
**The Impacts of User-generated-content on Tourist Behaviour
and Its Collaboration in Tourism Industry: An Investigation in
a Chinese World Heritage Site**

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DECLARATION

My declaration hereby is that this thesis is my original work, to the best of my knowledge, to the best of my belief, except for the portions of the thesis that have been published jointly with other scholars. Below is an explicit indication of the contribution made by the candidate in addition to the other authors to this work. In the thesis, where information has been referred to that has been derived from the work of others, I confirm the appropriate credit has been given to them.

This thesis has been published in the following journals:

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The three publications cover the literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusions of the entire thesis. Findings from the first two papers are primarily presented in Chapter 4, which represents quantitative research findings, and the findings of the third paper are presented in Chapter 5, which presents qualitative research findings.

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This thesis is in memory of my lovely father,
who gave me a happy family and had always supported my decisions with
infinite love.

You are gone in heaven; however, you are always the hero in my heart.
You made my Ph.D. journey possible.

GUANGHUI XU

(徐光辉)

15 December 1966 — 19 April 2019

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A STATEMENT ABOUT COVID-19 IMPACT ON THIS THESIS

The topic of this thesis revolves around how social media influences tourist decisions and behaviour, and the case study focuses on Chinese tourists in Gulangyu Island. The COVID-19 outbreak has had a severe impact on the research activities of this PhD thesis in late 2019, particularly the Phase two study, disrupting the original research scheduled in the following ways.

First, the framework of the study in this thesis has been modified slightly. This study was divided into two phases, the first of which was a quantitative assessment of the impact of UGC on social media on travellers' actual decision-making behaviours. Originally, the second phase of the qualitative study was meant to provide insight into the reasons travellers make their travel decisions primarily based on UGC. Based on the fact that the questionnaire data for the first phase was collected prior to Ph.D. admission in 2018, the research questions for this phase remained unchanged. Due to the impact of the 2019-2022 pandemic, the second phase of the original in-depth interviews with tourists was not possible because some tourism spots in China were closed for a longer period of time and many cities were placed on lockdown (e.g., Chinese people in many provinces and cities were not allowed to travel across provinces). Therefore, the second phase of the study changed to analyse how tourists share their travel experiences on social media after their trip and how these UGCs further impact the destination.

Second, Covid-19 impacted the methodology of the second phase of this study. In Phase two, no initial face-to-face interviews with tourists could be conducted due to the strict measures to prevent and control the epidemic in China. Furthermore, the alternative telephone interviews were insufficient for the original research plan. This is primarily because the thesis examines how UGC affects tourists' travel decisions. If telephone interviews were to be used for the original research plan, there would be the following drawbacks: (1) it would be difficult to screen out potential interviewees. Since the case study is based on Gulangyu Island in Xiamen, China, it is difficult to ensure that the interviewer has been to Gulangyu Island before and selecting tourists who have been to Gulangyu Island would be difficult. (2) compared to interviews with tourists on-site at tourism destinations, telephone interviewees had difficulty recalling which of the initial travel products tourists selected based on UGC. If the telephone interviewees were not able to clearly recall which travel services and products they used and why they used UGC, the goal of the initial Phase two interviews would not be achieved. Hence, the second phase of the study changed to collect secondary data via travel blogs.

In the second phase of this thesis, as explained above, this study changed

to explore the ways tourists share their travel experiences on social media at the post-travel stage, and how these UGC further influence other tourists and destinations. In this way, the new questions from the Phase 2 study and the Phase 1 study provide a new logical framework for this research, targeting the mutual influence between UGC and tourists, i.e., how UGC influences tourists' travel decisions before and during their travels (Phase 1 study), and how they share new UGC back to social media after they return from their travels (Phase 2 study). The new research's logical framework has the following advantages over the original plan: (1) it categorises tourist decision making and behaviours chronologically, making the research more comprehensive. Specifically, the travel stages of tourists are commonly divided into three main stages: pre-travel, mid-travel, and post-travel. The changed research scheme is more complete because it covers the post-consumption behaviour of tourists. (2) It encompasses both the demand and supply sides of tourism research scope thus making this study more comprehensive. (3) The second stage of the study changed to the use of travel blogs (narrative analysis), which has become a more innovative approach in recent years. Compared with the traditional tourist interview method, travel blog analysis has its own advantages and has been adopted by many tourism scholars in their published papers. Since the advantages of the narrative analysis are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, they will not be repeated here.

ABSTRACT

Advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) have revolutionized communication between service providers and consumers. Both academics and industry have acknowledged that social media platforms play a vital role in tourist decision-making and destination branding, but a comprehensive assessment of how social media affects tourism behaviour and its capacity to boost destination value remains elusive.

The purpose of this study is to fill that gap by examining the impacts of user-generated content (UGC) in social media on tourist behaviours, as well as its role in contributing to destination value co-creation. Gulangyu, a well-known World Heritage Site and a heritage tourism destination in southeast China, served as a case study in this study. An on-site questionnaire survey and online narrative analysis were conducted to investigate how UGC influences visitors during their entire vacation travel process and how travellers share their travel experiences through social media, further enhancing the value of the destination.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this investigation. During the first-stage on-site questionnaire collection, 500 Gulangyu tourists were approached in 2018. The structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis was conducted based on a sample of 439 travellers who reported they planned their trips using user-generated travel information on social media. Study results indicate that UGC impacts tourist behaviour across the entire holiday-related decision process, from destination selection, purchasing behaviour to loyalty behaviour. On the second round of data collection, 97 travel blogs and their interactive comments with readers were selected as a suitable qualitative data set. The online narrative analysis of travel blogs identified three unique themes that contribute to the co-creation of destination value through the sharing of holiday travel experiences on social media (Xu et al., 2022). A discussion is presented on the theoretical and managerial implications of each study regarding how UGC influences tourists' decision-making as well as how tourists' sharing behaviour affects destination value co-creation. With a conclusion, the limitations and future research directions are indicated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement.....	iv
A statement about COVID-19 impact on this thesis	vi
Abstract.....	viii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Figures.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	- 1 -
1.1 Research Background.....	- 1 -
1.1.1 Consumer decision-making theory	- 2 -
1.1.2 Social media in consumer decision-making	- 4 -
1.1.3 Social media in tourism.....	- 6 -
1.2 Research gaps.....	- 9 -
1.3 Research aims and objectives	- 11 -
1.4 Rational for selecting a World Heritage site in China	- 11 -
1.5 Significance of this study.....	- 12 -
1.5.1 Contribution to theory	- 12 -
1.5.2 Contribution to practice.....	- 13 -
1.6 Definitions of key terms.....	- 13 -
1.7 Organization of this thesis.....	- 14 -
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	- 17 -
2.1 Understanding tourists' decision-making and behaviour.....	- 17 -
2.1.1 Grand model of consumer decision-making: Information processing theory	- 18 -
2.1.2 Narrative transportation	- 19 -
2.1.3 Dual system accounts of information processing and decision- making.....	- 21 -
2.2 User-generated-content (UGC) on social media	- 22 -
2.2.1 Social media: definitions and features	- 22 -
2.2.2 UGC: concept and value.....	- 23 -
2.2.3 The UGC in tourism	- 25 -

2.3 The impact of UGC on tourist behaviour	26 -
2.3.1 Effect of UGC on destination choice and purchasing behaviour-	27-
2.3.2 Effect of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour	28 -
2.4 Hypothesis development.....	29 -
2.4.1 Factors affecting tourists' destination selection and purchasing behaviour	29 -
2.4.2 Factors affecting tourists' loyalty behaviour	33 -
2.4.3 Conceptual framework.....	34 -
2.5 UGC value on destination	35 -
2.5.1 Value co-creation.....	35 -
2.5.2 Social media and destination value co-creation.....	36 -
2.5.3 The effects of UGC on destination cocreation: a consumer socialization perspective	37 -
Chapter 3 Methodology	39 -
3.1 Research design	39 -
3.2 Phrase 1: Questionnaire survey.....	40 -
3.2.1 Questionnaire development.....	40 -
3.2.2 Measurement.....	41 -
3.2.3 Pilot study	43 -
3.2.4 Data collection	44 -
3.2.5 Ethical considerations.....	44 -
3.2.6 Data analysis	44 -
3.3 Phrase 2: Online narrative analysis	47 -
3.3.1 Data collection process.....	48 -
3.3.2 Data analysis	49 -
3.4 Summary.....	51 -
Chapter 4. The Findings of Quantitative study: Exploring the effect of UGC on tourist behaviour.....	52 -
4.1 Introduction	52 -
4.2 Profiles of respondents	52 -
4.2.1 Socio-demographic profile of respondents.....	52 -
4.2.2 Trip characteristics of respondents	53 -
4.3 The use of UGC on social media in pre-trip planning.....	55 -

4.3.1 Overall use of UGC for travel planning	55 -
4.3.2 Comparison of UGC usage between first-time visitors and repeat visitors	56 -
4.4 Structural Equation model.....	57 -
4.4.1 Data normality.....	57 -
4.4.2 Scale reliability	59 -
4.4.3 Measurement of UGC.....	62 -
4.4.4 Measurement of other constructs	63 -
4.5 Quantitative Analysis I: effect of UGC on tourist decision-making...-	67 -
4.5.1 Confirmatory factor analysis	67 -
4.5.2 Evaluation of the overall measurement model.....	67 -
4.5.3 Hypothesis testing	70 -
4.6 Quantitative Analysis II: the effects of UGC on tourist loyalty	72 -
4.6.1 Confirmatory factor analysis	72 -
4.6.2 Evaluation of the overall measurement model.....	73 -
4.6.3 Hypothesis testing	75 -
4.7 Summary.....	78 -
Chapter 5: The Findings of Study 2: Understanding how tourists construct travel experience on social media at the post-travel stage.....	79 -
5.1 Content of travel experience in travel blog.....	79 -
5.1.1 Travel motivation for the destination	81 -
5.1.2 Memorable travel experience at the destination	84 -
5.1.3 Travel advice about the destination	87 -
5.2 Destination value cocreation through travel blogs.....	89 -
5.2.1 Motivation and destination value cocreation	89 -
5.2.2 Memorable travel experience and destination value cocreation-	91-
5.2.3 Travel advice and destination value cocreation	92 -
5.3 Summary.....	92 -
Chapter 6: Discussion	93 -
6.1 How do tourists use for UGC affect their perceptions and travel arrangements?.....	93 -
6.1.1 How do tourists refer UGC for their travel arrangements?.....	93 -

6.1.2 How UGC influence the actual decision-making behaviour of tourists?	- 94 -
6.2 How does UGC affect tourists' evaluations of trips and loyalty?	- 96 -
6.3 How do tourists share travel experiences back to social media and contribute to the destination value?	- 98 -
6.4 Summary.....	- 100 -
Chapter 7 Conclusion, limitations and future research	- 101 -
7.1 Theoretical Contribution	- 101 -
7.2 Practical Implications	- 103 -
7.3 Limitation and Future research	- 105 -
List of References	- 107 -
Appendix A: Information sheet	- 130 -
Appendix B: Informed consent to participate in questionnaire survey for the research	- 131 -
Appendix C: Questionnaire	- 132 -
Appendix D: A sample of selected travel blogs in Mafengwo.com	- 136 -

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Examples of tourism studies on social media.	6 -
Table 4.1 Social-demographic profiles of the survey respondents. ...	58 -
Table 4.2 Travel characteristics of the survey respondents.	59 -
Table 4.3 Comparison of UGC usage between first-time visitors and repeat visitors.	61 -
Table 4.4 Normality test results.	62 -
Table 4.5 Reliability of Measurements of the Major Constructs.	64 -
Table 4.6 Means and Standard Deviations of UGC.	67 -
Table 4.7 Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of UGC.	68 -
Table 4.8 Means and Standard Deviations of Items Measuring perceived usefulness of UGC, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation intention.	69 -
Table 4.9 Exploratory factor analysis of perceived usefulness of UGC, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation intention.	71 -
Table 4.10 Confirmatory factor analysis results for factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, perceived useful of UGC, destination selection and purchasing behaviour.	73 -
Table 4.11 Inter-construct Correlations.	74 -
Table 4.12 Path coefficients in the structural equation model test of the UGC's effect on tourist decisions.	77 -
Table 4.13 Confirmatory factor analysis results for factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, tourist satisfaction, word of mouth and revisiting intention.	78 -
Table 4.14 Inter-construct correlations.	80 -
Table 4.15 Path coefficients in the structural equation model test of the UGC's effect on tourist loyalties.	82 -
Table 5.1 Selected travel blog details.	84 -
Table 5.2 Examples of research codes.	85 -

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 The role of UGC in consumers' decision-making process.	- 4 -
Figure 1.2 The flow chart of the research framework	- 10 -
Figure 1.3 The structure of the thesis.	- 17 -
Figure 2.1 The information process model	- 20 -
Figure 2.2 Three simplified stages of information processing	- 21 -
Figure 2.3 The narrative persuasion process.	- 22 -
Figure 2.4 The proposed theoretical Framework.	- 24 -
Figure 2.5 The categories of UGC.	- 29 -
Figure 2.6 The impact of UGC on tourist's decision-making process.	-30-
Figure 2.7 The conceptual framework model of UGC impacts on tourist behaviour.	- 33 -
Figure 2.8 The effects of UGC on tourists' decision-making.	- 34 -
Figure 2.9 The effects of UGC on tourists' loyalty	- 34 -
Figure 3.1 Overall research process	- 45 -
Figure 4.1 The use of UGC on social media in pre-trip planning.	- 60 -
Figure 4.2 Structural model for the effects of UGC on tourist decision-making.	- 75 -
Figure 4.3 Structural equation model with estimated path coefficient about UGC's impact on tourist decision-making.	- 76 -
Figure 4.4 Structural model for the effects of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour	- 80 -
Figure 4.5 Structural equation model with estimated path coefficient about UGC's impacts on tourist loyalty behaviour.	- 81 -
Figure 5.1 The Gulangyu official website.	- 95 -
Figure 6.1 Co-creation of destination value through travel blogs.	- 107 -

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research background and study setting for this study. The study's purpose and objectives will be discussed next, followed by the research questions. Finally, contributions to theory and practice are discussed. The chapter concludes with a glossary of terms used in this thesis and the structuring of this thesis.

1.1 Research Background

In the tourism industry, information plays an increasingly important role in tourists' decision-making (Ivanova & Ivanov, 2020; Poon, 1988). As UGC is rapidly spreading on social media (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014), it has an impact on all aspects of the tourism industry, including tourists' pre-travel information search, decision-making, and destination promotion, which is undoubtedly affecting the whole industry (Wang et al., 2020). From the tourists' (consumers') perspective, social media have a significant influence on their decisions and behaviour (Liu et al., 2021; Pop et al., 2021). As travel products are inherently experiential and intangible, tourists cannot measure them before buying them, making other tourists' recommendations the most influential source of information (Buhalis, 1998; Chung & Koo, 2015). Through social media, tourists can share their travel experiences directly with other online users (Hays et al., 2013). In this regard, the communication of key attributes of a destination or tourism product depends more on electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) effects than on commercial tourism promotions (Sparks et al., 2013). Thus, tourists' decision-making processes and behaviours are changed and influenced by images, information, and knowledge they gain from online social networks of other tourists.

Apart from empowering the tourists, social media has changed the way travel service providers engage with their target tourists and promote destinations (Lund et al., 2018). The UGC has become a source of 'big data' for destination marketers to better understand tourists' needs and preferences. Social media is increasingly used by destination managers to communicate directly with potential tourists in order to monitor and respond to their thoughts and assessments of their services. However, the increased use of social media has also presented new challenges for destination managers, mainly because tourists are increasingly turning to peer-to-peer sharing of information on social media to find out more about tourism products and destinations, replacing traditional marketing campaigns (Lund et al., 2018).

Research on social media usage and its impact on travellers' behaviour and tourist operations has become increasingly popular in recent years (Leung et

al., 2013; Zarezadeh et al., 2018), since consumer-generated content continues to enhance tourists' choices and plays a vital role in destination marketing (Chen et al., 2017; Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). The rapid development of social media has enabled individual travellers and tourism organisations to break down geographical and time barriers (İştin, 2020), resulting in fundamental changes in how travel information is available and transformed. Potential travellers can use social media to find and share information about destinations and discuss travel and related issues during their travels (e.g., transportation arrangements and hotel accommodation reservations) through online travel communities. Social media also allows tourism businesses, destinations and travellers to connect at any time. With the advent of 5G networks and social media mobile apps, such as blogs, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, travellers are able to share their travel experiences wherever and whenever they want. Tourists share travel information on social media as a reliable source of information that can help other potential travellers plan their trips and may even influence their decisions. Studying the impact of social media on tourists and destinations is particularly important in this context. However, as Zarezadeh et al. (2018) stated, research on the impact of social media on tourism is still at its exploring stage.

Research on social media is currently a popular topic of interest in the tourism industry, both in terms of its impact on consumers and tourism organizations, such as destination management and marketing aspects. However, there are still some research gaps. For example, research is mostly focused on a single stage of the tourist decision-making process and lacks empirical research on the entire process. Moreover, the use of social media by tourists at the post-decision stage has not been fully studied. The post-travel decision stage involves tourists' sharing their travel experiences back to social media, essentially contributing to UGC. This newly added content has the potential to further influence the decision-making behaviour of other tourists. So far, academic research does not take a post-travel decision-making stage as a lens for understanding how late-stage visitor-generated content (UGC) sharing behaviour measures destination performance or how UGC can be used to create value for destinations and provide new insights into customer service. Therefore, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between UGC and tourists from multiple perspectives in order to examine the influence of UGC on various and continuous stages of visitors' decision-making. In the following section, the role of social media in consumer decision-making will be discussed in greater detail.

1.1.1 Social media in consumer decision-making

The widespread use of ICT has radically changed the way people communicate, interact, express, and share ideas, thoughts, and opinions (Chatterjee & Dsilva, 2021). Today, social media plays an important role in people's daily

communication (Zarezadeh et al., 2018). Every day, more than 350 million images are uploaded to Facebook, 60 million photos are shared on Instagram (Maclean et al., 2020), and 500 million tweets are posted on Twitter (Twitter, 2018). Statista (2021) reports that there are currently 3.96 billion social media users worldwide, representing a 92.76 % active users over the past five years.

The new age of the social media era has created a new interpersonal connection (Lee, 2013), where users can share their experiences, comments, tips, and other information with strangers or organizations in a timely and instant (Sema, 2013) manner. In light of this, consumers' access and use of information about products and services have changed dramatically and are no longer based on commercial promotions or official organizations. Social media information comes primarily from users and consumers themselves, who often have different perceptions and feelings from marketers (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). As a result, UGC on social media is becoming an important source of information for consumers' decisions and has a significant impact on consumers' behaviour (Nash, 2018), from searching for information to making decisions to purchasing a product (Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018).

Consumers' decision-making behaviour can be influenced by social media information in the following ways. First, the social media information can stimulate people's shopping desire and inspire them to purchase products that they do not intend to purchase or have never considered. The majority of UGC shared by consumers on social media is narrative in nature and often accompanied by photos and pictures. When searching for information about a product, people may become curious about relevant UGC descriptions of a specific product they never originally intended to buy. In such a case, UGC reviews may enhance consumers' interest in the product as well as influence their decision-making process. Consequently, consumers may put their newly acquired inspiration into action when exposed to relevant UGC.

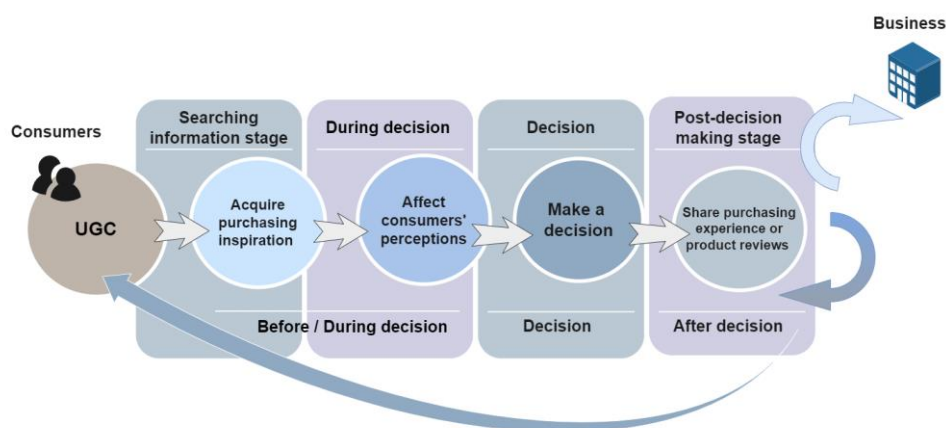


Figure 1.1 The role of UGC in consumers' decision-making process

Second, UGC can affect consumers' perceptions of a certain product or service (Gretzel, 2017; Hausmann et al., 2018). UGC is a collection of reviews and comments about a product or service by specific consumers who have already purchased that product or service (Cheong & Morrison, 2008; Cox et al., 2009). Essentially, UGC reflects the collective knowledge and attitudes of users. Research has shown that consumers' attitudes are often unstable and change with the social environment (Chung & Han, 2017; Liu et al., 2020). While consumers may have their own preferences when making choices, their decisions are not always conscious and deliberate and can be influenced by unconscious factors such as social environment (Gretzel, 2017; McCabe et al., 2016). UGC based on peer consumers' experiences can provide people with relevant "prior experience" and social decision support, thus further influencing peoples' decision-making (Gretzel et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2017). UGC, which can be seen as an important social factor, how to motivate prospective consumers to develop preferences and adopt choices, is an ongoing research topic in the field of consumer decision-making and marketing, but when it comes to purchasing intangible products, such as travel products, it is still in its infancy (Gupta, 2019; Liu et al., 2020).

