers' attraction to destinations, yet the broader implications for visit intentions are still unclear. (Li et al., 2023). This lack of differentiation poses a challenge for tourism marketers who seek to optimize their strategies based on the specific types of content that most effectively drive engagement and intention to visit.

Therefore, an in-depth literature review is needed to further understand the relationship between UGC and tourist interest. This research aims to review previous studies to identify patterns, trends, and key factors that link UGC and traveler decisions.

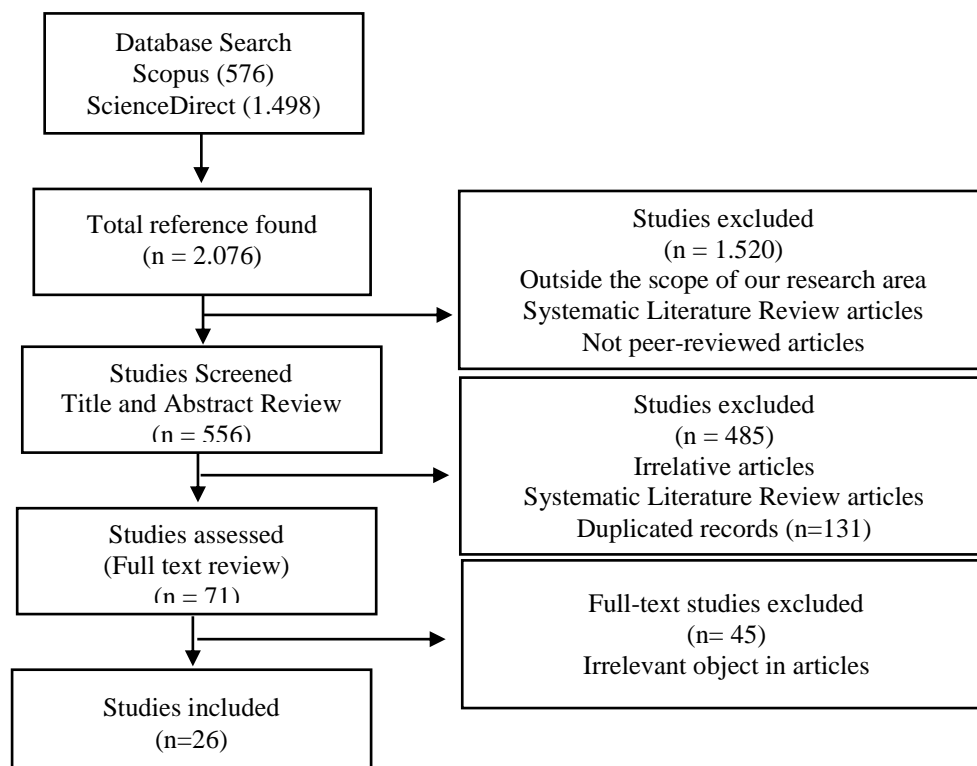


Figure 1. Search Strategy

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

We conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) following Tranfield et al. (2003) to produce an updated summary of recent studies on User-Generated Content (UGC) about Tourist Visit Intention (TVI). This allowed us to identify pertinent themes and potential avenues for further study (Fig. 1). We used VOSviewer and Rayyan QCRI software to conduct the SLR to accomplish the goals of this study, which included analyzing and synthesizing previous research to identify research trends and potential future directions. SLR articles highlight important research gaps, give readers a current understanding of the research issue, summarize pertinent material to compare the findings of previous studies, and suggest new ideas, theories, metrics, methodologies, and research questions for future study directions. (Massaro et al., 2016; Paul & Criado, 2020). For our article search, we chose Elsevier Scopus and Science Direct.

Recent developments in social media technology, particularly in relation to AI-based algorithms, have brought about significant changes in the way these platforms function and influence the interaction between users and content. In the context of analyzing the literature on social media, these developments are particularly important as they can affect various dimensions of social media studies, including how content is distributed, selected and consumed by audiences.

With AI's ability to analyze user data (such as click activity, time spent viewing certain types of content, social interactions, etc.), algorithms are increasingly able to serve highly personalized content.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, it is explained the results of research and at the same time is given the comprehensive discussion. Results can be presented in figures, graphs, tables and others that make the reader understand easily (Grieshaber, 2020). The discussion can be made in several sub-chapters.

#### 3.1 Descriptive Analysis

The literature on the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on tourist visit intention is mapped using descriptive analysis. In addition to highlighting the current research's strengths and limitations, this approach aids in identifying trends. (Tranfield et al., 2003). Our findings are presented in this part together with information on the published venues, country of origin, and year of publication.

##### a. Publications by Year

The proliferation of articles concerning UGC and Tourist Visit Intention has been monitored from 2017 to January 2024. Figure 2 depicts this trend, demonstrating that the preponderance of study has taken place in the last four years, signifying a growing academic interest in this topic. Significantly, almost half of the publications pertaining to this subject (62.4% of the total 26) were published in 2024. Consequently, it is plausible to expect that other studies will be published prior to the conclusion of 2024.

##### b. Publications by country

Table 1 shows the geographic distribution of articles by nation based on the quantity of papers and citations gathered from Scopus. Even if an article was co-authored with another nation, each nation receives a point for their distinct authorship contribution (Del Vecchio et al., 2022). The purpose of this analysis is to identify the countries that have expressed interest in studying how user-generated content affects traveler intention to visit. The most influential of the 26 articles were those from China (n

= 8). On the other hand, Table 1 shows that the United Kingdom has the most cities represented in publications, closely followed by Jordan.

Table 1 . Citation Counts as on November 2024

No	Title	Country	Authors	Journal	Cities	Year
1	Age and gender differences in online travel reviews and user-generated-content (UGC) adoption	United Kingdom	Guy Assaker	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	203	2019
2	Negative Word of Mouth In The Hotel Industry: A Content Analysis of Online Reviews On Luxury Hotels In Jordan	Jordan	Mithat Zeki Dinçer And Zaid Alrawadieh	Journal Of Hospitality Marketing & Management	90	2017
3	The Importance Of User-Generated Photos In Restaurant Selection	Portugal	Bruno Oliveira, Beatriz Casais	Journal Of Hospitality And Tourism Technology	80	2019
4	Role Of User-Generated Photos in Online Hotel Reviews: An Analytical Approach	United State	Qingxiang An, Yufeng Ma, Qianzhou Du, Zheng Xiang, Weiguo Fan	Journal Of Hospitality And Tourism Management	57	2020
5	Narratives on Facebook: The Impact of User-Generated Content on Visiting Attitudes, Visiting Intention, and Perceptions Of Destination Risk	Malaysia	Saeed Pahlevan Sharif, Paolo Mura	Information Technology & Tourism	28	2019
6	Heritage Image and Attitudes toward a Heritage Site: Do They Really Mediate the Relationship between User-Generated Content and Travel Intentions toward a Heritage Site?	China	Shafaqat Mehmood, Changyong Liang, Dongxiao Gu	Sustainability	28	2018
7	Short Video Marketing and Travel Intentions: The Interplay Between Visual Perspective, Visual Content, And Narration Appeal	Non-specific region	Jianhong Gan, Si Shi, Raffaele Filieri, Wilson K.S. Leung	Tourism Management	27	2023
8	The Role of Social Capital for Short-Video Platform Users' Travel Intentions: SEM and Fsqca Findings	China	Shan-Shan Liao, Ching-Yuan Lin, Ying-Ji Chuang, Xing-Zheng Xie	Sustainability 2020	17	2020
9	Impact Of User-Generated Travel Posts On Travel Decisions: A Comparative Study On Weibo And Xiaohongshu	China	Zhuoli Wang, Wei-Jue Huang, Bingjie Liu-Lastres	Annals Of Tourism Research Empirical Insights	14	2022
10	Empowering the traveler: an examination of the impact of user-generated content on travel planning	New Zealand	Luiz Mendes-Filho, Annette M. Millsb, Felix B. Tan c and Simon Milne	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	14	2018
11	The Predictive Role Of Tourist-Generated Content On Travel Intentions: Emotional Mechanisms As Mediators	China	Wei Xiong, Meijiao Huang, Bendegul Okumus, Siyan Chena And Fang Fan	Asia Pacific Journal Of Tourism Research	10	2022
12	Which type of tourism short video content inspires potential tourists to travel	China	Guihua Wu, Xinyi Ding	Frontiers in Psychology	8	2023
13	User-generated videos and tourists' intention to visit	Ghana	David Adeloje, Kudzai Makurumidze,	Anatolia (International Journal of	8	2021