Third, UGC is the process of consumer sharing and dialogue about commodity information and purchasing experiences (Zhao et al., 2020). Its impact on consumer decision-making can also be reflected at the post-purchase stage of the decision-making process (Ana, 2019; Mensah et al., 2021). In the post-decision stage, UGC provide different views and options to potential consumers regarding the purchase of a particular product or service (Al-Rawabdeh et al., 2021), which may further influence other potential consumers' attitudes and cognitions towards the product provider and the brand itself, thus influencing their purchase decisions. One of the most significant features of UGC information is that information sharing is not led or dominated by brands or companies (Ana, 2019; Mayrhofer et al., 2020), but is primarily based on consumers' own consumption experiences. As such, UGC content consists of a wide variety of informational details about consumers' decisions and purchases of relevant products and services, and it goes beyond the commercial promotion of the product or brand itself. However, research in the current literature paid little attention on consumer sharing and interaction on social media in the post-decision stage (Delafruz et al., 2019), which indirectly influences other potential consumers' decisions and co-creates brand equity.

1.1.2 The impact of UGC on tourist decision-making

Information plays a crucial role in tourism decision-making (Chung et al., 2015). When consumers have no prior experience with the targeted goods or services, they often rely on sources of information such as friends and

family members to make decisions (Matikiti-Manyeverere & Kruger, 2019). Travel-related intangible services require consumers to search for more information than other manufactured products in order to make more informed decisions. With the wealth of information available on social media, people are able to search for relevant information and make travel decisions more intelligently, which in turn allows the UGC on social media to influence tourist behaviour and decisions throughout their travel activities (İştin, 2020). That is, UGC has a huge impact on tourists' behaviour before, during, and after a trip (Nezakati et al., 2015). Specifically, at the pre-travel stage, UGC is a source of information for tourists to review travel products and destinations, generate expectations (Wang et al., 2016), develop travel plans (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) and assist in making travel decisions. During the trip, UGC allows tourists to evaluate tourism products and services. At the post-trip stage, some studies have examined the impacts of UGC on tourist satisfaction (Narangajavana et al., 2019) as well as explored the motivations for sharing holiday experiences back to social media (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

Recent studies have examined the use of social media and its impacts on tourist behaviour (**See Table 1.1**). The use of social media for pre-trip information searches in small regional tourism destination, for example was examined by Pabel and Prideaux (2016). Narangajavana et al. (2017) investigated the reasons for using UGC to acquire tourist information as well as the impact on tourists' expectations. These studies have highlighted that social media can assist in providing tourists with better information search, recognizing their needs and building expectations, and even assessing safety for specific travel purposes at pre-travel stage. Researchers also have examined the effects of social media on tourists' behaviour during and after their trips. Research has shown that social media can be used to evaluate potential options, influence travel experience, buying decisions and even loyalty behaviour. An analysis of how social media information about tourism shapes perceptions about a destination was conducted by Kim et al. (2017d). According to Gupta (2019), social media can have a considerable influence on tourists' hotel booking decisions.

Although these studies provide valuable insight into how tourists utilize social media and how it affects their decisions and behaviours, the majority of them concentrate on one aspect of the tourist decision-making process (e.g., information search) or a certain stage of the travel process (e.g., prior to travel). Additionally, these studies are more likely to use relevant concepts in tourism, such as trust and tourism ties, to formulate hypotheses and draw relevant conclusions from their investigations. As theoretical frameworks, only a few studies apply decision-making frameworks and theory, such as the general consumer decision-making model and the theory of planned behaviour into their research. Hence, it is necessary to investigate the influence of social media sites on travellers' behaviour and how user-generated content

(UGC) affects travellers' behaviour at different stages of travel using appropriate decision theory models.

Table 1.1 Examples of tourism studies on social media.

Stage	Research Topic	Publications
Pre-trip stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information search ● Need recognition ● Health safety evaluation ● Expectation creation 	Cox et al. (2009); Mendes et al. (2012); Pabel & Prideaux (2016) Matikiti-Manyevere et al. (2019); Fotis et al. (2011); Öz, (2015); Țuclea et al. (2020); Narangajavana et al. (2017)
During-trip stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation of alternatives ● Travel experience ● Purchase decision 	Liu et al. (2020); Varkaris & Neuhofer (2017); Gupta (2019); Singhal & Khattri (2018); Zehrer et al. (2011)
Post-trip stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trip evaluation ● Loyalty behaviour 	Narangajavana et al. (2019); Jamaludin et al. (2018); Kim & Fesenmaier (2017); Scott & Orlikowski (2012); Yoo & Gretzel (2011)

Source: author's elaboration

On the other hand, social media research has largely focused on consumer use; however, the role that social media plays in influencing destinations and organizations needs to be further explored. In social media, tourists and UGC have a mutually beneficial connection. That is, the services offered by UGC on social media not only allow tourists to access and use information about tourism products and services at the planning stage, but also allows them to share their experiences again on social media after their visit. In this context, post-travel reviews have become a new resource for UGC and a tool for evaluating destinations and tourism services, further influencing other travellers. Particularly, when tourists constantly comment on a destination or tourism service based on their travel experiences on social media, similar narratives and comments about a destination or tourism product will further influence destination organizations and may have a greater impact on tourism marketing (Pérez-Vega et al., 2018). For example, the post-trip comments on social media from Chinese tourists who have visited York in the UK as a place to take wedding photos not only influence perceptions of York among other tourists but may also lead York to assess its own marketing and positioning. To obtain more effective and efficient outcomes, travel and tourism organizations have shifted their marketing efforts from traditional media to UGC on social media (Li et al., 2021). However, tourism research is currently focused on how UGC influences consumer decisions (Cassar et al., 2020; Narangajavana et al., 2019), so research from a supplier perspective on how UGC shared on social media influences destinations is limited. Hence, an in-depth investigation of how UGC shared by tourists at the

post-trip stage impacts tourist destinations is a timely and necessary research topic.

Overall, this study investigates the impact of UGC on tourists' decisions in the pre-, during-, and post-travel phases. Drawing on consumer decision theories, it explores the dynamic cycle of influence between UGC and tourists, starting with the pre-trip phase when tourists use UGC to plan their trips, and ending with the post-trip phase when tourists share their travel experiences back on social media. This study will fill a gap in current related tourism research by relying less on traditional consumer decision theories and integrating them to construct the main theoretical framework. In the following section, relevant consumer decision theories are reviewed in detail.

1.1.3 Consumer decision-making theory

Decision-making theory is considered as a branch of cognitive science and social psychology (Ajzen, 1996; Busemeyer, 2015). As decision-making theory aims to better understand how individuals make decisions and why they make certain choices, research on the consumer decision-making process and behaviour has long been a cornerstone of marketing and management research (Santos & Gonçalves, 2021; Stankevich, 2017). In order to systematically understand the consumer decision journey, a number of theoretical models have been conceptualized in different ways across a range of disciplines. These models provide a conceptualisation of relevant factors, phases, and interaction variables, identifying the inherent complexity of the decision process (McCabe et al., 2016; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

Economic theories have a long history of being grounded in consumer decision-making research (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Since decisions in economic models are usually based on tangible and manufactured products, studies usually assume that consumers follow the principle of utility maximization, and therefore the proposed decision-making models are often based on the rational choice paradigms, such as expected utility theory (Morgenstern & Von Neumann, 1953), bounded rationality (Simon, 1990) and prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972). In these models, consumers are assumed to deliberately weigh the limitations of their choices and the final choice should provide the maximum benefit to the individual. However, in real life, almost all consumers' decisions do not depend solely on their rationality (Biswas, 2009), since they are influenced by a variety of factors (e.g., social influence and time constraints), which may lead them to act irrationally (Bettman et al., 1998). As a result, this economic paradigm has been criticized by many scholars since it assumes that people are rational and utilitarian (Dai et al., 2022; Decrop, 1999a; McCabe et al., 2016).

Psychology has also been widely used to understand consumers' decision-

making processes and choices. Psychologists classify consumers' choices and judgments according to task categories such as 'preferences', 'beliefs' and 'social decisions' (Loewenstein et al., 2008), so they generally study consumer decision-making process based on cognitive models that primarily focus on the mental processes involved when consumers make choices (Doyle & Thomason, 1999; Einhorn & Hogarth, 1981; Svenson, 1979). A benefit of this approach is that it takes into account that consumer decision-making processes are not always rational and are influenced by emotional and social factors (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). There are many classic theories in psychology, but one of the most well-known ones is the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1977). This theory proposes that 'attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention' are related (Sun et al., 2020). Considering psychological and social factors, this model provides useful insights into consumer decision-making process (consumer decisions are influenced by various input attributes), so it has been widely applied over the years to research in the field of social sciences, particularly in the field of tourism decision-making (McCabe et al., 2016). However, in recent years, new claims have emerged and argue that this model ignores affective aspects of intuitive thinking, adaptable personalities, consumption inspiration, and spontaneous behaviours (Decrop, 1999b; McCabe et al., 2016; Smallman & Moore, 2010). Therefore, these factors should not be ignored when studying the decision-making process of real consumers.

Computer scientists currently use data mining to study consumers' decision-making process and how aggregated-information datasets or big data affect consumer cognitions, perceptions, and emotions. As such, computer scientists typically focus on using a machine-learning approach to develop intelligent systems and work to better apply these intelligent systems to a wider consumer experience service. As a result, research in the field of computer science on consumer decisions has mainly focused on business and knowledge management, such as consumers' preference management and market promotion (Jebble et al., 2017; Kiang et al., 2000; Pires et al., 2006). Therefore, the impact of ICT innovations and changes in the social environment on the decision-making process of individual consumers is not focused on computer science research.

While a number of empirical studies have incorporated incremental conceptual knowledge from the core disciplines above (McCabe et al., 2016) into consumer decision-making research, an important question is whether these models are sufficiently reflective of recent ICT innovations (e.g., social media) on consumer decision-making and behaviours, particularly for intangible goods, such as purchasing services and travel products. The ever-evolving social media landscape today exacerbates consumer decision-making processes by making them vulnerable to external information. Correspondingly,

there is a call for more empirical studies that consider the changes in decision-making environments caused by technological innovations as well as recent consumer behaviour phenomena to advance consumer decision-making theories (Santos & Gonçalves, 2021).

The reasons why people make decisions is complicated, and they are influenced by a variety of external factors. In the era of continuous innovation and development of information and communication technology (ICT), social media has been acknowledged as an important information source that influences contemporary consumer decision-making (Pop et al., 2021). This thesis aims to examine the role of social media in tourism decision-making which includes its influence on different stages of tourist decision-making processes, as well as its influence on tourism practices. This introduction therefore reviews the key literature of decision-making that links across several academic fields and then integrate the central content to this thesis; using a social science perspective to understand the impact of social media on contemporary consumer decision-making. At the macro level, Figure 1.2 shows how these fields interact.

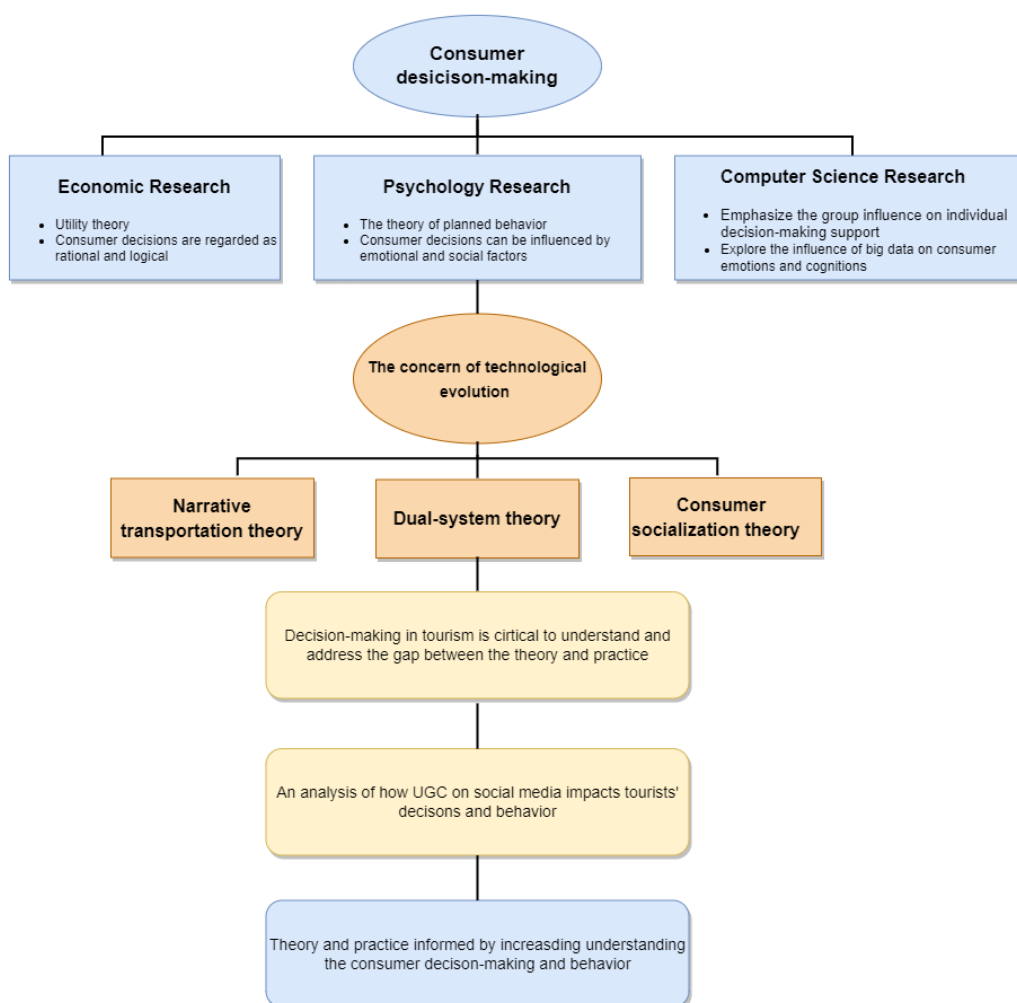


Figure 1.2 The flow chart of the research framework

1.2 Research gaps

With consumers increasingly relying on social media for destination and product information, the value of UGC to tourists, and indeed to destination marketers and tourism companies, has become an important topic of tourism research. Although many theories and empirical studies have explored the role of UGC in traveller behaviour and decision-making (Pop et al., 2021; Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015; Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017), as well as related concomitant factors, mediating variables, and building conceptual models for a particular decision stage (Fotis et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2017c), they are not without their limitations.

First, the majority of research on the impact of UGC on travellers tends to focus on specific stages of the decision-making process or specific decisions (Cassar et al., 2020; Hu & Trivedi, 2020; Jang & Moutinho, 2019; Wen et al., 2020), while analysis on the impact of UGC on travellers' overall travel decisions and behaviour is lacking. Specifically, existing research has focused on the impact of UGC on travellers at specific stages of decision-making, such as before the decision is made, during holiday travel planning (Cheunkamon et al., 2020; Fotis et al., 2012; Matikiti-Manyevere & Kruger, 2019), or on travellers' hotel choices (Gupta, 2019; Hubner et al., 2021). Furthermore, previous studies have examined the impact of UGC on consumers (Fotis et al., 2011). Despite this, there has been little discussion of how UGC impacts destinations and tourism businesses in the consumer post-decision phase, with travellers sharing their experiences on social media again after their trip. In the post-trip phase, when travellers share their travel experiences back to social media, these experiences can be valuable resources for other potential travellers to understand the travel company and destination, influencing their decisions and destination choices. This is where UGC can have a profound impact on destination marketing and management. Therefore, there is a need for an in-depth study on how UGC can impact tourism at different stages and how it can further influence destinations and tourism businesses.

Second, a significant gap still exists between research on tourist decision-making influenced by UGC and actual tourist behaviour patterns. The general mechanisms of how UGC influence visitor decision-making process and behaviour are not yet fully understood. Some studies have examined how tourists assess the perceived usefulness of consumer reviews and how trust in these reviews influences their travel decisions (Kim et al., 2017a; Purnawirawan et al., 2015; Willemsen et al., 2011), including factors that influence the perceived usefulness of online reviews and how these factors positively or negatively impact purchase intentions (Kim & Kim, 2020; Tan et al., 2018; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). There is a noteworthy point that

these studies assume that tourists are rational decision makers who follow a deliberate, purposeful, and rational process that includes extensive information searches, but tourists may not follow standard patterns of information processing. Instead, tourists who refer to UGC for decision-making may form perceptions and make judgments about tourism products that are largely based on other consumers (derived from the UGC) and driven by their own interests, leading to a more a free-hearted and straightforward decision-making process. However, empirical research on the direct or indirect influence of UGC on tourist behaviour, emotional reactions or cognitive reasoning has been lacking.

Third, few studies have distinguished the types of UGC and assessed their impact on different decision-making tasks when applying different decision-making strategies. UGC is a travel information bank that includes not only factual information, such as ticket prices and transportation routes, but also travel stories, photos, and short videos created by tourists. At different stages of their journey (before, during, and after travel), tourists may combine distinct types of information and strategies for different decision-making tasks (e.g., destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, recommendation of tourism products to others, and revisiting intention). To inform theory and provide implications for practitioners, a better understanding of how different types of UGC affect tourist behaviour is necessary.

Fourth, despite an increased recognition that tourists add value to business organizations and destinations by posting UGC in online platforms about their travel experiences and interacting with online community members at the post-travel stage (Bigné et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019a), this process has received little attention from scholars and has not been fully conceptualized in value-creation frameworks. While UGC can facilitate peer-tourists destination acquisition and processing by offering relevant and real-visit information and interpretation has been established. However, empirical research examining the effects of UGC on tourism organizations and destinations remains scarce. The potential of UGC in value co-creation remains unknown and requires more research. This thesis aims to fill the gaps in the existing literature and address the aforementioned issues.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

In this thesis, the aim is to extend knowledge of today's tourism within the context of social media communications and specifically focus on how UGC influences tourist decision-making as well as tourism businesses and destinations in tourism. This purpose of this study is to empirically investigate the impacts of UGC on tourist behaviour with an emphasis on the effects of

UGC on tourists' destination choice, purchasing, and loyalty behaviour, as well as the co-creation of destination value.

The fundamental research question addressed is: What is the role of UGC in travel decision-making? Toward addressing this problem, this study investigates: (1) How does the use of UGC affect their perceptions and travel arrangements? (2) Does the UGC influence tourists' behaviour intentions or actual behaviour? (3) What is the working mechanism of UGC on tourists' decision-making?

To achieve the research purposes, this study is carried out to meet the following research objectives:

- a) To examine tourists' use of UGC on social media in travel decision-making as well as their impact on the tourists' perceptions.
- b) To test the effect of UGC on tourist destination choice and actual purchasing behaviour.
- c) To test the effects of UGC on tourists' loyalty behaviours.
- d) To identify and test factors mediating the effect of UGC on tourist behaviour (destination choice and purchasing behaviour) and behaviour intention (loyalty).
- e) To investigate how tourists construct travel experiences through social media and further impact destination management.
- f) To provide a better understanding of the potential implications of social media for the travel and tourism industry.

1.4 Rational for selecting a World Heritage site in China

Gulangyu, a well-known heritage tourism destination in southeast China, is used as a case study to provide empirical evidence and elucidate the impacts of UGC on tourist behaviour and tourism destination management. The reasons are threefold. First, China is chosen as the study country because it has the world's largest population and provides an ideal platform to investigate social media's influence on tourists' decision-making. According to Statista (2020), there were around 882 million social media users in China in 2019. Additionally, China is home to some of the largest social media sites in the world, including Weibo, WeChat, TikTok, and Xiao Hongshu. This provides an opportunity to study how tourists interact with these platforms as well as how their social media usage affects their travel behaviour and destination management. Furthermore, the use of social media has become an integral part of everyday life and routines in China. Chinese people are used to consulting information when making decisions (Zaw, 2018). Due to this, Chinese tourists heavily rely on social media information to make travel decisions. Second, Gulangyu is taken as a tourism case study because it has a

strong reputation and high visibility on the Internet. According to a report by Ctrip (2017), Gulangyu was the second most popular tourist destination during the 2017 Chinese Lunar New Year, receiving a total of 2.25 million visitors and generating 2.4 billion RMB in tourism revenue. Third, as a historical international community, Gulangyu was officially listed as a World Heritage Site in 2017. Apart from historical buildings, it has a wide range of different types of attractions. Gulangyu has world-class museums that visitors can explore. Visitors can also attend a concert in the local concert hall to experience the unique tradition of classical music. There are also beaches, seafood restaurants, and other attractions on the island. In 2018, Gulangyu was the second most visited UNESCO World Heritage Site, attracting approximately 12 million domestic and foreign visitors (UNESCO, 2018). For all the above reasons, Gulangyu appears to be an appropriate case study for this current study.

1.5 Significance of this study

1.5.1 Contribution to theory

This thesis makes an important contribution to both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, it examines the widespread use of UGC on social media in consumer decision-making and provides valuable insights into how tourists and tourism organisations can work together to co-create value. First, this study proposes a model of complex tourism decision-making incorporating reasoning and heuristic systems based on a narrative transportation theory and the dual-system theory. Many tourism scholars have studied the impact of social media on tourism planning and tourists' decision-making but have yet to address its theoretical underpinnings. Given the prevalence of unorganized information (UGC on social media) in today's consumer decision-making, this study approaches real tourists and examines the impact of UGC on the decision-making process to develop a new conceptual model that can predict and reflect real tourist behaviour and decision-making.