			Christian Sarfo	Tourism and Hospitality Research]		
14	Effects Of Instagram User-Generated Content On Travel Inspiration And Planning: An Extended Model Of Technology Acceptance	United State	Lijie Zhou & Fei Xue	Journal Of Promotion Management	7	2021
15	User-Generated Content On Gen Z Tourist Visit Intention: A Stimulusorganism-Response Approach	Philipin es	Kafferine Yamagishi, Danzel Canayong, Mariella Domingo, Kim Nieva Maneja, Angel Montolo And Arabelle Siton	Journal Of Hospitality And Tourism Insights	5	2024
16	The Effect Of User Generated Content On Travelers Selection Of Enviromentally Friendly Guesthouse	Non-Specific Region	Fatemeh Fehrest, Bahram Nekouie Sadry And Fatemeh Sepehr Pour	Advances In Hospitality And Leisure	5	2021
17	A Pentadic Analysis Of Tiktok Marketing In Tourism: The Case Of Penang, Malaysia	Malaysi a	Aaron Tham, Shu-Hsiang (Ava) Chen, And Levi Durbidge	Tourism Studies	5	2024
18	Will Sensory Impressions Drive The Intention To Revisit? An Empirical Study In Therural Tourism	China	Wenjing Lua, Mei Peng Low, And Wai Mun Yeong	Journal Of Travel & Tourism Marketing	2	2024
19	Does User-Generated Video Content Motivate Individuals To Visit A Destination? A Non-Visitor Typology	Indones ia	Lma Aulia Zaim, Dimitrios, Konstantinos Andriotis, And Anthony Thickett	Journal Of Vacation Marketing	1	2024
20	Harms Of Inconsistency: The Impact Of User-Generated And Marketing-Generated Photos On Hotel Booking Intentions	China	Shan Zhang, Weifang Liu, Tingting Zhang, Wei Han, Yupeng Zhu	Tourism Management Perspectives	1	2024
21	Use and Impact of Online Travel Reviews for Planning Free and Easy Holidays	Malaysi a	Yahya Mohamad Halawani Patrick Chin-Hooi Soh, Firas Mohamad Halawani,	International Journal of Information Systems in the Service Sector	1	2022
22	Understanding Chinese Tourists' Changing Shopping Experience In Macao: Pre And In COVID-19 Via User Generated Content	China	Xiaojuan Li, Yanping Feng, Cora Un In Wong Lianping Ren	Tourism Critiques: Practice And Theory	0	2024
23	Find The One You Like! Profiling Swiss Parks With User Generated Content	Swiss	Franziska Komossa, Daniela Marino~, Annina Helena Michel, Ross Stuart Purves	Journal Of Outdoor Recreation And Tourism	0	2023
24	Influencing Travel Decisions: Social Media's Role In Destination Perception And Visit Intentions	Non-specific Region	Eko SUSANTO, Vanessa GAFFAR, Disman DISMAN, Chairul FURQON	African Journal Of Hospitality, Tourism And Leisure	0	2024
25	The Influence Of Social Media Content On Attitude, Destination Image And Intention Of Female Muslim Travelers To Visit Halal Destinations: Comparison	Indones ia	Caroline Octavia Wijaya, Serli Wijaya And Ferry Jaolis	Journal Of Islamic Marketing	0	2024

Between UGC And FGC						
26	The Impact Of Group Facebook User-Generated Content On Consumer Purchase Intention – A Case In Tourism Industry	Vietnam	Nguyen Thanh Tung Nguyen Quoc Bao Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao Nguyen Van Anh	GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites	0	2023

### 3.2 Common keywords

This analysis focuses on identifying frequently used keywords by authors to evaluate a substantial amount of text on user-generated content (UGC) and tourist visit intentions. By conducting a keyword co-occurrence analysis, a network was created to visualize the relationships between various terms (Radhakrishnan et al., 2017). This method helps reveal the implicit connections authors make between their chosen keywords and the topics of their research (Su and Lee, 2010). The frequency of specific keywords across 26 articles is displayed in a graphic format, with larger circles indicating higher frequency. Keywords like “tourist intention” and “user-generated content” can encompass related terms such as “travel content” and “visit motivation or intention.”