Second, this study contributes to tourism literature by classifying information on social media into different types and examining the impact of different types on travel decisions. Specifically, this study analyses the interactions among different types of UGC (factual UGC and emotional UGC), travel decision tasks (destination choice, purchasing behaviour, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty behaviour), travel stages (pre-, during- and post-travel stages), and travellers' information processing strategies (reasoning or heuristic), in order to offer empirical insights into how UGC impacts the travel decision-making process in actual situations. Third, this study uses the framework of consumer socialization to explore the process of co-creation of destination

values through travel blogs. It fills in the gaps in UGC's influence on tourism service providers by demonstrating how travel blogs, as a popular form of UGC, can be shared in the post-travel phrase, and by exploring how interactions between tourists can affect destinations.

1.5.2 Contribution to practice

From a management perspective, this research provides valuable knowledge for business professionals. First, it contributes to understanding what tourists want in terms of the types of tourism products and services available on social media and how the different types of UGC influence visitors' decisions and consumption behaviour. With such knowledge, destination managers can develop appropriate strategies to improve the competitiveness of their destinations in social media settings. Second, the findings from this research can be utilized to develop peer-review systems for travel and tourism apps and websites. In Today's digital world, travel decisions are highly influenced by the UGC and social networks, and such changes have a significant influence on the way travellers mobilize different decision-making systems at different stages of their decision-making processes. Consequently, optimizing the search engines of the online travel platforms will pave the way for designing effective systems to provide innovative and customized services to travellers. Third, the results of this study provide tourism service providers with a deeper understanding of traveller perceptions and sharing behaviours. Travel and hospitality service providers can also consider which types of businesses will be useful to potential customers, as well as how to engage and encourage contemporary consumers to co-create their experiences through positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

1.6 Definitions of key terms

Social media: 'A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

Online/Virtual Community: 'A group of people who share their consumer experiences via social media, including communicating with other members or the company regarding their concerns and opinions, and providing critiques of offered products/services' (Rheingold, 1993).

Word of mouth (WOM): 'It is an oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product or service' (Arndt, 1967).

e-Word of mouth (e-WOM): It refers to 'the opinions and recommendations

of other users who generate their own content in different websites (electronic WOM or e-WOM) ' (Hernández-Méndez et al., 2015).

User-generated-content (UGC): It refers to 'media content created or produced by the general public primarily distributed on the Internet' (Daugherty et al., 2008).

Usefulness: 'The degree to which a person believes that the use of a particular system would enhance his or her job performance' (Davis, 1989, p. 320).

Destination Image: It is defined as 'the sum of the beliefs, feelings, conceptions, knowledge, imaginations, emotional thoughts, ideas, and impressions held by people about a place or destination ' (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996).

Tourist loyalty: It refers to 'the tourists' intention to revisit the destination and to recommend the experience to their friends and family'(Oppermann, 2000).

1.7 Organization of this thesis

There are seven chapters in this thesis. The first three introduce the research background, literature review, and general research design of this study. Chapter four presents the results of the quantitative study. The fifth chapter presents the findings of the second phase of the qualitative study. The sixth and seventh chapters mainly summarize and conclude the findings of this research, explaining the limitations and outlining the future directions. The **Figure 1.3** present the structure of the thesis.

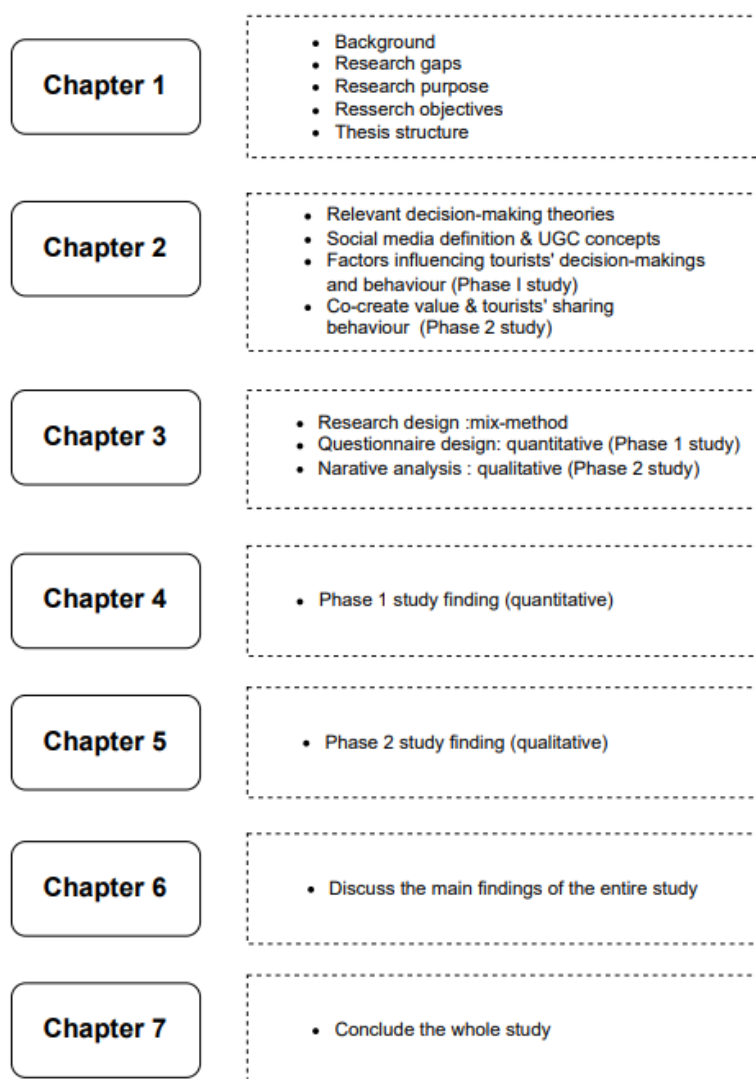


Figure 1.3 The structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the background, gaps, purpose and objective of the research, and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the major decision-making theories relevant to this study. This chapter then explores the definition of social media and basic concepts of UGC through existing literature. The factors that influence tourists' decisions and behaviour throughout their travel journal are examined. Lastly, tourist post-consumption behaviour (sharing behaviour on social media) is discussed and discussed how it contributed to co-creating value and communicating about tourism destinations.

Chapter 3 discusses research methodology, including research philosophy, research design, and the methods used for this study. The ethical considerations of the research are explained.

Chapter 4 presents the qualitative findings of the first phase of this study, which examined the impact of UGC on social media on visitor behaviour throughout the holiday process. First, the type of travel products that consumers are more likely to seek out UGC information on social media before departing is identified. The difference in UGC usage between first-time visitors and repeaters was compared. Next, UGC's influence on tourist destination selection and purchasing behaviour at the destination is examined. Finally, the impact of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour is also be studied. The relationship between UGC, destination image, satisfaction, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth publicity is discussed.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of the second phase of qualitative study. The findings were discussed to shed light on how travellers record and reconstruct their travel experiences on social media at the post-trip stage and how such UGC can further influence tourism business and destination management.

Chapter 6 summarises and discusses the main findings of the phase one and phase two studies.

Chapter 7 provides the conclusion for the whole study. Both the theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed. A review of the study's limitations is presented, along with suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of four sections that outline the main theories and concepts relevant to this study. To facilitate the understanding of how social media affects tourists' decision-making and behaviour, the first section of the literature review reviews some classical theories and proposes a new framework for understanding contemporary consumer decision-making behaviour in the context of the rapid development of communication technologies. The second section discusses the definition, value, and influence of social media in the tourism industry. Based on the theoretical framework of this study, the concrete hypothesis of the first phase quantitative study is presented in the third section. The fourth section discusses co-creating value from the perspective of the tourism providers, emphasizing the post-consumption behaviour of tourists.

2.1 Understanding tourists' decision-making and behaviour

Since the 1950s, market economics theory and behavioural decision theory have been applied to tourism research (De Almeida & Bohoris, 1995; Han, 2021). Traditional rational choice theory suggests that consumers make decisions that maximize benefits relative to costs (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972); (Morgenstern & Von Neumann, 1953; Simon, 1990). This has led to a long history of rational decision-making being dominant in tourism and hospitality research (McCabe et al., 2016; Pop et al., 2021; Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). The three main approaches used in traditional tourism research are the normative approach (utility theory), the prescriptive cognitive approach (the theory of planned behaviour) and the structured process approach (choice set model) (Gursoy, 2019; McCabe et al., 2016).

However, consumer choice is also thought to be influenced by personal experience and social context (Keegan, 2009; Yates & de Oliveira, 2016). As the purpose of tourism is to seek pleasure and experience positive emotions, travel decision making is inherently different from the purchase of other tangible goods due to the irrational element of the 'experience' and 'emotion' in tourism consumption (Keegan, 2009; Yates & de Oliveira, 2016). For this reason, the study of consumer decision-making in travel context has become increasingly important by integrating critical social theories alongside rational choice and behaviouralist theories (Gretzel, 2011).

The rapid development of communication technologies in recent decades has had a profound impact on the tourism industry (Bethapudi, 2013; Gössling, 2021). In the new social media era, tourism decision-makers now

heavily rely on information generated by social media users and are affected by their peers when making decisions, which is likely to result in a different approach than before. Consequently, it is essential to reconstruct the model of tourism decision-making in the new social media era by reviewing the relevant theories. This chapter will review the decision theories used in this study, build the theoretical framework and propose a model that is more closely related to the decision-making of tourists in the social media era.

2.1.1 Grand model of consumer decision-making: Information processing theory

Information processing theory plays a central role in all models of consumer behaviour (Bettman et al., 1998; Gabbott & Hogg, 1994). This theory states that consumer decision-making involves five main stages (see Figure 2.1). They are: (1) problem or need recognition (2) information search (3) various alternatives evaluation (4) purchase decision (5) post-purchase behaviour or evaluation and first introduced by Dewey (1910). A consumer's purchase process begins with recognizing a need to be met or a problem to be solved or a need to be satisfied. Whether we act to resolve a particular problem depends upon two factors: (1) the magnitude of the difference between what we have and what we need, and (2) the importance of the problem (Bruner, 1983).

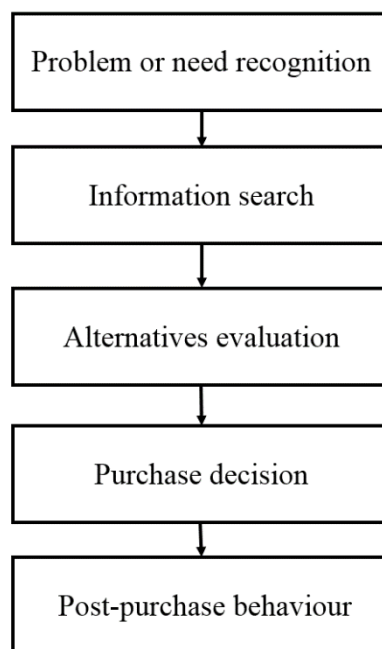


Figure 2.1 The information process model (Dewey, 1910)

The information-process model is one of the grand models of consumer behaviour that many tourism models have been based upon. However, the actual sequence of processes does not always adhere to the order of numbering. In some cases, emotions may drive a purchase, leading to information

search coming before problem recognition. For example, when people see photographs of the Great Wall on the internet, they may be motivated to travel to China in the coming holidays. In this case, travelling in the next holiday (as a need or problem) is not necessary, but is a result of information search action. Besides, all stages of information processing are not independent, and information search may alternate with alternative evaluation.

Even though the information processing model does not consider internal factors and cannot explain how consumers form their attitudes towards products and services and then make decisions, it provides a macro-view of the tourism decision-making process and has been used in diverse studies (e.g., Bargeman and van der Poel (2006), Fodness (1992) and Crompton (1992)). With other internal factors considered, the stages of tourists' decision-making processes in this study are also derived from this macro-information processing theory, but tourists' dynamic information that reflects more real behaviour has been simplified into three stages suggested by Leung et al. (2013): pre-decisions, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behaviours (Figure 2.2).

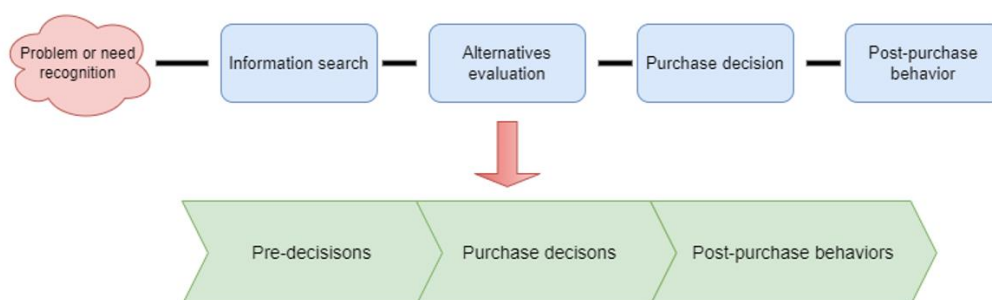


Figure 2.2 Three simplified stages of information processing (Leung et al., 2013)

2.1.2 Narrative transportation

In media and social psychology, narrative transportation is the process of becoming deeply engaged and emotionally invested in a story (Green & Brock, 2000). When this occurs, people may be transported into the narrative world and may experience an attitudinal and behavioural change (Green & Clark, 2013). Research has shown that stories or narratives can affect people through watching, listening, and reading (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2007).

Travel information on social media capture storytellers' accounts of destinations or travel products, creating a storytelling experience (Kim et al., 2017b). When engaging with online travel reviews that represents a destination, the

audience can travel mentally and emotionally (i.e., experience touristic activities) during story reception (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Van Laer et al., 2014). The process by which people obtain a virtual experience through travel information on social media can also be defined as a form of “narrative transportation” (Van Laer et al., 2014).

Narrative transportation theory seeks to explain narrative persuasive effects through a different mechanism from well-known theories such as social cognitive theory and dual systems theory (Green & Sestir, 2017). Scholars in marketing (Green & Brock, 2000) and psychology (Hamby et al., 2015) have studied narrative transportation to explore factors that influence narrative communication and explain narrative persuasive effects on attitudes and behavioural change. Specifically, studies have examined the role of narrative transportation, narrative types, and audience factors (e.g., interviewer age) influencing narrative transportation (Green, 2004; Rozier-Rich & Santos, 2011) and paths between narrative persuasion and outcomes (Banerjee & Greene, 2012; Van Laer et al., 2019).

To explore the general mechanism in and process of narrative persuasion, Hamby et al. (2015) proposed the transportation-reflection-behaviour intention model (Figure 2.3). The model suggests two key processes for narrative persuasion – transportation and reflection – and assumes that narratives that carry information about the real world “transport” readers in a plausible experience of others (Deighton et al., 1989). Hence, narratives can have a significant influence on changes in recipients’ beliefs (Escalas, 2007; Green, 2004). While reflection acts as a facilitator between transportation and behaviour intention, it refers to an individual’s ability to link the story world to the real world (Hamby et al., 2015). Reflection is affected by the context and content of the narrative but controlled by audience members (Yukawa, 2006). During the reflection process, individuals evaluate the informativeness of narratives and decide whether and how to incorporate that useful information into a subsequent decision (Park et al., 2007). Thus, the potential outcomes of the reflection process are changes in behaviour and commitment to action (Yukawa, 2006). Although the above theoretical model has been proposed, empirical studies examining the general mechanism of narrative persuasion are still limited.



Figure 2.3 The narrative persuasion process (Hamby et al., 2015).

Academic interest related to narrative persuasion effects in marketing is growing (Wang et al., 2020). While narrative transportation theory provides a good explanation for how UGC on social media may help tourists form men-

tal images and gain knowledge of the location even if they have not been there, this theory has not been widely studied in the tourism field (Chen et al., 2019). Irimiás et al. (2021) found that narrative transportation can influence travel in various way, and that escapism and immersion both play an important role in this process. Ryu et al. (2019) examined how the structure of a brand story affects narrative transportation and perceived brand image of luxury hotels. Van et al. (2019) examined the effects of digital storytelling on individuals by conducting a meta-analysis of relevant moderators of the narrative transportation effect. The results showed that the transportation effect was moderated by the presence of interactive elements, narrative structure, and individual characteristics. Increasingly, tourists' online reviews have become a valuable information source and have been able to influence other potential tourism decision-making processes (Cheng et al., 2019; Lian & Yu, 2019; Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2018). Despite this, researchers have yet to explore fully how these spontaneously generated comments can be converted into persuasion mechanisms, and future quantitative and theoretical studies are necessary to understand how these narrative on social media persuade. This study fills this gap by using narrative transportation as a theoretical lens to examine how UGC affects tourists' decision-making process.

2.1.3 Dual system accounts of information processing and decision-making

Consumers do not always make rational decisions and may choose without being guided by external information. A dual-processing theory based on psychological processes can help to overcome limitations of neo-classical economic theory in this regard (Evans, 2008). According to Kahneman (2011), two distinct modes of cognition that play a role in decision-making, namely intuition (system 1) and reasoning (system 2). Kahneman (2011) specifies two ways people make decisions: System 1 is 'fast, automatic, experiential, and related to emotion', while System 2 is 'rational, logical, and related to rational thinking' (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Kahneman, 2011). Despite their differences in description and terminology, the final decision is ultimately based on a satisfactory balance between two systems (Evans, 2008).

Cognitive and social psychology have extensively employed dual-system models (Samson & Voyer, 2012). Experimental psychology and neuroscience have provided ample empirical evidence for the dual-process and dual-system theory (Berry et al., 1993; Eichenbaum, 2001). However, in travel and tourism, there have been few studies of dual-system models. Jun and Vogt (2013) propose two possible explanations for the lack of attention to dual-system theory. Firstly, the dual-system model may not considered appropriate when individuals are highly motivated to process information. In their study, it is argued that when making decisions based on emotion, such

as choosing a travel destination stimulated by watching short films, a particular focus is placed on the intuitive and rapid mechanisms of emotion. These situations may not lead to a strong incentive for information search or information processing. Secondly, dual-system approaches are more suitable for experiments, which are not often employed in tourism research. Thus, assessing the causal and moderating effects of a dual-system model is challenging.

Recently, Information and communication technologies have diminished the control of organizations over the source of information. Consumer reviews of products and services create a new and different context where a dual systems approach can be applied in the tourism sector (McCabe et al., 2016). Modern travellers who use social media to share a wealth of text and images about a destination enable other potential travellers to quickly learn about the destination and achieve the goal of understanding the product and service in a short period of time. As travellers gain experience or consumption skill from fellow consumers, they may employ different information processing strategies (or combinations) to make travel decisions. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the way travellers make decisions has changed in the age of social media. In light of this, the dual-system mental processing theory will serve as the overarching theoretical lens for this study. A general framework incorporating narrative transportation and dual-system mental processing (i.e., heuristic and analytical) approach is proposed in order to better understand how UGC impacts the tourist experience and behaviour.

2.1.4 Theoretical Framework

The information processing, dual-system, and narrative transportation theories provide a theoretical framework (See Figure 2.4) for understanding how social media content may influence tourists' decision-making process and behaviour. As the information processing theory suggests, consumers process information in stages, and the content on social media can influence each stage. Therefore, the developed theoretical framework will examine how social media content influences individual behavior at different decision stages (pre-decision, during decision, and post-decision).

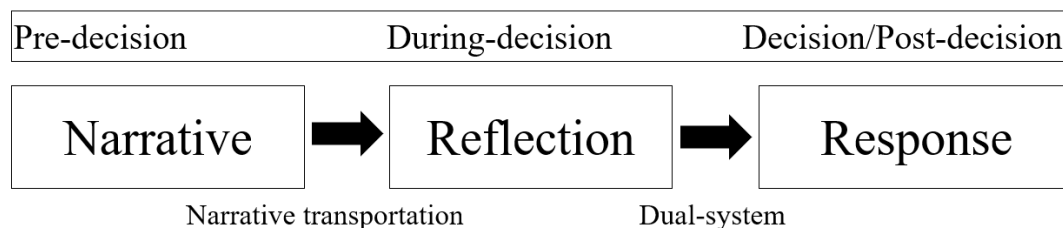


Figure 2.4 The proposed theoretical Framework.

Narrative transportation theory posits that individuals become “transported” into a narrative world when they encounter a story, and that this transportation is a key factor in understanding how the narrative is interpreted, processed and applied in real-life situations. Despite some research being conducted on narrative transportation theory in the context of tourism, there are still some important gaps in the current literature. For example, there is a need for research on how narratives are used differently in different contexts, such as in online environments. Additionally, there is a need for research on how the characteristics of narratives, such as factual information and emotional information, can influence the degree to which readers are transported into the narrative and influence individual behavior. Finally, there is a need for research on how the effects of narrative transportation can be measured and how they can be used to inform marketing strategies and tourist management practices. Therefore, in order to fill in the above gaps, building off the narrative transportation theory, the theoretical framework for this study could be developed which would focus the online social media environment and the role of UGC content in narrative transportation. The developed theoretical framework for this study will examine whether different types of UGC (e.g. factual vs. emotional) affect the degree of narrative transportation and can lead to a more impactful decision-making process and behaviour.

The dual-system model posits that individuals use two cognitive systems – System 1 and System 2 – to process information and make decisions. When consumers can experience a story as if it were their own, allowing them to create a cognitive and emotional connection to the products, service or destination. This cognitive and emotional connection can lead to a more impactful decision-making process and behaviour. System 1 is activated by the visual content (e.g. Photos or video) and emotional connection created by the narrative transportation, while System 2 is activated by the analytical aspects of the content on social media, such as reviews. This allows individuals to quickly process the content and make a decision. As such, social media content can stimulate both Systems 1 and 2 and can significantly influence consumers’ decision-making process and behavior.

While the dual-system theory provides explanations and mechanisms of how consumers make decisions, research on the dual-system’s application in tourist decision-making and behaviour is lacking and empirical studies are insufficient. Further, there has little study on how different types of content stimuli affect the dual-system, in order to gain a better understanding of how the dual-system affects consumer behaviour and decision-making. Using social media as an empirical study, this study will examine how different types of content stimuli may differ between the two decision systems to fill in the theoretical gap in dual system theory.