### 3.3 Bibliographic coupling

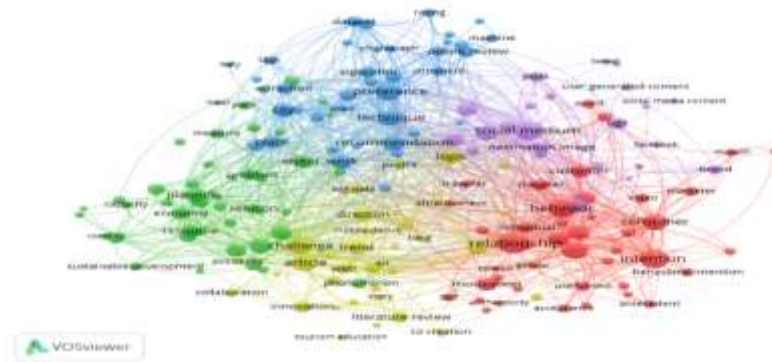
Because these sources shed light on the subject, articles that quote the same references are connected (Perianes-Rodriguez et al., 2016). Benefits of bibliographic coupling include generating visualization maps of highly cited works, shedding light on contemporary research concerns, and directing further investigations (Mariani et al., 2022). The 26 articles in the data sample underwent bibliographic coupling using VOSviewer software, using documents as the units of analysis. Four clusters were found using this research. Van Eck and Waltman (2010) developed VOSviewer, a tool commonly employed for generating bibliometric maps, which is more effective for this purpose than multidimensional scaling (Ferreira, 2018).

#### a. Major themes

To enhance the accuracy of article grouping and understanding of research areas, a detailed analysis was conducted on 26 articles identified through bibliographic coupling. Initial groupings showed a lack of thematic coherence, often due to diverse academic backgrounds. A content analysis focused on each article's purpose, research questions, methods, and key arguments to identify primary topics. Descriptive statements were created, leading to initial theme titles (Clark et al., 2019). Articles were compared and sorted to categorize them by themes, which were then grouped into larger study themes.

#### b. The Impact of UGC on Tourist Visit Intention

The first theme thoroughly examines the influence of UGC on tourist visit intention. It emphasizes how UGC facilitates the efficient and cost-effective gathering of customer insights, enhances interaction and co-innovation with consumers, and significantly improves the product innovation process. In this context, Liu et al. (2020) investigated the impact of UGC on tourist visit intention. Moreover, Ukpabi & Karjaluoto (2018) note that a substantial majority of travelers actively seek out UGC, with around 80% of them reading reviews before making travel decisions. This demonstrates the critical role that UGC plays in shaping tourists' perceptions and intentions. Additionally, Xu et al. (2021) found that UGC not only influences tourists' loyalty but also affects their overall satisfaction and perceived value of a destination, further reinforcing the connection between UGC and visit intentions.



Based on various studies, user-generated content (UGC) plays a significant role in influencing tourists' intentions to visit. For example, Yamagishi et al. (2024) found that UGC that evokes positive emotions is more effective in driving visit intentions compared to factual information. This is consistent with findings from Fehrest et al. (2021), who noted that UGC is crucial in travelers' decisions to book eco-friendly guesthouses, highlighting its importance in the accommodation sector. Additionally, An et al. (2020) reported that guests at higher service-level hotels are more inclined to share photos, particularly after positive experiences, which can impact the perceptions and choices of others regarding those establishments. Li et al. (2024) discussed a shift in tourist preferences towards integrated leisure and shopping experiences, especially in the post-pandemic context, where UGC plays a vital role in drawing tourists' interest. Furthermore, Susanto et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of destination credibility, revealing that UGC and social media engagement significantly shape tourist perceptions and contribute to the democratization of travel information. Wijaya et al. (2024) found that both UGC and firm-generated content (FGC) greatly affect attitudes towards halal tourism and destination image, influencing the visit intentions of Muslimah travelers.