2.2 User-generated-content (UGC) on social media

2.2.1 Social media: definitions and features

Social media, as one of the most influential extensions of Internet technology, has become a crucial component of local communities (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as 'a collection of web-based programs that expand on Web 2.0's conceptual and technical underpinnings and enable the production and sharing of UGC'. Social media, which is product of the second stage of Web growth (Web 2.0), facilitates interactivity and information sharing between individuals and groups. (Murugesan, 2007). It is also known as "peer-to-peer" communication channels, which enables users to create content, engage in interactive networks, collaborate and exchange information with the public (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). This has led to a significant and pervasive change in the way organizations, communities and individuals communicate (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

On the internet, there are many types of social media available, including social networking sites, blogs, wikis, consumer review sites, and forums (Asur & Huberman, 2010; Maddux et al., 2008). Sharing, collaboration, and cooperation are three key elements of social media. Sharing is the act of exchanging information, news, pictures, short films and videos among users on social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram (Russo et al., 2008). Collaboration refers to developing content on social media by individuals in a voluntary manner (Khatri et al., 2015). Cooperation refers to the creation of virtual communities and their mutual sharing within social networks, as well as the production of asymmetrical and non-hierarchical digital content (Sigala et al., 2012; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

Socialization is another important aspect of social media in addition to these three characteristics. The use of social media, such as blogs and consumer review websites, promotes the socialization of members of online communities (Wang et al., 2012). The use of social media enables users to socialize with a wide range of peers who act as socialization agents, as well as access a wealth of information that enables them to effectively acquire knowledge of specific skills and tasks efficiently (Gershoff & Johar, 2006; Liu, 2010; Wang et al., 2012). As a result, social media has become a new medium for knowledge sharing and learning.

2.2.2 UGC: concept and value

2.2.2.1 The definition of UGC

Academically, there is no widely accepted definition as UGC research is still

in its infancy. UGC originated as a niche activity driven by long-tail distribution (Daugherty et al., 2008), characterized by participatory inequalities with only a few people involved in creation (Ochoa & Duval, 2008). With the transformation of the World Wide Web, consumers are increasingly empowered to express themselves publicly on the internet, which has influenced the shift in consumer market intelligence from manager-generated content to consumer-generated content (Daugherty et al., 2008).

Daugherty et al. (2008) described the UGC as media content primarily distributed on the Internet. This definition is too broad and of no use in the current context, as it includes participation at all levels across all platforms and lacks specificity. UGC is described by United States' Interactive Advertising Bureau (2008) as "any material produced and published to the website by non-media professionals". This definition was criticized by academics because the description of UGC creators as 'non-media professionals' is flawed Christodoulides et al. (2012). According to a more flexible definition, customers who create UGC are "regular people," or the user of goods or services (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (2007) definition of UGC is the one that is most frequently cited. It states that UGC as having three main characteristics: (1) content published publicly on the Internet; (2) content that displays some degree of creative effort; and (3) content that produced outside of standard working hours and procedures.

2.2.2.2 The value of UGC

Value is perceived as the 'usefulness of something' (Mohammad et al., 2020; Parasuraman, 1997; Wikstöm & Normann, 1994). The value of UGC lies in the intense social interaction of community members on social media, where consumers discuss or comment on a product or service, resulting in their satisfaction, positive recommendation, and enhanced interaction among them (Seraj, 2012; Shilpa lyanna et al., 2012).

In this regard, the value of UGC here is not correlated with economic value, but rather reflects the situation with 'knowledge capital', which is the result of the long-term accumulation and collective effort of all participants in the online community (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Bharati et al., 2015). The value can also be described as an 'epistemic' value, which is often associated with the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. This type of value is driven by a desire to learn and explore new ideas and concepts (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

The value of UGC can generally be divided into functional and emotional values (Mohammad et al., 2020) based on the consumption value theory (Sheth et al., 1991). Functional value of the UGC refers to providing specific

information about the functional benefits of the product or brand (Asmayadi & Hartini, 2015). In order to create functional value, UGC creators and website designers seek to provide more specific knowledge and improve the quality of their content, for example by examining functional factors in a product or service, such as accessibility, ease of use, low cost, and availability (Liu-Thompkins & Rogerson, 2012).

The emotional value in UGC is the level of emotional satisfaction or pleasure people experience from the consumption of UGC and receive perceptions of the products or services (Mohammad et al., 2020; Sheth et al., 1991). Generally, people tend to avoid negative emotions like sadness, disappointment and anger when they purchase goods or services, so emotional value typically described as positive feelings, such as joy and happiness (Vickery & Wunsch-Vincent, 2007). Researchers therefore often assert that emotional value arises from the satisfaction or positive feelings that users experience when using UGC (Ali et al., 2016; Cheung et al., 2021; Karahasanović et al., 2009; Mohammad et al., 2020).

2.2.3 The UGC in tourism

2.2.3.1 The concept of UGC in tourism

With the development of ICT, the UGC concept has been introduced into the tourism industry. This technology enables individual visitors to create and share electronic content among multiple users at the global level (Cox et al., 2009; Munar & Jacobsen, 2013). Travellers are thus increasingly making travel decisions based on UGC information found on social media, such as posts and travel reviews on TripAdvisor, C-trip, or Mafengwo (Van der Zee & Bertocchi, 2018).

In tourism literature, the UGC generally refers to media content created or produced by any individual using internet platforms, where they can create and share their opinions, experiences, or doubts about destination products, services, attractions, and so on (Burgess et al., 2011), for other users to see and respond to (Cox et al., 2009). Unlike traditional sources of travel information (i.e., Government-sponsored tourism websites), UGC is created by the general public and ordinary consumers rather than by paid professionals with less commercial interests.

2.2.3.2 The categories of UGC in tourism

Scholars generally categorize UGC based on social media applications, so the UGC impacts on tourist behaviour have been investigated for Twitter (Liu et al., 2017; Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013), Tripadvisor (Amaral et al., 2014;

Guo et al., 2017) and YouTube (Mir & Ur Reham, 2013). Other scholars have classified UGC sources as strong ties (friends and family) and weak ties (acquaintances and strangers) based on UGC contributors (Narangajavana et al., 2019). However, the potential impact of UGC attributes on the tourist perception and behaviour is still not fully understood.

In tourist marketing studies, a number of empirical studies have found that the decision-making process of tourists has two dimensions: cognitive process and affective process (Crompton, 1992). The cognitive process refers to ‘the knowledge a person has about the characteristics or attributes of products or services’ (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike & Ryan, 2004), whereas affective processes refer to feelings an individual has towards a product or service (Chen & Uysal, 2002; Kim & Richardson, 2003).

The popularity of using UGC by travellers has grown significantly (Ayeh et al., 2013); this is because it enables consumers to easily obtain up-to-date information about destinations and services reported by other tourists, such as popular tourist attractions, transportation, and travel tips. This aggregated information also includes photographs, videos, and stories that may positively influence tourist feelings and emotions toward travel products or destinations. In this sense, UGC is not only a source of information used to inform tourism purchasing decisions, but it is also a source of supporting information that is used to shape perceptions of travel products or destinations (Luo & Zhong, 2015).

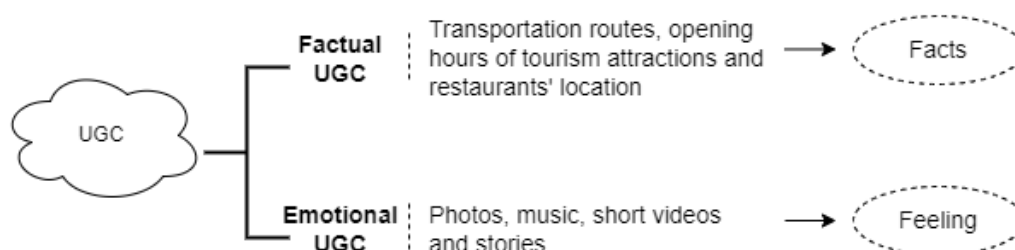


Figure 2.5 The categories of UGC.

Based on the above discussion, this study categorizes UGC-related tourism into factual and emotional UGC. The factual UGC refers to tourist-generated factual information about a destination, such as a ticket price, transportation routes, events information and relevant interpretation information of scenic spots, which give basic facts to the tourists and affects their cognitive perception towards the travel products or a destination (Li et al., 2008). Emotional UGC refers to any form of information, such as famous music and films mentioned in online UGC, which may trigger a tourist's imagination and affect emotional perceptions of a destination (Hadinejad et al., 2019; Kim, 2012).

2.3 The impact of UGC on tourist behaviour

The importance of UGC in tourists' decision-making can be summarized into the following three main considerations: first, tourism-related products and services cannot be experienced, and therefore consumers are unable to accurately and effectively evaluate them before consumption (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008), which leads tourists to rely heavily on the knowledge and experiences of others (Mehraliyev et al., 2020). Furthermore, reviews from tourists who have purchased the product or service are deemed honest and trustworthy, thus forming a dependable source of information for potential tourists in the planning stage of visits (Cox et al., 2009). Second, travel-related consumption is normally not a single purchasing decision, but includes a series of travel decisions, including selecting destinations, booking hotels, planning travel routes, buying tickets, and choosing local restaurants. Seeking to make the best travel decisions and make the most of their experience, tourists read reviews and comments from fellow tourists to reduce risks and uncertainty and even improve their satisfaction during the travel (Chung & Koo, 2015; Narangajavana et al., 2019). Third, in the post-travel stage, when tourists are satisfied with other tourists' reviews after their trip, those influenced by other opinions are likely to share their travel journey on social media. This post-consumer behaviour, in turn, contributes to a healthy UGC sharing environment.

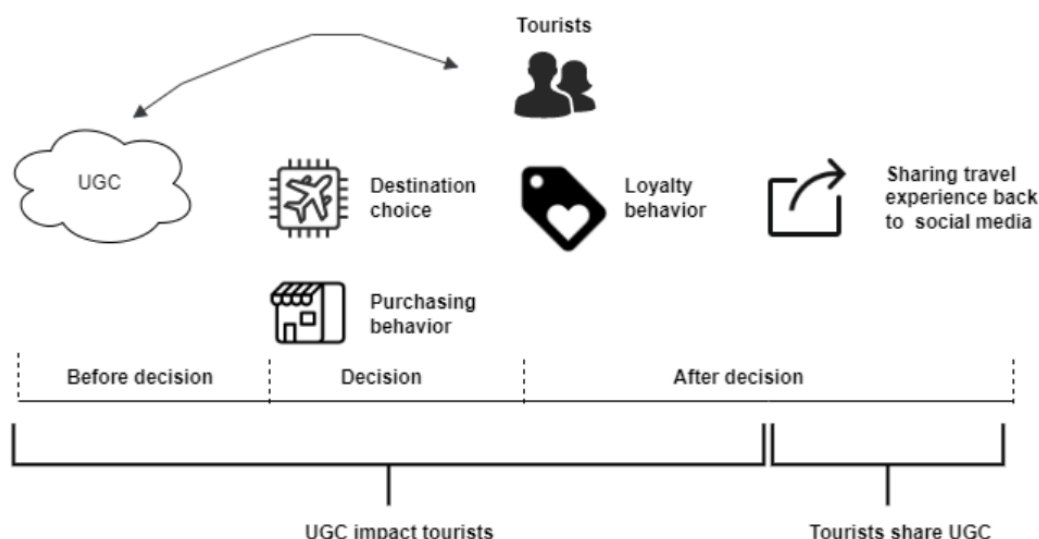


Figure 2.6 The impact of UGC on tourist's decision-making process.

The UGC plays a critical role in the entire travel decision-making process of tourists (Cox et al., 2009). Following the discussion in section 2.1.1 of the role of information in consumer decision-making process, this thesis focuses on the three stages of UGC's influence on tourism decision making (see Figure 2.5): the pre-travel decision stage, the travel decision stage, and the

post-decision stage. Specifically, this study examines the impact of UGC on two major tourism decisions (destination choice and purchasing behaviour) and post-consumer loyalty behaviour. In the post-tourism phase, tourists engage in UGC sharing behaviour, which will be discussed separately in section 2.4 of this chapter.

2.3.1 Effect of UGC on destination choice and purchasing behaviour

Destination choice is a 'process of selecting a destination from competing alternatives' (Crompton, 1992; Decrop & Snelders, 2005). As an important supplementary decision-making information source for potential tourists, UGC provides reviews of destinations and helps potential tourists access whether the 'pull' factors (destination attributes) that the reviews mention correspond to 'push' factors (travel motives). In other words, online user-generated travel information helps tourists to evaluate whether a destinations' specific characteristics suit their personal needs and interests when traveling. Hence, UGC has a great chance of influencing tourists' destination choices.

Existing studies have acknowledged that social media can contribute to the evaluation of destination choices (Di Pietro et al., 2012; Litvin & Hoffman, 2012). For example, Di Pietro et al. (2012) demonstrated that the perceived usefulness of social networks affects tourists' attitudes towards using online reviews to choose tourism destinations. Tham et al. (2013) compared the effects of word-of-mouth and e-word-of-mouth on tourist destination choice. A number of studies have made valuable contributions to the understanding the usage of online reviews and their adoption by potential tourists, including evaluating the different effects of positive and negative reviews on purchase intention, investigating the impacts of online reviews on tourists' attitudes towards destination hotels, and examining the influence of travellers' trust in online reviews on their behavioural intention (Kim & Kim, 2020; Tan et al., 2018; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Another group of researchers has drawn upon the heuristic-systematic model to identify factors that likely influence the perceived usefulness of consumer reviews, such as website credibility, review length, receiver–source similarity, product type, content characteristics, and valence (Kim et al., 2017a; Purnawirawan et al., 2015; Willemssen et al., 2011).

While numerous academic studies assume that online reviews drive consumer choice, and some review characteristics are categorized as useful cues affecting information persuasiveness, tourists do not follow a standard mode of information processing (Gursoy, 2019; Wattanacharoensil & Larornual, 2019). Instead, they are more likely to make travel purchasing decisions based on their subjective standards and the context, such as interests and trip purpose (Kim et al., 2021; Proyrungroj, 2020; Zeng & He, 2019).

Therefore, the general mechanism by which online reviews influence prospective tourists' subsequent travel decisions is still unclear.

2.3.2 Effect of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour

Traditional studies of tourist destination loyalty focus on how the destination relates to tourists and establishes a lasting relationship (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018; Lee et al., 2011). With social media revolutionizing tourism industry, destinations are not able to simply upgrade their services or products to reconnect with tourists. The growth of internet UGC has led to significant changes in the flow of information that permeates and influences consumer behaviour, not only at the travel planning stage, but also extends to the post-travel stage (Kim & Kim, 2020; Leung et al., 2013). As tourism marketers, it is necessary to understand how travellers have adapted to changes in their behaviour and establish their loyalty relationships in order to improve destination competitiveness and communication strategies.

The marketing literature defines customer loyalty as a long-term commitment to buy a product or service again in the future (Oliver, 1999). Destination loyalty, as a result of intangible and heterogeneity characteristics of tourism, is defined as travellers' commitment to a destination (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008), and can also be defined as travellers' desire to return to a particular destination and share their experiences with others through word-of-mouth (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Chi & Qu, 2008; Rahman, 2014).

By revolutionizing the way tourists communicate, collaborate, consume, and generate destination information, the UGC is contributing to assessment of destination experiences and potentially affecting tourist loyalty (Lam et al., 2020). Specifically, UGC provides potential tourists with reviews of destinations that are written by travellers who have visited it previously. During the travel stage, tourists form assessments of a destination based on their pre-conceived assumptions of what they expect to encounter, and make satisfaction judgments at the post-travel stage. On the other hand, some researchers have observed that tourists who use the UGC platforms to plan their trips exhibit a high level of engagement with a destination, which may further lead them to plan to revisit or recommend a destination (Narangajavana et al., 2019; Narangajavana et al., 2017). In this regard, the UGC plays an increasingly important role in fostering tourist loyalty. Although scholars have recognised the importance of the UGC in maintaining tourist loyalty, little research has been done on the impact of the UGC on formation processes of tourist loyalty (Couture et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2013).

2.4 Hypothesis development

2.4.1 Conceptual framework

The purpose of the whole theoretical framework model on tourists is to examine how UGC, directly (heuristic) or indirectly (reasoning), affects tourists' behaviour at different stages of the travel trip. The proposed model is presented in **Figure 2.6**. However, given that tourist decision-making differs across travel stages, two separate models will be used in the following structural equation model to study the effects of UGC on tourist decision-making at pre- and during travel stages (see **Figure 2.7**) as well as on loyalty behaviour at the during and post-travel stages (see **Figure 2.8**). The main constructs in the theoretical framework included factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, perceived usefulness of UGC, destination selection, tourist actual purchasing behaviour, tourist satisfaction, WOM intention and revisit intention.

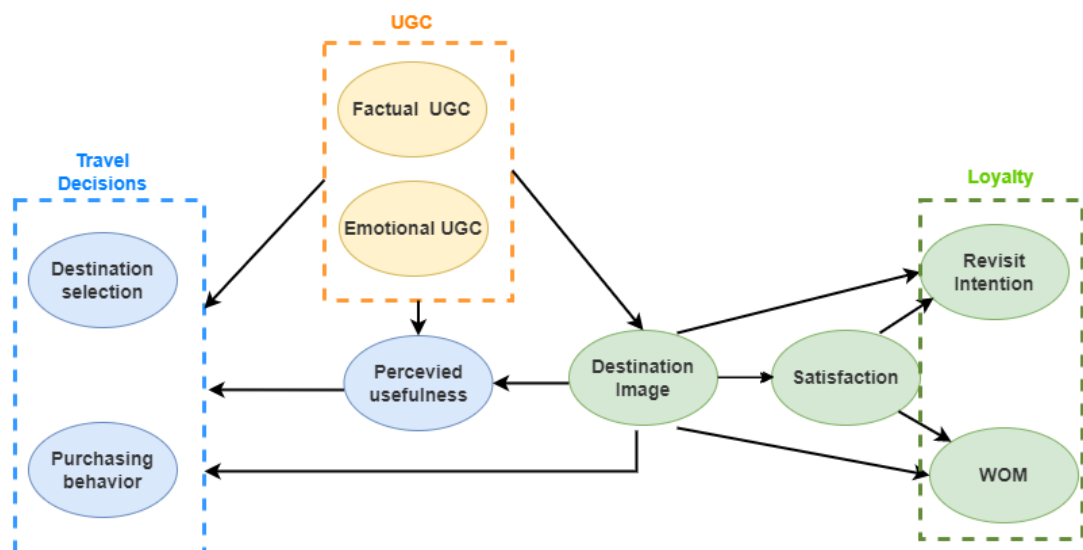


Figure 2.7 The conceptual framework model of UGC impacts on tourist behaviour.

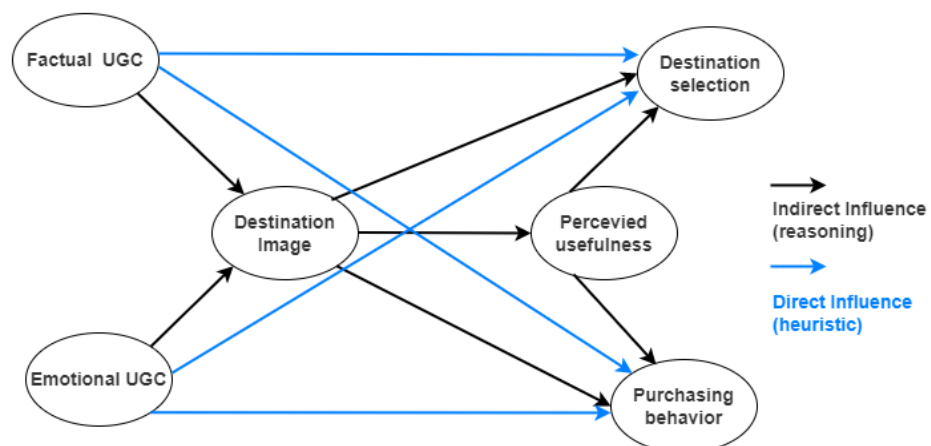


Figure 2.8 The effects of UGC on tourists' decision-making (Decisions)

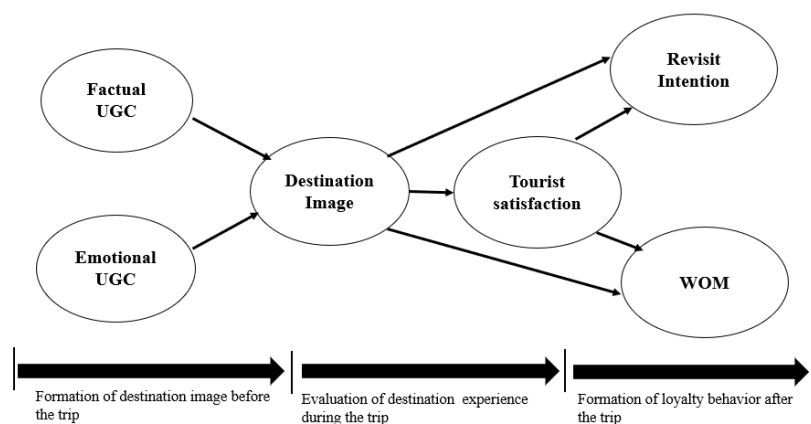


Figure 2.9 The effects of UGC on tourists' loyalty (post-decision stage).

2.4.2 Factors affecting tourists' destination selection and purchasing behaviour

2.4.2.1 The effect of UGC on tourists' decisions

UGC is essentially a narrative of the reviewers' personal consumption experiences (Jurafsky et al., 2014), which provides the readers with an opportunity to experience the product indirectly from the writers' perspective (Slater & Rouner, 2002). When potential travellers plan a vacation by reading real-life tourist reviews, they engage in mental imagery processing and are transported into a destination-related narrative. Accordingly, UGC can help consumers get an idea of what a destination is like without having to physically visit it and may inform consumers' subsequent travel and purchasing decisions (Alcázar et al., 2014). For example, through reviews, consumers can learn about the best attractions, local hotspots, and activities available at a destination without having to spend the time and money to travel there.