### 3.4 Discussions

The evolution of tourist preferences, especially towards integrated leisure and shopping experiences post-pandemic, accentuates UGC's role in capturing tourists' interests (Li et al., 2024). This trend is reinforced by the findings of Susanto et al. (2024), which reveal that destination credibility is significantly influenced by UGC and social media engagement, contributing to a more democratized landscape of travel information.

The impact of UGC is also evident among specific demographics, as Wijaya et al. (2024) noted that both UGC and firm-generated content affect attitudes towards halal tourism, significantly influencing Muslimah travelers' visit intentions. Moreover, the emotional appeal of UGC not only inspires travel decisions but also mediates the relationship between perceived enjoyment and travel intentions (Xiong et al., 2022). UGC, particularly on visually driven platforms like Instagram, enhances perceived enjoyment in low-engagement contexts, thereby influencing travelers' planning processes (Zhou & Xue, 2021).

Conversely, inconsistencies between UGC and marketing-generated content can lead to negative perceptions and reduced booking intentions (Zhang et al., 2024), emphasizing the importance of coherent messaging in tourism marketing. Overall, UGC enriches the information landscape for prospective tourists, enhancing trust and transparency in destination marketing. The growing influence of social media platforms, such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu, further establishes UGC as a critical component in shaping visitation patterns across diverse user groups (Wang et al., 2022).

To effectively engage potential visitors, tourism marketers must leverage UGC to create authentic and relatable content that resonates emotionally, thereby fostering a

credible and inviting environment for travel decisions. Additionally, demographic factors, including age, gender, and cultural background, significantly influence how UGC is perceived and utilized. Different user groups, such as Muslimah travelers, may have unique responses to UGC based on their cultural contexts (Wijaya et al., 2024). Recognizing these nuances can enable marketers to tailor their strategies, ensuring that UGC effectively resonates with various segments of the travel market. UGC stands out as a powerful driver of travel intentions, highlighting the need for a strategic approach to its integration in tourism marketing efforts. By understanding and utilizing the emotional and credibility aspects of UGC, stakeholders can foster greater engagement and inspire a broader range of travelers to explore new destinations.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The findings from recent studies underscore the significant impact of user-generated content (UGC) on shaping tourists' intentions to visit destinations. Emotional resonance emerges as a critical factor, with UGC that evokes positive feelings proving more effective than factual information in driving travel intentions (Yamagishi et al., 2024). This aligns with Fehrest et al. (2021), who emphasized UGC's pivotal role in decision-making, particularly in the context of eco-friendly accommodations. The tendency for guests at higher service-level hotels to share positive experiences through photos (An et al., 2020) further highlights the influence of emotional engagement in shaping perceptions and choices among potential visitors.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Limitations in research on social media, especially with regard to the rapid development of technology, often include aspects such as the speed of technological change, difficulties in measuring long-term impacts, and limitations in the data and methodologies used to analyze this dynamic social phenomenon. To improve the quality and relevance of future research, especially in the face of rapid technological change in social media, the following approaches could be considered: Utilization of Longitudinal Approaches, Multidisciplinary Collaboration to Understand the Social and Technological Context, Improved Methodologies to Measure the Impact of AI and Algorithms, Use of Broader and Diverse Data, Integration of Advanced Technologies and Analytical Tools, Focus on Ethics and the Evolving Social Impact of Social Media.

Future research can be conducted longitudinally to monitor changes in tourist behavior over time, especially how the evolution of user-generated content (such as technological developments and changes in social media algorithms) affects tourists' interest in visiting in the long term. Considering the limitations and opportunities, this study can serve as a foundation for further exploration of the influence of user-generated content on tourists' decisions, which will be of great benefit to the tourism industry and destination marketing.

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