This information processing is also believed to help potential visitors understand tourism products or increase their knowledge of destinations (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Through UGC, tourists are empowered in a combined way to engage in complex, elaborate decision-making as well as simplified reasoning in particular choice contexts (either relating to a destination choice or a specific travel-related decision). Also, UGC may facilitate tourists' intention to visit the destination by providing an intuitive response (system 1). Moreover, tourists' preferences can be constructed in the context of the social context when faced with each new decision problem (McCabe et al., 2016). Positive UGC can also directly influence a visitor's choice of other tourist services, such as hotels, local tours and restaurants (Ishida et al.,

2016; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). Based on the above literature, the following hypotheses are established:

H1: Factual UGC can positively influence tourists' destination selection.

H2: Factual UGC can positively influence tourists' purchasing behaviour.

H3: Emotional UGC can positively influence tourists' destination selection.

H4: Emotional UGC can positively influence tourists' purchasing behaviour.

2.4.2.2 The effect of destination image

The notion of destination image can be characterized as a mental representation, consisting of 'beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds about a destination' (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). It is essentially prior knowledge that an individual has about a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Tourists' perceived image of destination is a fluid concept (Lee et al., 2014), which can be influenced and transmitted by social groups (Jenkins, 1999).

Scholars and practitioners recognise the importance of the UGC in shaping the image of destinations (Burgess et al., 2011; Stankov et al., 2010). In a study by Amaral et al. (2014), involving more than 190 participants, it was demonstrated that UGC had an impact on the positive beliefs of tourists regarding a destination. This was further affirmed by Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) who found that UGC had an effect on visitors' cognitions of destinations. Scholars have also explored how the usefulness of UGC influences tourists' feeling and emotions about a destination. For example, Serna et al. (2016) found that the underlying emotions generated by UGC have a significant impact on the formation of tourist perception. After investigating how photographs posted in travel blogs affected tourists' perceptions of Russia as a travel destination, Kim and Stepchenkova (2015) discovered that photographs failed to encourage tourists to visit the destination, but they did produce an impression for tourists that Russia was a clean, safe and friendly country. Using social media platforms, tourists are able to share a variety of shared experiences, including not only factual information that is related to knowledge about the destination (e.g., the price of a product, the weather conditions, and information related to tourist attractions), but also emotions, imagination, and fantasies about the destination that are shared. Based on the theoretical backgrounds, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Factual UGC are positively correlated with destination image.

H6: Emotional UGC are positively correlated with destination image.

The destination image provided by UGC is not well structured, when compared to traditional channels (e.g., travel brochures, newspapers, and TV advertisements), but it is more detailed and occurs in multiple forms. Specifically, the travel reviews posted by tourists usually have no unifying themes, but they contain stories, photos, videos, music, and personal movie clips, expressing visitors' opinions, feelings, and understandings about a destination. As such, UGC aids in interpretation, using travellers' points of view to disseminate destination knowledge to others.

UGC may boost tourists' knowledge about a destination, affecting their choice of destinations and some specific tourism product purchases at a destination, such as booking a hotel room or visiting a local restaurant. Pabel and Prideaux (2016) suggested that UGC can emphasize certain characteristics of destinations and tourism products, which can act as "pull factors" to draw tourists to destinations and to buy the same service or travel products as other tourists. Kim et al. (2019b) noticed that tourists' pre-existing knowledge about a destination can be augmented when they read online reviews. Tourists' knowledge of a destination and perceived destination image further influences their evaluation of the destination, which translates into their intentions to travel to the destination. Abubakar and Ilkan (2016) reported that tourists' prior knowledge of a destination reduces their perceived risk and facilitates their decision-making about a destination. Ellis and Mattison Thompson (2018) found that tourists' perceived destination image significantly influences their purchasing behaviour regarding wine. From the discussion, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H7: Destination image will positively influence tourists' destination selection.

H8: Destination image will positively influence tourists' purchasing behaviour.

2.4.2.3 The effect of perceived usefulness

Consumers' assessments of UGC, which may be perceived as a type of personal belief or attitude, is referred to as the perceived utility of information (Willemsen et al., 2011). Despite the acknowledged narrative persuasive effects of online reviews (Van Laer et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2016), prior research suggests that travel evaluations will not only be beneficial to customers' decision-making process when they are seen as advantageous (Purnawirawan et al., 2012; Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2018).

Despite the benefits of reading online UGC to reduce risk in purchasing experiential goods (e.g., cruise travel, hotel booking, restaurants), but online travel-related information overload may increase their cognitive costs (Frias et al., 2008) and result in poor decision-making. In other words, when UGC are most relevant to travellers' preferences, travellers are likely attracted to the destination or tourism products suggested by UGC and incorporate this information into their decisions. Thus, this study regards the perceived usefulness of UGC as a traveller's subjective reflection process, which reflects the extent to which UGC can meet tourists' needs, achieve tourists' goals and subsequently facilitate their decision-making.

Tourist decision-making is a 'negotiation process between tourists' needs and destinations' amenities, while travel information is an influencing factor of tourist behaviour (Karl, 2018). Recent studies have explored the factors affecting the perceived usefulness of online consumer reviews. Content characteristics, such as expertise claims and review valence, are found to significantly influence the perceived usefulness of online reviews (Willemsen et al., 2011). However, the process of how UGC influence purchase decisions has received less attention. Therefore, based on dual-system theory, this study considers perceived usefulness as a mediator between UGC and consumer behaviour. That means the usefulness of UGC is a significant factor that encourages tourists to use different systems to make decisions. A tourist may apply the analytic system depending on how useful he or she perceive UGC to be. Specifically, if tourists perceive a high-UGC usefulness situation, they have a low commitment and are more likely to rely on heuristic system, whereas when tourists perceive mass information, they are more likely to put more effort into processing information about travel and to make relevant decisions. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated to explain the analytical system (system 2) among tourists in the travel decision-making:

H9: Destination image will positively influence tourists' perceived usefulness of online reviews.

H10: Tourists' perceived usefulness of UGC will positively influence tourists' destination selection.

H11: Tourists' perceived usefulness of UGC will positively influence tourists' purchasing behaviour.

2.4.3 Factors affecting tourists' loyalty behaviour

2.4.3.1 The effect of destination image

The influence of destination image on tourists' loyalty has been investigated both directly and indirectly in previous studies (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lee et al.,

2014; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Various studies have demonstrated that tourists' perceptions of the destination image directly influence their intention to visit and their willingness to recommend the tourism products to others (Agapito et al., 2013; Hallmann et al., 2015; Kock et al., 2016). For example, Chen and Funk (2010) found that destination image predicts revisit intention in a destination hosting sporting events. Moreover, a study conducted by Bigne et al. (2001) found that the image of a destination was positively correlated with the willingness to recommend that destination in the future. To expand on these previous findings, Kock et al. (2016) proposed that the destination image plays an important role in determining whether a tourist will be willing to visit a destination and whether they would recommend it to others. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

H12: Destination image will positively influence revisit intention.

H13: Destination image will positively influence WOM intention.

2.4.3.2 The effect of satisfaction

Satisfaction plays an important role in successful destination marketing because it is considered one of the most powerful drivers of tourist behavioural intentions (Oliver, 1999), such as destination chosen and decision to revisit (Chen & Gursoy, 2001). Studies examining tourist satisfaction have confirmed the positive association between satisfaction and loyal behaviour (i.e. revisit intentions and WOM publicity) (Prayag et al., 2017; Rajesh, 2013). McDowall (2010) reported that the satisfaction of international tourists visiting Bangkok has significant impacts on their intention to recommend. Among other factors, Hui et al. (2007) pointed out the importance of overall satisfaction as a key determinant of WOM publicity. After interviewing European visitors to Mediterranean destinations, Assaker and Hallak (2013) found tourist satisfaction positively influenced tourists' revisit intentions. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are developed:

H14: Overall satisfaction is positively correlated with revisit intention.

H15: Overall satisfaction is positively correlated with WOM intention.

2.5 UGC value on destination

2.5.1 Value co-creation

In recent decades, value co-creation has received considerable attention,

which has been approached from various theoretical perspectives (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017; Prebensen et al., 2013). Value co-creation is a collaborative and demand-driven process, in which two or more entities voluntarily integrate resources (skills, knowledge, etc.) to achieve a common objective (Cabiddu et al., 2013). Both customers and the organizations can benefit from this process (Buonincontri et al., 2017).

The 'Goods-dominant (G-D) logic' (Normann, 2001), which focuses on producing tangible outputs, emphasizes value co-creation as the exchange of output units by multiple parties. Value co-creation focuses on intangible products and is a process rather than output of products. It is a form of production where value is produced jointly by consumers and companies through consumer-company interactions, and so can be regarded as 'service-dominant (S-D) logic' (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Both theories claim that value is only produced when service providers and customers engage and cooperate (Helkkula et al., 2012).

Given the rapid development and extensive use of the Internet, the notion of value co-creation now includes customers as agents playing a leading role in the marketing process who 'actively' co-create and re-create value (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2018; Fan, 2000; Tuan et al., 2019). This creates a new paradigm of customer-dominant (C-D) logic, which regards customers as the primary creators of value and acknowledges that value is generated via experiences and practices that are located in and affected by customers' own social settings (Rihova et al., 2018). This logic redefines the agency that produces value, beyond specific service interactions occurring within the service provider's scope of influence, making the customers' value-formatting process 'invisible' to service organizations (Medberg & Heinonen, 2014).

The tourism sector is experiential (Zhang et al., 2018) in comparison to other tangible products and services. Tourism organizations emphasize authentic, tailored experiences that promote their value to visitors. As tourism experiences are produced and consumed simultaneously, customer interaction is an important aspect of tourism's value generation (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). The C-D logic and value co-creation offers a research framework for understanding the potential value of UGC shared by visitors about real-life travel experiences at post-travel stage. Uncovering this understanding is essential for the production of value at the post-travel stage by tourism businesses and destination marketing, as tourism experiences can be enriched and consumed at this stage, with customer engagement being a vital part of the value-creation process (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009).

2.5.2 Social media and destination value co-creation

Destination value is derived from experiential value, which is distinct from societal, functional, and market values. This refers to the multidimensional evaluation of travel products and services that involves prominent features (Zhang et al., 2018) such as individual preference, diversity of activities, tourist emotions and sensations.

Tourism is consumed in social contexts. People can use social media, primarily as a form of communication, to stay connected with one another online, thereby creating possibilities for travellers to create special experiences through their connections with their social circle (Harrigan et al., 2017). When tourists post about their travel experiences, such as travel blogs in online travel communities, their accounts of the destination's attributes and distinctive features are viewed as a crucial source of information and knowledge by other tourists. In addition, online travel communities can accommodate the specific desires and needs of travellers (Luo & Zhong, 2015). When on vacation, tourists may encounter different problems. In online travel communities, members can often offer targeted advice and specific, precise solutions to questions based on their actual travel experience. As a result, UGC on social media has changed the way tourists and destinations interact. Traditional vacation marketing no longer dictates promotion rules; instead, peer-to-peer tourist communications, influence the value and brand of a destination, and control what is communicated about a destination (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015).

Previous studies have highlighted that tourists, as members of online travel communities, are positive value co-creators (Antón et al., 2018; ARICA & ÇORBACI, 2020; Shen et al., 2018). For example, active participation of tourists has a crucial component for a co-creative tourism experience was demonstrated by Buonincontri et al. (2017). Casais et al. (2020) used in-depth interviews of guests using accommodation services to show guests' reviews are important in co-creation of the tourism experience. In their study, relationships were revealed as an key component of the co-creation process. The close relationship between the hosts and guests can lead to value co-creation, and the results indicated that the business model and technology can help to overcome trust difficulties between hosts and guests. Fan et al. (2020) adopted a mixed-method approach to investigate online tourist social contacts and revealed that tourists' satisfaction with their travel experience can be attributed to three distinct factors: intrinsic/extrinsic enjoyment, logistics and efficiency. By incorporating the guests' reviews, hosts can enhance the service they provide. While online travel communities have been an important platform for present-day tourists to share their travel experiences, there are still gaps in research on how online platforms contribute to destination value co-creation.

2.5.3 The effects of UGC on destination cocreation: a consumer socialization perspective

Consumer socialization, rooted in social learning theory (Aleti et al., 2018), attempts to explain how people are influenced to perform their roles as consumers in society with consumption learnt via social contact with both external and environmental factors (Watne & Brennan, 2011). Through socialization, consumers can acquire information, skills and attitudes related to consumption in the marketplace (Watne et al., 2014). Individuals and groups that affect learners' self-concepts, emotions, attitudes and behaviour are known as 'social agents'.

A cognitive development model and social learning theory are both employed in consumer socialization theory to explain consumer-to-consumer knowledge transfer (Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978). The former suggests that socialization is a result of certain stages of cognitive development that are based on cognitive/psychological processes. The latter emphasizes external sources of learning, such as peers, as socialization agents. During the socialization process, consumer interactions are based on a gift-acceptance model of communication rather than the sender-receiver paradigm (Bellenger & Moschis, 1982). That is, the socialization agents offer consumption knowledge as a "gift to the learner and the learner accepts the gift" (Aleti et al., 2015; Aleti et al., 2018). Previous research has investigated the socialization process in family settings, with both parents and children as socialization agents (Watne et al., 2014). Here, we extend the concept in a social media environment.

Consumer communication over social media in the virtual world is mainly motivated by consumers' need for information, knowledge and socialization, thus it is frequently connected with learning about consumption, such as brand preferences and involvement (Chinchanachokchai & de Gregorio, 2020). On tourism social media sites, tourists are likely to both search and share information with others. This indicates that tourists are willing to serve as socialization agents, both to impact others and to be influenced by their peers through peer communication and learning. Customer socialization behaviour can apply to cases where a tourist shares his/her travel experience with friends and relatives both online and offline. The current study uses consumer socialization theory as a general framework for interpreting how members of social media contribute to co-creation destination value. Tourists who share tourism-related information to peers are seen as the socialization agent, while destination value co-creation is seen as an outcome of consumer socialization. This study does not aim to provide a complete list of peer communication attributes, but rather to analyze those that are the most pertinent for the research context.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is a belief system that guides the researcher in developing knowledge in a specific field which is an important foundation for any research project when designing a research project in order to ensure that the data collected, and the methods used are appropriate for the research questions being investigated (Crossan,2013). Research philosophy helps to answer three basic questions: ontology (the essence of reality), epistemology (the association between the researcher and subjects/objects), and methodology (the set of guidelines for conducting research) (Saunders et al., 2014). Research philosophy can be broadly divided into two categories: positivist and constructivist (Hirschman,1986). Positivist research follows a more traditional approach, where the researcher looks for cause and effect relationships that can be measured quantitatively. Constructivist research, on the other hand, relies more heavily on qualitative methods such as interviews and observation to explore the complexity of the issue being studied. Research philosophy also considers how the data should be interpreted and used to draw conclusions. It is important to consider the research philosophy when designing a research project in order to ensure that the research is being conducted in a scientific and ethical manner.

This thesis examines the impact of user-generated content on social media on tourist behaviour and decision-making in the pre-, during, and post-purchase stages. It further looks at how visitors share social media content after making a purchase and how that can shape the decisions of other tourists, creating a dynamic cycle between social media content sharing and decision-making. In contrast to other studies that explore the relationship between social media and tourists' decision-making process at a more specific stage, this research puts more emphasis on a comprehensive process of tourist behaviour and decision-making that covers the entire pre-, during, and post-travel purchase phases. Thus, the study's design will mainly be divided into two parts, using a mixed- method.

Research using mixed methods is based on the belief that any phenomenon can only be adequately understood when different perspectives and methods are combined. In mix-method approach, both quantitative and qualitative aspects of a particular issue are considered. Additionally, mixed methods research can also help uncover the complexity of a particular issue or phenomenon by comparing and exploring different types of data. In the quantitative component of this study, statistical relationships are examined between social media use, tourist behavior, and tourist reflection, while in the qualita-

tive component, tourists' sharing behavior on social media, their interactions with other users and consumers, especially after the decision has been made, is explored.

This first part of this study aims to examine the impact of UGC on social media on travelers' decision-making processes and behaviors, within the positivist paradigm. In this paradigm, phenomena are explained by casual relationships (Jenning,1983), which are grounded in scientific rules. As explained by Saunders, et al. (2009), researchers who adopt a positivist perspective are objective analysts who develop hypotheses based on existing theories and collect quantitative data for statistical analysis. Furthermore, they state that the researcher believes he or she has minimal influence over the study's subject and that the researcher "neither influences nor influences the subject". Specifically, the first part of the study explores the ontological foundation of predictable behavior in humans. The proposed research framework is quantitative in nature, based on a field questionnaire approach, and it explores causal relationships between variables. Using this approach, the researcher is thought to be less intrusive. The study's questionnaire was designed based on previous literature, and carefully planned to ensure reproducibility.

The second part of this study investigates tourist social media content-sharing behaviour, with a particular focus on the post-decision-making stage. It is guided by the constructivist paradigm, which assumes that multiple realities exist, and that knowledge is created through 'the collaboration of the knower and respondent' (Bryman 2016; Flick 2006). This study adopts a qualitative research approach, using online narrative as data. According to Volo (2010), using online narrative as a source of qualitative data is a widely accepted practice (Robinson,2001). As this method is unobtrusive and non-reactive, it allows for a more unfiltered view of the subject of study. In the social media age, travel blogs have become a popular medium for narrative researchers to get insight into consumer behavior (Volo, 2010; Stainton & Iordanova, 2017). Thus, for the second part of this study, travel blogs were selected as a source of qualitative data.

3.2 Research design

Research design is a master plan that indicates how we will address your research questions (Wahyuni, 2012). It includes the methods and procedures for ongoing research and provides an appropriate framework for data collection and analysis. This study employed a mix-method design with two phases. Through a combination of questionnaires and online narrative analysis, this study seek to comprehend the impact of UGC on tourists during the entire holiday travel process, as well as how tourists' sharing of holiday trav-

el experiences on social media can enhance the destination's value. The overall research process of this study is shown in **Figure 3.1**.

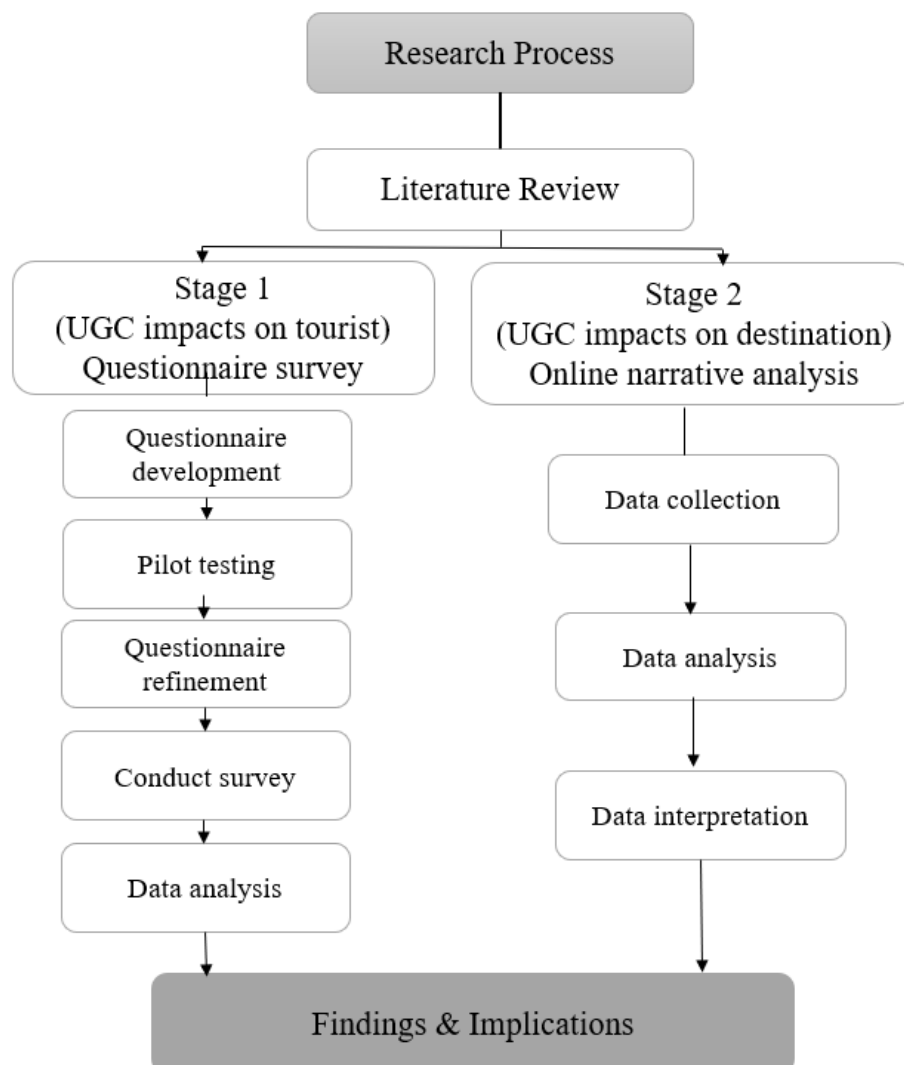


Figure 3.1 Overall research process

This study was conducted in two stages. The first stage is a quantitative research phase, aiming to understand how tourists use UGC on social media to assist in travel-related decisions, as well as to test the relationship between UGC, key variables, tourist purchasing behaviour and destination loyalty. A questionnaire survey (**see Appendix C**) was used as it provides the researcher with opportunities to introduce the research topic and to reply with a genuine answer and was suitable for a large number of individuals at the same time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The first phase aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To verify the types of travel products that consumers will search for UGC information on social media (the pre-trip stage before travelling).
2. To explore how the UGC influence tourist' choice of destination and actual purchasing behaviour at the destination (pre- and during-trip stage).
3. To critically investigate the relationship between the UGC, the key factors and their importance to tourist loyalty (post-trip stage).

The second phase is a qualitative study to understand how tourists construct their holiday experiences on social media and further enhance destination value. Online narrative analysis was selected as the methodology for the second phase of this study, as it provides researchers with a useful method to pinpoint specific issues and qualitative insights into them. Because narratives are freely expressed rather than elicited responses, are full of feelings, thoughts, and emotions, and are widely used by researchers to examine tourism experiences (Chandralal et al., 2015; Jin et al., 2020; Wu & Pearce, 2014). Rageh et al. (2013) stated that because of its nature, the researchers were unable to capture the tourism experiences and destination value, the only data source accessible was the researchers' interpretations of the tourists' reflexive narratives. As a result, travel blogs were selected as the appropriate data for second phase of the exploratory study.

The purpose of the second phase of this study is not to test preconceived hypotheses, but rather to gain insight into how tourists share their travel experiences and their potential for destination value co-creation. The author considers whether each recurring theme of travel experience forms a distinct kind of destination value as visitors share their experiences with others via social media. In this process, the second phase follows the three netnographic analysis steps proposed by Kozinets (2002): data collection, data analysis and data interpretation.

3.3 Phrase 1: questionnaire survey

3.3.1 Questionnaire development

The current research was conducted using questionnaires as its primary research instrument during the first stage of its empirical study. The questionnaire was divided into six sections to examine how the UGC's use affects the behaviour of tourists at each stage of the decision-making process. The first section of the questionnaire asked for information on how UGC was using the grant for travel planning. To understand how the UGC affects tourists at the pre-trip stage, the second part of the questionnaire includes measures of the factual UGC, emotional UGC, the perceived usefulness of UGC and destination image. The third section explores how UGC influences the actual decision-making of travellers at the destination and their behaviour of loyalty at the end of their journey. It measures a tourist's destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, recommendation intention, and intention to revisit. The fourth section aimed to gather demographic information about respondents. Apart from the first and fourth sections of the questionnaire, which included UGC usage and demographic questions, all other questions adopted a 5-point Likert scale (5-point from "strongly disagree" = 1 to "strongly agree" = 5).

3.3.2 Measurement

The design of the examination questions is based on an extensive literature review. The authors modified some of these items slightly to suit the research purpose of this study.

3.2.2.1 Measurement of UGC

In this study, UGC was operationalized as two separate constructs, namely factual UGC and emotional UGC. Based on an extensive literature review, the measures for the factual UGC and emotional UGC were developed for this study (Chung & Koo, 2015; Crouch, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Vengesai, 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Descriptions of factual UGC and emotional UGC were collected and adapted from the literature to generate the questions. Factual UGC refers to the information reflecting factual attributes of the destination and does not involve any tourists' personal feelings towards the destination. Emotional UGC refers to any form of information that affects tourists' personal feelings about the destination and was captured in six questions.

3.2.2.2 Measurement of perceived usefulness of UGC

The construct of the perceived usefulness of UGC was adapted from the work of Liu and Park (2015) and Hu et al. (2008), with minor modifications to suit tourism and travel research, such as "UGC provided a good reference for me to visit Gulangyu" and "UGC was useful in helping me arrange the whole trip".

3.2.2.3 Measurement of destination image

The item for tourist perceived destination image towards Gulangyu was adopted from its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) on the basis of the UNESCO designation. The original purpose of establishing World Heritage sites is to identify, protect and present attractions of OUV, which is considered as "a concept of value based on human perceptions" (Buckley, 2018). This study examines if the World Heritage Site's OUV mirrors tourists' perceived cultural value (Buckley, 2018).

3.2.2.4 Measurement of destination selection and actual purchasing behaviour

As one of the objectives of this study was to explore the impact of the UGC on the choice of destinations and purchasing behaviour of travellers, five

items were created to measure the impacts of different forms of UGC on destination selection, and four items were created to measure the specific purchasing behaviour of key tourism products or services.

3.2.2.5 Measurement of satisfaction

Four question items were included to measure the tourist satisfaction which were derived Bigné et al. (2005); and a further four items were adapted from Castro et al. (2007) to evaluate the revisiting intention of visitors to Gulangyu.

3.2.2.6 Measurement of Word-of mouth

The word-of-mouth construct was adapted and slightly modified from the recommendation intention derived from different tourism products (Papadimitriou et al., 2018), such as: "I would like to recommend some worth-visiting scenic spots on Gulangyu to others"; "I would like to recommend the good hotels where I have stayed in during this trip to others"; and "I would like to recommend the delicious food that I have tried on this trip to others".

3.2.2.7 Measurement of Revisit Intention

Revisiting a destination at a different time may change the desire to return. A two-year period was used in this study to assess intention to revisit. "I intend to..." is a widely used and popular question when measuring intention directly. However, from a psychometric viewpoint, Povey et al. (2000) suggested that the use of multiple-item measurement would be advantageous. Empirical studies have shown that "plan," "hope," and "intend" measurements have a high degree of internal reliability ($\alpha > 0.9$) for a range of behaviours (Povey et al., 2000). Four items were adapted from Castro et al. (2007) and developed to assess the revisiting intention of visitors to Gulangyu.

3.2.2.8 Measurement of respondents' demographic profile and trip characteristic

The demographic information and visiting information provided by respondents were used to characterize the study group. It is common to use respondents' demographics and travel characteristics to divide sample into different groups, allowing researchers to examine differences in interest variables between groups. Questionnaires for surveys always include these questions, as is standard procedure.

This study asked respondents about their demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education, monthly income and place of residence loca-

tion. Travel partners, travel group size, past visits, travel duration, and expenditures were all used to assess travel characteristics.

3.3.3 Pilot study

A pilot study is a smaller version of a comprehensive study of assessment and elimination (Kim, 2011). The objectives of the pilot study are as follows:

- i. Check questionnaire wording
- ii. Check questionnaire sequence
- iii. Test questionnaire layout
- iv. Test fieldwork arrangement
- v. Training of fieldwork assistants
- vi. Estimate response rate
- vii. Test analysis procedures

To determine the validity of the measurement scales, four tourism scholars were asked to determine whether the scales accurately measured the concepts examined in this study. In order to ensure the questions were appropriate, relevant and internal consistent, the designed questions were meaningful to responders, all scales were pretested on 20 Chinese postgraduate students. By limiting the number of items on each subscale, the survey sought to maintain a manageable length for respondents. The entire questionnaire was then pretested on 35 travellers who had visited the Gulangyu and used the UGC as a planning tool. On the basis of the pilot test, some minor changes were made to eliminate ambiguities in the Chinese version.

3.3.4 Data collection and sample selection

The final questionnaire was distributed to visitors to Gulangyu. Ten research assistants were trained in field questionnaire survey management to improve response rates and minimize misunderstandings. The data was collected on both weekdays and weekends from June to August 2018, as the summer holidays are one of the two peak travel periods of the year in Gulangyu. The study was conducted with a sample of travellers from Gulangyu who used the UGC to plan their planned itineraries. Random selection was chosen for this questionnaire collection whereby all individual tourists were randomly selected. A random selection of respondents can reduce the likelihood of bias in survey results (Marshall, 1996). Surveyors approached tourists at the entrances and exits of tourist attractions on Gulangyu and asked about screening questions (e.g., if they had read relevant UGC travel information on social media before their trips). Only tourists who had used UGC travel information on social media were invited to participate in the survey. It took approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Interpretation of the question items was given to the respondents if they asked for clarification. A total of 500 respondents were approached.

3.3.5 Ethical considerations

The ethical aspects of this study were examined and reviewed in the light of its goals and objectives. Subject of investigation, i.e., 'User-generated travel information and tourist behaviour', was deemed a non-sensitive topic with minimal expected risk. Data collection for the first phase of this Ph.D. was conducted in 2018. The questionnaire survey was approved by the sub-committee on ethics of humanities of the Education University of Hong Kong. Research assistants involved in this project were trained to collect data in according with agreed procedures.

Participants were assured of privacy and confidentiality, as well as adequate information, prior to participating in the questionnaire survey. This was done to protect personal data and ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. To ensure that the participants were informed of the potential costs and benefits of participating in the study, relevant information was provided to them in a written format (e.g., information sheets and informed consent forms are included in Appendix A and B).

3.3.6 Data analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is used in this study to test the proposed conceptual model. SEM. As described by Kaplan (2008), SEM is a set of methods used to describe assumptions about the mean, variance, and covariance of observed data, as well as a smaller number of structural parameters defined by a hypothetical underlying model. In SEM, the primary focus is the structure of connections, especially between latent variables and constructs (Hair et al., 2014; MacKenzie, 2001).

In the current study, the rationales for choosing the SEM path modelling are as follows. First, the SEM technique has advantages in exploring theories rather than confirming them, and in applying them to relatively new phenomenon and measurement models in the exploratory stage (Wold, 1985). A second advantage of SEM is that measurement errors can be corrected. Researchers were able to distinguish random errors from the total variance of the observed variables (Gefen et al., 2011). A third advantage of SEM is the ability to compute models without restriction (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). Fourth, SEM allows simultaneous examinations that reflect the relationships between variables throughout the model. Finally, SEM enables social science researchers to scientifically investigate potential variable relationships. Empirical research in many fields of social science, such as education, marketing, and social policy, relies largely on latent variables that are not directly measurable but can be quantified and measured indirectly through specific observational measures. With its ability to detect potential variables, SEM has broadened its application into social research. Therefore,

SEM is the primary method for analysing first-stage quantitative data. Nonetheless, there is no conflict between using conventional statistical procedures as well as using SEM.

This study follows the concept and processes of SEM to analyse the data. The SEM is a statistical method that combines factor analysis and path analysis. Factor analysis, in particular confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), helps to understand and validate structural measurements in a complete structural model (Hair Jr et al., 2020). SEM applications typically involve measurement models. In this sense, CFA serves as a proxy for SEM (Hair Jr et al., 2020). CFA, on the other hand, does not solve all the problems in structural models. Path analysis techniques should be incorporated into their use (Kline, 1998).

Path analysis helps determine the type of effect (direct or indirect) and the extent to which it affects the model variables. The advantage of path analysis over regression is that all path coefficients can be estimated simultaneously based on the observed data (Lleras, 2005). Combining factor analysis and path analysis, SEM solves the defects of these two methods. In addition to elucidating the interrelationships between latent variables, SEM is a useful analytical tool.

In summary, as part of the first phase of the quantitative data analysis, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was first performed. This is a prerequisite for conducting the main hypothetical model test and was conducted using SPSS 23. SEM analysis was then performed using AMOS 21.0 with the maximum likelihood estimation method.

3.3.6.1 Data screening and preparation

Data were examined before formal analysis. The data were screened to make sure they met the requirements for SEM and did not contain any major discrepancies. A total of 500 questionnaires were received, and 439 were valid, representing a response rate of 87.8%. A number of missing values were identified, but they were deemed insignificant and therefore no corrective action was required. The key assumption for applying SEM is that the observed variables should be subject to normal distributions. In this study, skewness and kurtosis statistics were tested using SPSS descriptive statistics analysis to ensure that the observed variables are subject to a normal distribution. According to the Kline (2015), an absolute value greater than 3.0 can represent "extremely" bias data, while an absolute value greater than 7.0 can represent "extreme" kurtosis. In a complete univariate normal distribution, both skewness and kurtosis would be zero.

Due to the increasing complexity of UGC in the decision-making process of

tourism, the UGC in this study, is a multi-layered structure with two sub-dimensions: factual and emotional, each with three to seven observable indicators. However, the number of layers that a SEM can contain is limited, usually to the second order (Byrne, 2013a). Therefore, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine the underlying dimensions of the UGC construct. This allows the author to compute unstandardized factor scores that can then be used as explicit variables in SEM testing for UGC abstraction.

3.3.6.2 Reliability analysis

In order to determine the level of internal consistency level of the measurement scales, the reliability of factor analysis was performed. For reliable measurement, Hair et al. (1998) recommends a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.70 or higher. When Cronbach's alpha is less than 0.70, a single item can be removed from the measurement, improving reliability.

3.3.6.3 Structural Model testing

Structural models are evaluated based on a whole-sample questionnaire, but each proposed model is run separately. To replace the free correlation between the exogenous and endogenous variables in structural models, a one-way effector relationship was used in SEM (Lleras, 2005). After running AMOS 21.0, all parameters were reassessed. Exogenous and endogenous path coefficients, latent variable variances, endogenous variable disturbance terms, loading factors, and error variances / covariances were all included.

Once the structural model is consistent with the observed data, the path coefficient calculated from the SEM can be assumed to be an indicator of the arrow's impact from start to finish (Chin, 1998; Mueller & Hancock, 2018). The mathematical symbols and absolute values of path coefficients are tested by using the modified structural equation model. A positive correlation between the two variables is indicated by positive signs, while negative signs point to a negative correlation. Absolute values represent the magnitude of the impact (Li et al., 2006). The results of the SEM will be reported and discussed in the next chapter.

3.4 Phrase 2: Online narrative analysis

The approach narrative analysis has recently gained widespread popularity in the social sciences (Mura & Sharif, 2017). Sociological narrative approaches are based on the assumption that people's narratives provide a window into social reality (Robert & Shenhav, 2014). This approach goes

beyond mere textual analysis alone to examine social phenomena that are stimulated, generated, organized, and disseminated through narratives (Bamberg, 2012). In this sense, narratives can be regarded as unique constructions that reflect collective processes of experiencing and observing the world (Herman & Vervaeck, 2019). Over the past few years, narrative analysis approaches have been applied more frequently to qualitative research in the tourism field. One possible reason is that the advancements in communication technologies have allowed a large number of travel blogs to be shared on social media, giving researchers the opportunities to study how tourists interpret the travel experiences and products.

Travel blogs are considered useful for this research as a format of narrative that is not constrained by external factors (McNeill, 2003; Rak, 2005). Rather than research-elicited responses, in travel blogs, travellers express their opinions, not responding to research, implying that they are portraying real travel stories. Unlike traditional questionnaire surveys, travel blogs are self-posted or self-published and have no laboratory effects, so the information in blog entities is considered more objective, informative and free of sample bias (Schuckert et al., 2015). Therefore, travel blogs provide researchers with a more genuine perspective on thoughts, feelings and reactions relate to tourism from the point of view of real travellers (Volo, 2010).

In response to the widespread use of social media among tourists, the use of travel blogs as a data collection tool for tourism research is gaining popularity among scholars. For example, Tang et al. (2019) used 84 blog posts to study international tourists' negative experiences in Sichuan, a growing international tourist destination in the southwest of China and the home of the Giant Panda. Jeuring and Peters (2013) used qualitative methods to investigate how the weather affects the travel experience by analysing online travel blogs written by Dutch tourists. They identified 16 weather themes that describe weather patterns on behalf of visitors. In a recent study, Jin et al. (2020) collected travel blog entries from two Chinese online travel communities to research Chinese tourist shopping in Australia. Therefore, travel blogs were selected as a suitable UGC source for the second stage of this study, using a qualitative research method to investigate when tourists share their travel experiences back on social media, how they construct their stories, and how these constantly shared travel stories further influence destinations or tourism suppliers.

3.4.1 Data collection process

3.4.1.1 Online platform selection

The online platform, Mafengwo.com, was chosen for data collection for this study since it is one of the leading independent travel service platforms in

China. Mafengwo.com is a highly interactive online community where more than 100 million active registered users create travel blogs, share travel experiences and exchange travel notes with others. In addition, it is well known to visitors for its massive user-generated content and offers inbound and outbound travellers with a variety of travel advice as well as destination services.

3.4.1.2 Selecting travel blogs

The data collection was completed in two phases from May to August 2021. All travel blogs and comments about Gulangyu were collected by the first author, who is a native speaker of Mandarin, and who registered and obtained membership in Mafengwo.com in August 2014. In the first phase, following logging in to the website, the first author chose “Gulangyu” in the destination catalog. The Gulangyu travel blogs obtained were placed in order from the most recent to oldest. The blogs and interactive conversations among community members were then read. To identify the most representative blogs, we only included travel blogs with the most follow-up comments and reviews since they indicate sufficient and varied social interactions (Bosangit et al., 2009).

Next, the first author scanned these blogs to make sure they met the following two criteria: the number of words in travel blogs should be no less than 500 Chinese words, and the content of the travel experience should include more than two travel elements, such as attractions and transportation. By applying these two criteria, we ensured the sample travel blogs had rich travel narratives to share. A sample of travel blogs is presented in Appendix D. Considering that travel blogs often contain private photos from travel bloggers, this thesis only presents one example case to illustrate the second stage of the data collection process. After screening, 97 travel blogs and their related comments were retained and coded as B-01 to B-97.

3.4.2 Data analysis

In qualitative research, coding is an essential component of the data procedure. This process involves allocating content to categories, examining the data sources for similar categories, and assigning a label to the codes (Dodgson, 2017), which sequentially allows researchers to construct descriptions, themes, and essences (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

Methods for coding data differ depending on the objectives, type of data in use, and scope of analysis. It is widely acknowledged that two distinct coding techniques—in vivo and descriptive coding—are utilized (Williams & Moser, 2019). To elucidate the phenomena being studied, the former form of coding involves analyzing individual statements and compiling them into se-

mantic clusters (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). A second approach is to develop the codes based on the existing literature, which might be of relevance to analyses that focus on explanation and confirmation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Given the objective of the qualitative phase of the research is to gain a deeper understanding of what tourists experienced at the destination and how they construct their travel experience through social media at the post-trip stage, which is exploratory in nature. This study thus followed the phenomenological data analysis. Relationship identification emerged after code development and concept identification has been established (Moustakas, 1994).

3.4.2.1 Phase 1: Code development and concept identification

The coding process began with the creation of codes and concept identification. In order to become familiar with the content, the authors first selected ten travel bloggers' posts and their relevant comments to use as a starting point for building initial codes. Ten travel blogs were selected represented a variety of heritage tourism, such as two bloggers who took children to Gulangyu and three bloggers who were visiting Gulangyu for the first time. These blogs varied in terms of travel type, content length and writing style. The researcher avoided falling into conceptual ruts while interpreting the phenomena of interest during the coding development process by remaining open-minded and constantly monitoring the data (Wicker, 1985). The similarities and differences of each related expression were compared. Similar phrases, sentences, or paragraphs describing the same incident were grouped. Codes related to different aspects of traveling to the destination were assigned based on these groups. The coding standards proposed by Thornberg and Charmaz (2014) were strictly followed, which required codes to be concise, straightforward, active and analytical.

Identifying ideas, along with their attributes and dimensions, was the next step. The codes were organized according to concepts, and conceptual labels were assigned based on the descriptions provided by the travel bloggers or the literature. For example, the researcher noted various words, sentences, or paragraphs referring to the reasons why people visit Gulangyu Island and describing tourists' expected travel activities at the location. According to Hsu and Huang (2008), these contexts were summarized and referred to as 'travel motivation'.

The researcher could have made the mistake of incorrectly categorizing the data into an unrelated topic in earlier rounds. To prevent this issue, coded words, sentences, and paragraphs were further examined to ensure that they were explicit reflections of the relevant codes and ideas, and that their meanings were connected to those codes and concepts. Concept identification led to generating and comparing questions such as, what constructs

'tourists' travel experience at the destination'? How is the travel experience characterized? Subsequent examinations were guided by these questions. The researcher identified probable errors using this procedure, ultimately enabling the accurate classification of both data and nodes. Data and nodes were eventually classified in the appropriate manner. During the initial phase of coding, several cycles were conducted because the data was discrete, and unstructured. Through this repeated procedure, the optimal fit was maximized while bias caused by preconceived beliefs was minimized.

3.4.2.2 Phase 2: Interpretation

The interpretation of qualitative narratives involves grouping known codes and categories into broader frameworks (Ngulube, 2015). Its purpose is to discover and explain links between observable events, to derive broader meaning from facts, and to compare and contrast personal perspectives with established conceptions and theories (Creswell & Poth, 2017). After examining codes based on Phase 1, the second phase focused on their relationships. Relationships were developed by examining each travel blog's descriptions holistically. To facilitate the identification of relationships, the researcher focused on three aspects of how travellers share their travel experience at the destination through travel blogs: 1) travel motivation before setting off on their journey; 2) memorable travel experiences while on the trip; and 3) travel advice following their trip.

3.5 Summary

This chapter addresses the study's methodological issues. The research design was first described, which was based on the research background and study subjects. The data collection in present study was conducted in two stages because of the nature of the research design. In the first quantitative stage, both development process of the questionnaire and data analysis process for SEM were introduced along with explanations and discussions of the methodologies and criteria utilized in the data analysis. In the second qualitative stage, the narrative analysis was introduced, and the reason why travel blogs were selected as an appropriate data source was discussed. Lastly, a description of online narrative data collection procedure and its analysis were presented.

CHAPTER 4. THE FINDINGS OF QUANTITATIVE STUDY: EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF UGC ON TOURIST BEHAVIOUR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of stage one of this study, the quantitative stage. Results are based on analysis of the questionnaire survey with tourists who used UGC to plan their trips to Gulangyu. To answer the research questions of the current study, an on-site questionnaire survey was conducted to examine (1) how tourists use UGC to prepare for a trip at the pre-trip stage; (2) what the general mechanism is for referring UGC and tourists' actual decision-making and (3) How UGC influences tourists' evaluation of a trip and their loyalty.

The quantitative results of the questionnaire are organized in this chapter by: (1) the descriptive analysis of tourist characteristics and visitation information; (2) types of activities using UGC on social media before visiting a destination; (3) the effects of using UGC on social media for selecting a destination and purchasing behaviour at a destination; and (4) the effects of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour. For the types of activities referring to UGC when planning a trip, all of the respondents could have included more than one activity.

4.2 Profiles of respondents

4.2.1 Socio-demographic profile of respondents

A total of 500 tourists were surveyed for this study. Since 61 respondents did not complete their questionnaires, the current research excluded their data from analysis. Consequently, the total number of respondents who took part in the survey is 439, yielding a response rate of 87.8%.

In accordance with the profiles of the respondents (**see Table 4.1**), among 439 participants, 263 (59.9%) of the respondents were female, and 176 (40.1%) were male. The majority of respondents were below 40 years old (90%) with the 18-30-year-old class being the largest group (73.4%). Approximately 81.3 % of respondents had attained an undergraduate degree or higher. Fewer had only a senior secondary level of education (13.4%), and only 5.3% had a junior secondary level. The majority of the respondents were in employment (71.3%), followed by students (24.8%). In terms of in-

come, 36.7% of the respondents had monthly incomes of 3001-6000 RMB, followed by 3000 RMB and below (27.6%) and 6001-9000 RMB (19.1%). Only 8.2% of respondents had a monthly income of more than 12000 RMB. The majority of the respondents are non-local Xiamen residents (94.1%).

Table 4.1 Social-demographic profiles of the survey respondents.

Variables	n	%	Variables	n	%
Gender			Occupation		
Male	176	40.1	Student	109	24.8
Female	263	59.9	Unemployed	7	1.6
Age			Employed	313	71.3
18-30	322	73.4	Retired	10	2.3
31-40	73	16.6	Monthly Income (RMB)		
41-50	34	7.7	<3000	121	27.6
51-60	8	1.8	3001-6000	161	36.7
61 and above	2	0.5	6001-9000	84	19.1
Education Level			9001-12000	37	8.4
Primary School and below	3	0.7	12001-15000	14	3.2
Junior Secondary School	20	4.6	>15000	22	5.0
Senior Secondary School	59	13.4	Place of residence		
Undergraduate	328	74.7	Xiamen local resi-	26	5.9
Postgraduate	29	6.6	dents		
			Non-local residents	412	94.1

4.2.2 Trip characteristics of respondents

As shown in **Table 4.2**, most tourists travel to Gulangyu with their family and friends (86.32%), and the majority of these groups consist of two to five people (340 respondents, representing 52% of the sample). The percentage of respondents who joined a package tour was only 8.88%, while travel groups with more than seven people accounted for 10.93%. This result may have been affected by the convenience sampling used to target respondents in this study. Namely, initial respondents were approached at the entrances and exits of tourist attractions in Gulangyu, and only tourists who had used UGC travel information on social media were asked to participate in this survey. Since group tourists often join one-day tours, they may be less likely to use UGC to plan their trip, and so are excluded from this study.

Regarding the frequency of past visits to Gulangyu, the proportion of first-time visitors (67.88%) was much higher than the proportion of repeat visitors (32.12%). Among those repeated visitors, 16.17% of respondents reported that they had visited Gulangyu for a second time. Another 6.61% and 9.34% of respondents reported that they had been to Gulangyu three or more times.

This suggests that Gulangyu has long been a very popular domestic destination in China. Even for repeat tourists, UGC still provides valuable information on pre-trip planning since there has a wide range of types of attractions and activities for tourists to experience and explore in Gulangyu.

As for the duration of stay, nearly half of the visitors (45.33%) stay for one day without staying overnight in Gulangyu, while more than half (52.39%) prefer short stays (2-5 days) in Gulangyu. Only 1.14% of tourists opt to stay longer in Gulangyu.

In Gulangyu, most visitors (32.21%) spend between 201 and 300 RMB per person per day (about £20-£30). Approximately 20% of tourists spend 301-400 RMB (about £20-£40) per person per day. Tourists who spend less than 200 RMB (around lower than £20) and more than 601 RMB (around more than £60) account for 17.77% and 14.81 %, respectively. Tourists who spend 501 to 600 RMB represent the smallest proportion, only 6.38%.

Table 4.2 Travel characteristics of the survey respondents.

Trip characteristics	N (%)	Trip characteristics	N (%)
Who travels with you		No. of days spent in Gulangyu Island	
Alone	21 (4.78%)	1 day	199 (45.33%)
Family members	116 (26.42%)	2 - 3 days	186(42.37%)
Friends	229 (52.16%)	4 - 5 days	44(10.02%)
Family and friends	34 (7.74%)	6 - 7 days	5(1.14%)
Package tour	39 (8.88%)	More than 7 days	5(1.14%)
The number of people traveling with you		The average spending per day per person on Gulangyu Island	
Alone	18 (4.10%)	Lower than 200 RMB	78 (17.77%)
2-3 people	254(57.86%)	201 - 300 RMB	137(31.21%)
4 - 5 people	86 (19.59%)	301 - 400 RMB	90(20.50%)
6- 7 people	33(7.52%)	401 - 500 RMB	41(9.34%)
More than 7 people	48(10.93%)	501 - 600 RMB	28(6.38%)
		Above 601 RMB	65(14.81%)
No. of previous visits to Gulangyu			
1 time	298 (67.88%)		
2 times	71 (16.17%)		
3 times	29 (6.61%)		
More than 3 times	41 (9.34%)		

4.3 The use of UGC on social media in pre-trip planning

4.3.1 Overall use of UGC for travel planning

The UGC is recognised as a valuable source of information that may influence tourists' travel decision-makings before the trip. Based upon the survey data, tourists used UGC primarily for eight activities to plan a trip. **Figure 4.1** shows that tourists search UGC for information about restaurants (25.36%), hotels (23.12%), transportation (19.84%), tourist site (13.6%), tickets (8.24%), recommended travel routes (7.44%), travel tips (2.08%) and recommended local tour guide (0.32%) prior to visiting a destination.

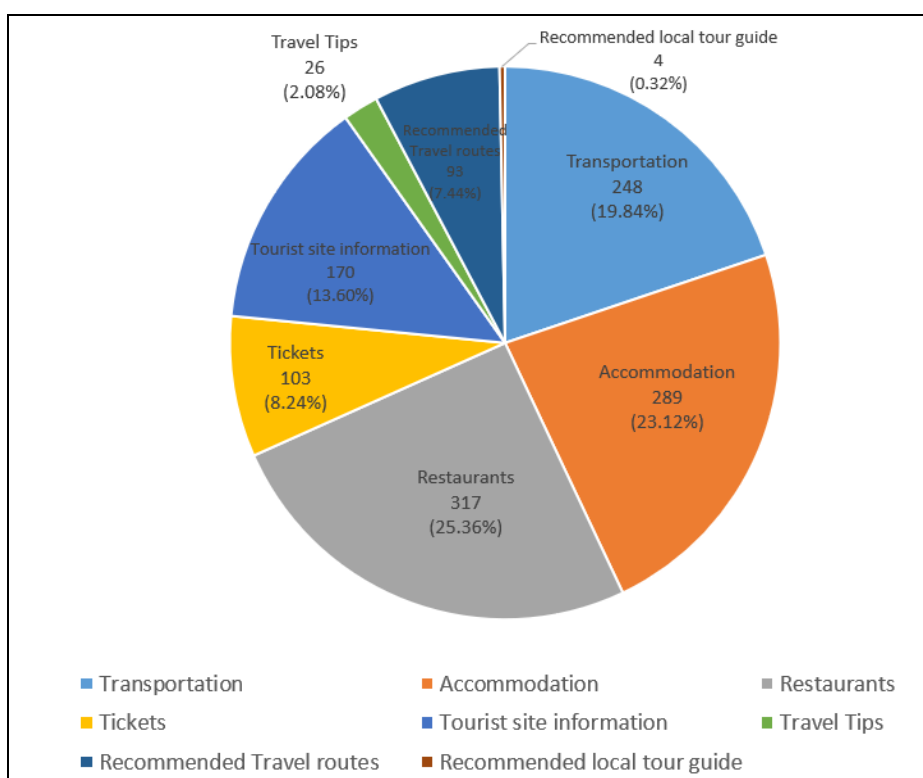


Figure 4.1 The use of UGC on social media in pre-trip planning.

The top three activities that tourists use UGC to obtain travel information are restaurants, hotels and transportation. These results support previous findings that restaurant, accommodation, and transportation are all essential travel components (Dellaert et al., 1998; Liu et al., 2020). Notably, the restaurant information was referred to most frequently by tourists among all the other information at a destination. Unlike traditional practices where tourists would simply enter a restaurant that looked appealing while on their trip, modern tourists prefer to search relevant reviews of restaurants at the pre-trip stage. This finding is consistent with Chen and Huang (2018b) argument that food culture and consumption play a significant role among Chinese

tourists, and local food can be a valuable attraction.

Additionally, tourists' use of UGC for travel planning is not limited to the main elements of a destination (e.g., transportation and accommodation), but is also extended to a broad range of tourist choices at a destination. The results show that tourists to Gulangyu also used UGC to find information about recommended travel routes, local tour guides and travel tips. This is assumed that UGC may not provide tourists with support information for trip planning (i.e., book a hotel in advance), but tourists believe UGC information can also serve as a guide, providing information such as travel tips and recommended routes that would improve their on-site tourist experiences.

4.3.2 Comparison of UGC usage between first-time visitors and repeat visitors

A comparison is made between how first-time visitors and repeat visitors use UGC (**Table 4.3**). For both first-time visitors and repeat visitors, the top three activities that tourists search UGC for travel planning are still restaurant, accommodation, and transportation, which is the same across the whole sample. For all travel information searches, chi-square results showed no significant differences between first-time visitors and repeat visitors.

This result is very interesting. Compared with first-time visitors, repeat visitors should be more familiar with the destination (Anwar & Sohail, 2004; Hahm & Severt, 2018; Stewart & Vogt, 1999) and may behave different searching behaviour. Nonetheless, the results indicates that travellers' information gathering efforts do not decrease when they visit a place they have already visited. Alternatively, UGC may attract repeaters if it includes a variety of extensive travel information about the destination, while novelty seeking may motivate repeat visitors to search information as first-time visitors.

Table 4.3 Comparison of UGC usage between first-time visitors and repeat visitors.

	Total Frequency	First-time visitor Frequency (n=289)	Repeat visi- tors Frequency (n=141)	χ^2 (Sig.)
Transportation	248 (19.84%)	176 (20.63%)	72 (18.14%)	$\chi^2=2.49$ (p =0.115)
Accommodation	289 (23.12%)	198 (23.21%)	91 (22.92%)	$\chi^2=0.154$ (p =0.695)
Restaurants	317 (25.36%)	220 (25.79%)	97 (24.43%)	$\chi^2=1.207$ (p =0.272)

Tickets	103 (8.24%)	66 (7.74%)	37 (9.32%)	$\chi^2=0.893$ (p =0.345)
Tourist site information	170 (13.60%)	116 (13.60%)	54 (13.60%)	$\chi^2=0.016$ (p =0.900)
Travel Tips	26 (2.08%)	17 (1.99%)	9 (2.27%)	$\chi^2=0.079$ (p =0.770)
Recommended Travel routes	93 (7.44%)	57 (6.68%)	36 (9.07%)	$\chi^2=2.351$ (p =0.125)
Recommended local tour guide	4 (0.32%)	3 (0.35%)	1 (0.25%)	$\chi^2=0.094$ (p=0.759)
Others, please specify	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	—

4.4 Structural Equation model

4.4.1 Data normality

A standard descriptive analysis was performed prior to evaluating the measurement and structural models to ensure that all variables were normal. The 47 variables selected to measure UGC, perceived usefulness of UGC, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction and revisit intention and recommendation intention were tested for multivariate normality using SPSS 23.0. Since all absolute skewness values were less than 2 and all absolute kurtosis values less than 7 (**Table 4.4**), the normality assumption was met for each item according to Blanca et al. (2013).

Table 4.4 Normality test results.

Item	Description	Skewness	Kurtosis
UGC			
UGC1	UGC makes me know that Gulangyu is the world's cultural heritage site	-.629	.813
UGC2	UGC makes me know more about the history of Gulangyu	-.519	.651
UGC3	UGC makes me know the latest activities and events in Gulangyu (e.g.UGC provide me more information related to the musical and cultural activities on the island)	-.442	.264
Emotional UGC			
UGC4	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beautiful	-.869	2.300
UGC5	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu Island has a great sense of history	-.752	1.241
UGC6	UGC makes me be deeply attracted by its beautiful	-.477	.478

UGC7	natural scenery and historical buildings UGC makes me think that I like this destination (Gulangyu) very much	-.646	1.099
UGC8	UGC inspires my interest in traveling to Gulangyu	-.306	.316
UGC9	UGC inspires my interest in visiting the historical and cultural building in Gulangyu	-.562	.612
UGC10	UGC makes me feel that it should be worth travelling to Gulangyu	-.612	.870
Perceived usefulness of UGC			
PUUGC1	UGC provides a good reference for me to visit Gulangyu.	-.680	.947
PUUGC2	UGC is useful in helping me arrange the whole trip.	-.629	1.132
PUUGC3	For me, these UGC are helpful.	-.619	1.605
Destination image			
DI1	Gulangyu has outstanding universal values	-.102	.355
DI2	Gulangyu is a prominent example of Chinese cultural diversity	-.391	.487
DI3	Gulangyu is part of the most unique culture of China	-.403	.407
DI4	Gulangyu has had a great impact on the people of the world.	-.228	.072
DI5	The international community has a responsibility to protect this heritage	-.669	1.296
DI6	Gulangyu is very important to China and the world	-.485	.441
DI7	This is a place where "you must visit"	-.215	-.086
Destination selection			
DS1	Positive reviews make me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	-.687	1.339
DS2	Other tourist recommended visiting routes makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	-.306	.007
DS3	The photos which are taken in Gulangyu and posted by tourist's online, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	.012	-.115
DS4	The travel experience shared by other tourists, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	-.261	.185
DS5	The music or books recommended by other tourists about Gulangyu, makes me chose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	-.672	1.446
Tourist actual purchasing behaviour			
TAPB1	UGC have an impact on my hotel reservation in Gulangyu.	.513	-.538
TAPB2	UGC have an impact on whether I buy tickets to visit some tourism attritions in Gulangyu.	.259	-.607
TAPB3	UGC have an impact on my choice of restaurant in Gulangyu.	.526	-.431
TAPB4	UGC have an impact on planning the visiting route in Gulangyu.	.462	-.348

TAPB5	UGC have an impact on my choice of souvenirs in Gulangyu.	.297	-.647
Tourist satisfaction			
TS1	Generally, I am satisfied with the experience of Gulangyu	-.687	1.339
TS2	I felt very happy with this trip to Gulangyu	-.306	.007
TS3	I felt relaxed during my trip to Gulangyu	.012	-.115
TS4	I enjoyed my trip to Gulangyu	-.261	.185
TS5	Generally, I think it is a wise choice to take Gulangyu as the destination of my trip	-.672	1.446
Word of mouth			
WOM1	I would like to recommend Gulangyu to my family and friends	-.780	1.642
WOM2	I would like to recommend some worth-visiting scenic spots on Gulangyu to others	-.686	1.481
WOM3	I would like to recommend the good hotels where I have stayed in during this trip to others	-.394	-.109
WOM4	I would like to recommend the delicious food that I have tried on this trip to others	-.669	.717
WOM5	I would like to recommend souvenirs bought on Gulangyu to my family and friends	-.344	.139
WOM6	I would like to share travel tips with others	-.802	1.673
WOM7	After this trip, I would like to share my travel experience on the Internet.	-.665	.591
Revisiting Intention			
RV1	I intend to visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	-.641	.414
RV2	I have plans to visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	-.420	.077
RV3	I hope I can visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	-.392	.133
RV4	I may visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	-.607	.486

4.4.2 Scale reliability

The level of internal consistency within the measurements of UGC, perceived usefulness, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation intention were tested using reliability analysis. **Table 4.5** summarizes the results of the reliability analysis.

Table 4.5 Reliability of Measurements of the Major Constructs.

Item	Description	Alpha if Item Deleted	Reliability Coefficient
UGC			0.903
UGC1	UGC makes me know that Gulangyu is the world's cultural heritage site	0.898	
UGC 2	UGC makes me know more about the history of Gulangyu	0.901	
UGC 3	UGC makes me know the latest activities and events in Gulangyu (e.g.UGC provide me more information related to the musical and cultural activities on the island)	0.907	
	Emotional UGC	0.895	
UGC4	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beautiful	0.889	
UGC5	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu Island has a great sense of history	0.890	
UGC6	UGC makes me be deeply attracted by its beautiful natural scenery and historical buildings	0.888	
UGC7	UGC makes me think that I like this destination (Gulangyu) very much	0.888	
UGC8	UGC inspires my interest in traveling to Gulangyu	0.889	
UGC9	UGC inspires my interest in visiting the historical and cultural building in Gulangyu	0.890	
UGC10	UGC makes me feel that it should be worth travelling to Gulangyu	0.898	
Perceived useful of UGC			0.859
PUUGC1	UGC provides a good reference for me to visit Gulangyu.	0.874	
PUUGC2	UGC is useful in helping me arrange the whole trip.	0.746	
PUUGC3	For me, these UGC are helpful.	0.788	
Destination image			0.868
DI1	Gulangyu has outstanding universal values	0.858	
DI2	Gulangyu is a prominent example of Chinese cultural diversity	0.851	
DI3	Gulangyu is part of the most unique culture of China	0.849	
DI4	Gulangyu has had a great impact on the people of the world.	0.846	
DI5	The international community has a responsibility to protect this heritage	0.843	
DI6	Gulangyu is very important to China and the world	0.841	
DI7	This is a place where "you must visit"	0.854	
Destination selection			0.883
DS1	Other tourist recommended visiting routes makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.862	
DS2	The photos which are taken in Gulangyu and posted by tourist's online, makes me choose Gulangyu as	0.846	

	the destination for this trip.	
DS3	The travel experience shared by other tourists, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.851
DS4	The music or books recommended by other tourists about Gulangyu, makes me chose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.847
Tourist actual purchasing behaviour		
TAPB1	UGC have an impact on my hotel reservation in Gulangyu.	0.862
TAPB2	UGC have an impact on whether I buy tickets to visit some tourism attritions in Gulangyu.	0.838
TAPB3	UGC have an impact on my choice of restaurant in Gulangyu.	0.838
TAPB4	UGC have an impact on planning the visiting route in Gulangyu.	0.835
TAPB5	UGC have an impact on my choice of souvenirs in Gulangyu.	0.857
Tourist satisfaction		0.926
TS1	Generally, I am satisfied with the experience of Gulangyu	0.914
TS2	The Gulangyu trip fully met my expectation.	0.914
TS3	The Gulangyu trip exceeded my expectation.	0.930
TS4	Gulangyu was a wise choice as the destination of my trip.	0.913
TS5	I felt very happy with this trip to Gulangyu	0.909
TS6	I felt relaxed during my trip to Gulangyu	0.914
TS7	I enjoyed my trip to Gulangyu	0.909
Word of mouth		0.870
WOM1	I would like to recommend Gulangyu to my family and friends	0.845
WOM2	I would like to recommend some worth-visiting scenic spots on Gulangyu to others	0.841
WOM3	I would like to recommend the good hotels where I have stayed in during this trip to others	0.857
WOM4	I would like to recommend the delicious food that I have tried on this trip to others	0.842
WOM5	I would like to recommend souvenirs bought on Gulangyu to my family and friends	0.848
WOM6	I would like to share travel tips with others	0.850
WOM7	After this trip, I would like to share my travel experience on the Internet.	0.873
Revisiting Intention		0.936
RV1	I intend to visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	0.906
RV2	I have plans to visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	0.913
RV3	I hope I can visit Gulangyu again in the next two	0.908

	years	
RV4	I may visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	0.938

The results of reliability analyses of the research constructs showed in the table, respectively: 0.903 for factual UGC, 0.916 for emotional UGC, 0.865 for perceived useful of UGC, 0.868 for destination image, 0.883 for destination selection, 0.926 for destination satisfaction, 0.870 for word of mouth and 0.936 for revisiting intention. A reliability coefficient of above 0.8 was found for all eight constructs, showing that the measurements taken were consistent with each other. An examination of “Alpha if Item Deleted” columns revealed that all the measurements for the 8 constructs need not be deleted to improve construct reliabilities. Therefore, 47 items remained.

4.4.3 Measurement of UGC

A descriptive statistic was performed to examine the mean values of all UGC items. The means and standard deviations of all items are shown in **Table 4.6**. The mean value of all ten items was above the mid-point (3.0), indicating that respondents generally accepted the effects of UGC statements. One item, namely “UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beautiful” displayed mean values over 4.0, indicating that UGC can increase tourists’ feelings of destination beauty. Furthermore, standard deviations of observations on these items showed slight differences, indicating that respondents had unanimously agreed with the impact of UGC.

Table 4.6 Means and Standard Deviations of UGC.

Item	Description	Mean ^a	Std. Deviation
UGC1	UGC makes me know that Gulangyu is the world's cultural heritage site	3.61	0.83
UGC 2	UGC makes me know more about the history of Gulangyu	3.62	0.80
UGC 3	UGC makes me know the latest activities and events in Gulangyu (e.g.UGC provide me more information related to the musical and cultural activities on the island)	3.57	0.84
	Emotional UGC		
UGC4	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beautiful	4.05	0.72
UGC5	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu Island has a great sense of history	3.88	0.78
UGC6	UGC makes me be deeply attracted by its beautiful natural scenery and historical buildings	3.82	0.78
UGC7	UGC makes me think that I like this destination (Gulangyu) very much	3.85	0.76
UGC8	UGC inspires my interest in traveling to Gu-	3.69	0.79

	langyu		
UGC9	UGC inspires my interest in visiting the historical and cultural building in Gulangyu	3.76	0.82
UGC10	UGC makes me feel that it should be worth travelling to Gulangyu	3.84	0.78

The underlying dimensions of the UGC sources were derived through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in order to determine their underlying dimensions. In this study, a principal component method with varimax rotation was used. To control the number of factors extracted, a minimum eigenvalue of one was used. Items with factor loadings lower than 0.4 and items with cross-loadings greater than 0.4 on more than one factor were excluded (Hai et al.; Hair et al., 2010), because items with these characteristics failed to prove pure measures of a specific construct. All UGC items were retained in the results. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.91, indicating the sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was 2855.68 (df=66, $p < 0.001$), supporting the factorability of the data (Hair et al., 1995). Two underlying dimensions of UGC, corresponding to factual UGC and emotional UGC, were identified. These two factors explained 61.01% of the variance in UGC sources. The final results are presented in **Table 4.7**.

Table 4.7 Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of UGC.

Constructs and indicators	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)
Factual UGC (FUGC)		1.47	12.23
FUGC1	0.84		
FUGC2	0.86		
FUGC3	0.69		
Emotional UGC (EUGC)		5.85	48.78
EUGC1	0.78		
EUGC2	0.70		
EUGC3	0.82		
EUGC4	0.85		
EUGC5	0.75		
EUGC6	0.74		
EUGC7	0.81		

4.4.4 Measurement of other constructs

A descriptive statistic was calculated using SPSS to test the other univariate measures of perceived usefulness of UGC, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behavior, satisfaction, revisit intention, and recommendation intention before EFA was used. For each of the 7 constructs, descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS. **Table 4.8** reports means and standard deviations. The majority of respondents rated all items positively. The mean values of all the items were over 3.0, indicating that respondents generally agreed that UGC affected their perception of a destina-

tion, selection of a destination, purchase behaviour, satisfaction, revisiting intention, and recommendation intention.

Table 4.8 Means and Standard Deviations of Items Measuring perceived usefulness of UGC, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation intention.

Item	Description	Mean ^a	Std. Deviation
Perceived useful of UGC			
PUUGC1	UGC provides a good reference for me to visit Gulangyu.	3.77	0.80
PUUGC2	UGC is useful in helping me arrange the whole trip.	3.85	0.74
PUUGC3	For me, these UGC are helpful.	3.93	0.70
Destination image			
DI1	Gulangyu has outstanding universal values	3.58	0.73
DI2	Gulangyu is a prominent example of Chinese cultural diversity	3.68	0.75
DI3	Gulangyu is part of the most unique culture of China	3.68	0.77
DI4	Gulangyu has had a great impact on the people of the world.	3.56	0.81
DI5	The international community has a responsibility to protect this heritage	3.99	0.75
DI6	Gulangyu is very important to China and the world	3.86	0.81
DI7	This is a place where "you must visit"	3.58	0.90
Destination selection			
DS1	Other tourist recommended visiting routes makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	3.11	1.02
DS2	The photos which are taken in Gulangyu and posted by tourist's online, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	3.32	1.06
DS3	The travel experience shared by other tourists, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	3.33	1.06
DS4	The music or books recommended by other tourists about Gulangyu, makes me chose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	3.48	1.00
Tourist actual purchasing behaviour			
TAPB1	UGC have an impact on my hotel reservation in Gulangyu.	3.36	1.10
TAPB2	UGC have an impact on whether I buy tickets to visit some tourism attritions in Gulangyu.	3.21	1.06
TAPB3	UGC have an impact on my choice of restaurant in Gulangyu.	3.40	1.07
TAPB4	UGC have an impact on planning the visiting route	3.37	1.00

TAPB5	in Gulangyu. UGC have an impact on my choice of souvenirs in Gulangyu.	3.16	1.10
Tourist satisfaction			
TS1	Generally, I am satisfied with the experience of Gulangyu	3.87	0.70
TS2	The Gulangyu trip fully met my expectation.	3.58	0.78
TS3	The Gulangyu trip exceeded my expectation.	3.30	0.85
TS4	Gulangyu was a wise choice as the destination of my trip.	3.73	0.75
TS5	I felt very happy with this trip to Gulangyu	3.85	0.71
TS6	I felt relaxed during my trip to Gulangyu	3.85	0.75
TS7	I enjoyed my trip to Gulangyu	3.86	0.74
Word of mouth			
WOM1	I would like to recommend Gulangyu to my family and friends	3.94	0.723
WOM2	I would like to recommend some worth-visiting scenic spots on Gulangyu to others	3.97	0.68
WOM3	I would like to recommend the good hotels where I have stayed in during this trip to others	3.69	0.86
WOM4	I would like to recommend the delicious food that I have tried on this trip to others	3.91	0.78
WOM5	I would like to recommend souvenirs bought on Gulangyu to my family and friends	3.70	0.81
WOM6	I would like to share travel tips with others	4.03	0.71
WOM7	After this trip, I would like to share my travel experience on the Internet.	3.71	0.88
Revisiting Intention			
RV1	I intend to visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	3.66	0.92
RV2	I have plans to visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	3.52	0.93
RV3	I hope I can visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	3.61	0.90
RV4	I may visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	3.74	0.87

^aScale:5 5= Strongly agree,1=strongly disagree

An EFA analyses was then conducted separately. Results showed that items intended to measure a latent construct loaded on the predicted component (**Table 4.9**). All items except for TS3 in tourist satisfaction scale, showed a loading approaching or exceeding 0.70 on their latent construct, which suggests that they had high reliability.(Hair et al., 2010). Because TS3 had a lower mean value, it is likely that it was not a significant tourism satisfaction item, and as a result, was removed. All the other items were retained for subsequent analyses. A total of 7 scales explained 63.99% for perceived usefulness, 56.34% for destination image, 74.14% for destination selection,66.36% for tourist actual purchasing behaviour, 74.12% for tourist satis-

faction, 56.33% for word of mouth and 84.2% for revising intention. For Bartlett's test of sphericity, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO) and chi-square values all met satisfactory levels (Hair et al., 1995).

Table 4.9 Exploratory factor analysis of perceived usefulness of UGC, destination image, destination selection, actual purchasing behaviour, satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation intention.

Constructs and indicators	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)
Perceived useful of UGC		1.20	63.99%
PUUGC1	0.73		
PUUGC2	0.87		
PUUGC3	0.80		
KMO = 0.706			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 319.865$, $p < .000$			
Destination image (DI)		2.26	56.34%
DI1	0.65		
DI2	0.71		
DI3	0.73		
DI4	0.78		
DI5	0.78		
DI6	0.81		
DI7	0.76		
KMO = 0.852			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 1346.474$, $p < .000$			
Destination selection (DS)		3.16	74.14%
DS1	0.83		
DS2	0.89		
DS3	0.87		
DS4	0.86		
KMO = 0.825			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 928.678$, $p < .000$			
Tourist actual purchasing behaviour		3.78	66.36%
TAPB1	0.85		
TAPB2	0.89		
TAPB3	0.90		
TAPB4	0.84		
TAPB5	0.87		
KMO = 0.859			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 1040.379$, $p < .000$			
Tourist satisfaction		2.43	74.12%
TS1	0.70		
TS2	0.70		
TS3 (x)	0.55		
TS4	0.72		
TS5	0.77		
TS6	0.70		
TS7	0.77		
KMO = 0.913			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 2311.804$, $p < .000$			

Word of mouth		2.40	56.33%
WOM1	0.78		
WOM2	0.80		
WOM3	0.74		
WOM4	0.81		
WOM5	0.78		
WOM6	0.74		
WOM7	0.66		
KMO = 0.880			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 1376.372$, $p < .000$			
Revisiting intention		2.76	84.20%
RV1	0.94		
RV2	0.93		
RV3	0.94		
RV4	0.87		
KMO = .0862			
Barlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 1539.786$, $p < .000$			

4.5 Quantitative Analysis I: the effect of UGC on tourist decision-making

4.5.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the measurement model scales on factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, perceived usefulness of UGC destination selection, and actual purchasing behaviour, and its adequacy was assessed. As presented in **Table 4.10**, the standardized factor loadings did not differ much from EFA loadings, ranging from 0.51 to 0.90. The findings indicated an acceptable model fit: $X^2=1107.70$, $df=449$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.93, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.92, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.58. *t* values for the standardized factor loadings of items were significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that they are significant indicators of their respective constructs.

4.5.2 Evaluation of the overall measurement model

Construct validity was next assessed to validate the measurement scales in accordance with Campbell and Fiske's (1959) criteria. Convergent and discriminant validity of the scale were examined. To measure convergent validity, the significance of the factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) for each factor (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All AVE scores were approached 0.5, demonstrating sufficient convergent validity were taken into account. The square root for each construct (**see Table 4.11**) is greater than its correlation with other factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, discriminant validity was also supported. In conclusion, the 25-item measurement scale showed strong construct validity and reliability.

Table 4.10 Confirmatory factor analysis results for factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, perceived useful of UGC, destination selection and purchasing behaviour.

Variable and items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (AVE)
Factual UGC (FUGC)		0.78	0.55
FUGC1: UGC makes me know that Gulangyu is the world's cultural heritage site	0.84		
FUGC2: UGC makes me know more about the history of Gulangyu	0.80		
FUGC3: UGC makes me know the latest activities and events in Gulangyu (e.g.UGC provide me more information related to the musical and cultural activities on the island)	0.56		
Emotional UGC (EUGC)		0.92	0.61
EUGC1: UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beautiful	0.72		
EUGC2: UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu Island has a great sense of history	0.74		
EUGC3: UGC makes me be deeply attracted by its beautiful natural scenery and historical buildings	0.81		
EUGC4: UGC makes me think that I like this destination (Gulangyu) very much	0.84		
EUGC5: UGC inspires my interest in traveling to Gulangyu	0.79		
EUGC6: UGC inspires my interest in visiting the historical and cultural building in Gulangyu	0.78		
EUGC7: UGC makes me feel that it should be worth travelling to Gulangyu	0.79		
Destination image (DI)		0.86	0.47
DI1: Gulangyu has outstanding universal values	0.62		
DI2: Gulangyu is a prominent example of Chinese cultural diversity	0.67		
DI3: Gulangyu is part of the most unique culture of China	0.66		
Gulangyu has had a great impact on the people of the world.	0.69		
DI4: The international community has a responsibility to protect this heritage	0.72		
DI5: Gulangyu is very important to China and the world	0.73		
DI6: This is a place where "you must visit"	0.69		
Perceived usefulness of UGC (PUOU)		0.86	0.67

PUOU1: It provides a good reference for me to visit Gulangyu.	0.51		
PUOU2: It is useful in helping me arrange the whole trip.	0.83		
PUOU3: For me, these online reviews are helpful.	0.72		
Destination selection (DS)		0.90	0.63
DS1: Positive reviews makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.77		
DS2: Other tourist recommended visiting routes makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.84		
DS3: The photos which are taken in Gulangyu and posted by tourist's online, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.80		
DS4: The travel experience shared by other tourists, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	0.83		
DS5: The music or books recommended by other tourists about Gulangyu, makes me chose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip	0.66		
Tourist actual purchasing behaviour (TAPB)		0.91	0.66
TAPB1: Online reviews have an impact on my hotel reservation in Gulangyu.	0.70		
TAPB2: Online reviews have an impact on whether I buy tickets to visit some tourism attritions in Gulangyu.	0.78		
TAPB3: Online reviews have an impact on my choice of restaurant in Gulangyu.	0.80		
TAPB4: Online reviews have an impact on planning the visiting route in Gulangyu.	0.82		
TAPB5: Online reviews have an impact on my choice of souvenirs in Gulangyu.	0.72		

Table 4.11 Inter-construct Correlations

	FUGC	EUGC	DI	PUOU	DS	TAPB
1.Factual UGC (FUGC)	0.74					
2.Emotional UGC(EUGC)	0.602	0.78				
3.Destinaiton Image (DI)	0.371*	0.535***	0.68			
4.Perceived usefulness of UGC (PUOU)	0.420	0.458	0.255***	0.82		
5.Destination Selection (DS)	0.010**	0.130	0.123	0.170***	0.79	

6.Tourist Actual Purchasing Behaviour (TAPB)	0.067***	0.076	0.032	0.150***	0.699	0.81
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Note: AVE=Average variance extracted. The square root of AVE is shown on the diagonal of the matrix in boldface; interconstruct correlation is shown off the diagonal.

4.5.3 Hypothesis testing

The structural model was tested after the measurement model was satisfactory in terms of fit indices and parameter estimates. The structural relationships, as postulated in the conceptual framework of this study, included: (1) UGC's direct impact on destination selection and purchasing behavior (2) UGC's indirect impact on destination selection and purchasing behavior through destination images (3) the indirect effects of UGC on destination selection and purchasing behaviour though perceived usefulness of UGC. As UGC were validated in previous analyses as multidimensional, two latent variables were used to represent it. **Figure 4.2** illustrates the structural relationships.

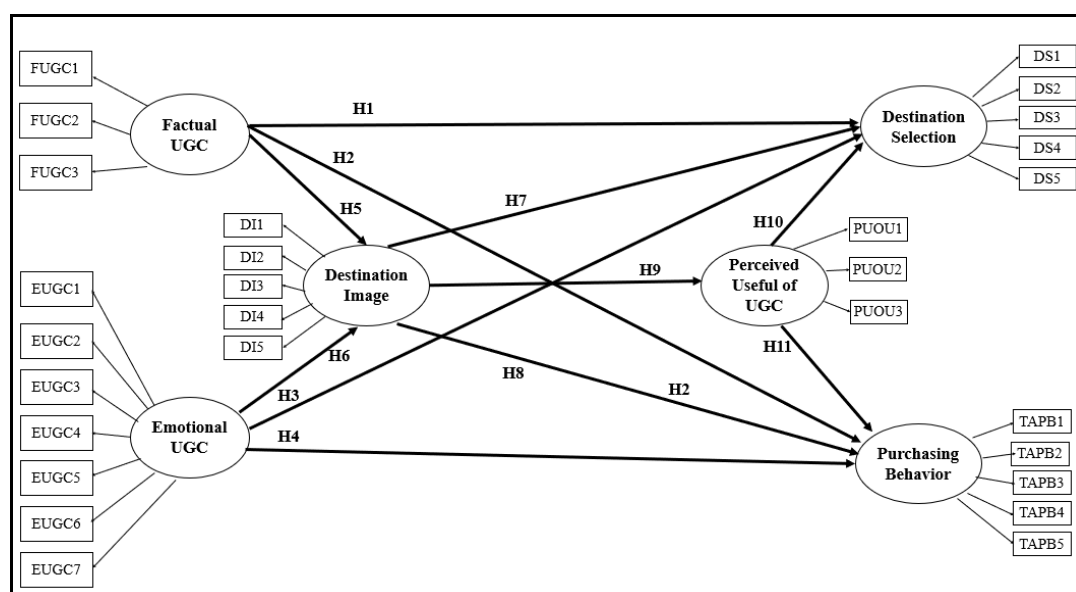
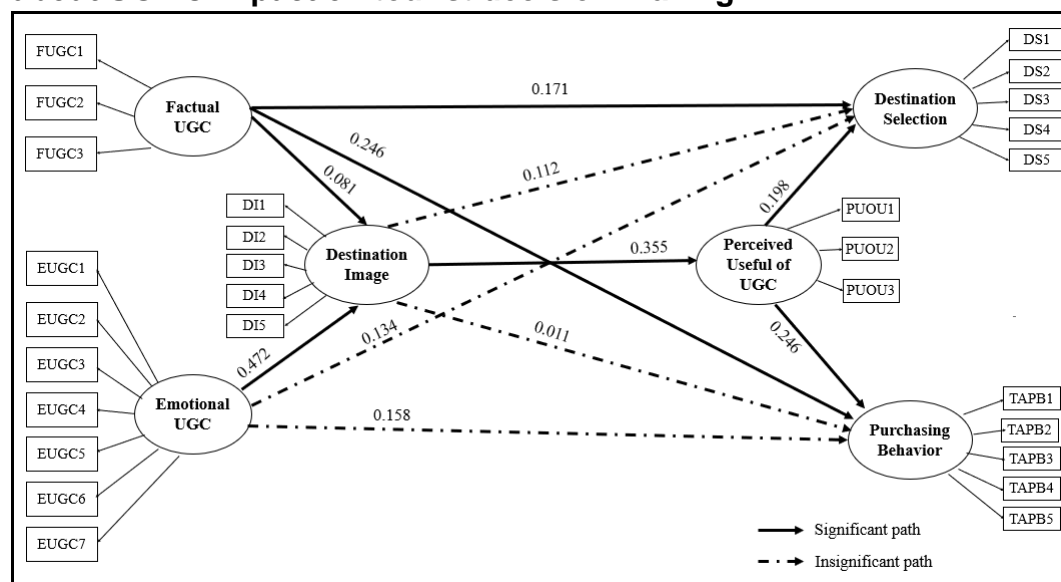


Figure 4.2 Structural model for the effects of UGC on tourist decision-making.

The proposed structural model was tested using SPSS software AMOS 21.0 with the maximum likelihood estimation method. The model fit indices indicated an acceptable model fit: $\chi^2=1160.53$; $df=339$; $CFI=0.89$, $TLI=0.87$; $RMSEA=0.07$. The hypotheses testing the persuasive effects of UGC on destination selection and tourists' actual purchasing behaviour are reported in **Figure 4.2** and **Table 4.12**. Results indicated that factual UGC had direct significant impacts on destination selection and tourists' actual purchasing behaviour, but emotional UGC had no such direct impact. However, both fac-

tual and emotional UGC had a significant influence on tourists' destination selection and purchase behaviour indirectly by affecting destination images and perceived usefulness of UGC.

Figure 4.3 Structural equation model with estimated path coefficient about UGC's impact on tourist decision-making.



Factual UGC was confirmed positively influence destination selection ($\beta=0.171$ $p<0.05$) and purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.246$, $p<0.001$), supporting hypothesis 1 and 2. The results indicates that factual UGC can enhance tourists' knowledge of the destination. As tourists gain more cognition about the destination, their choice will be influenced by other tourists' reviews of the destination. However, emotional UGC was found that had not a positive effect on destination selection ($\beta=0.134$ $p>0.05$) and purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.158$, $p>0.05$), rejecting hypotheses 3 and 4. The results were consistent with some of past studies that have shown that UGC impacts tourist decisions differently depending on the themes and content of UGC (Huang et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2016).

As shown in the conceptual mode (Figure 5.1), both factual ($\beta=0.081$, $p<0.001$) and emotional UGC ($\beta=0.472$, $p<0.001$) were hypothesized to have an impact on destination image. The hypothesis 5 and 6 are confirmed by the model test results. However, the results showed no impact of destination image on destination selection ($\beta=0.112$, $p>0.05$) and purchase behaviour ($\beta=0.011$, $p>0.05$), rejecting hypotheses 7 and 8. The finding suggests that both factual and emotional UGC can contribute to tourists' greater understanding of destinations, but tourists' perceptions of destination images do not directly influence their decisions and behaviours.

The path coefficient from destination image to tourists perceived usefulness of UGC ($\beta=0.355$, $p<0.01$), destination selection ($\beta=0.198$, $p<0.01$) and

actual purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.246$, $p<0.01$); were all positive and significant, supporting hypotheses 9,10 and 11. The results suggest when tourists perceive UGC as useful, they are more likely to use UGC to make subsequent decisions.

Table 4.12 Path coefficients in the structural equation model test of the UGC’s effect on tourist decisions.

	Std. Estimates	t value	Conclusion
Factual UGC→ Destination selection	0.171	3.088**	Supported
Factual UGC→ Tourist actual purchasing behaviour	0.246	3.852***	Supported
Emotional UGC→ Destination selection	0.134	0.169	Rejected
Emotional UGC→ Tourist actual purchasing behaviour	0.158	1.671	Rejected
Factual UGC→ Destination image	0.081	2.275*	Supported
Emotional UGC →Destination image	0.472	8.225***	Supported
Destination image→ Destination selection	0.112	1.151	Rejected
Destination image→ Tourist actual purchasing behaviour	0.011	0.101	Rejected
Destination image →Perceived useful of UGC	0.355	5.047***	Supported
Perceived useful of UGC→ Destination selection	0.198	3.007***	Supported
Perceived useful of UGC→ Tourist actual purchasing behaviour	0.246	9.967***	Supported

Note: R² Destination image =0.274; R² Perceived useful of UGC =0.082;R² Destination Selection =0.091; Tourist actual purchasing behaviour = 0.098.

*p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

4.6 Quantitative Analysis II: the effects of UGC on tourist loyalty

4.6.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

CFA was conducted to further purify the measurement model scales on factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, tourist satisfaction, word of mouth and revisiting intention identified from EFA analysis, with all constructs allowed to freely intercorrelate with one another. The analysis was performed by employing a principal component factor analysis with a varimax rotation. Items with factor loadings lower than 0.5 and items with cross-loadings greater than 0.5 on more than one factor were dropped on principle (Hair, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). In this stage, item TS2 and TS4 were dropped because they had higher cross-loadings greater than 0.5, so these two items could not be used as pure measures of a specific construct (Hair et al., 2010). The findings indicate an acceptable model fit: $\chi^2=760.56$, $df=335$, comparative fit index (CFI)=0.94, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)=0.94, and root

mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.06. t values for the standardized factor loadings of the items were significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that the indicators are representative of each construct.

4.6.2 Evaluation of the overall measurement model

The whole measurement model was evaluated using SPSS Amos 21.0. The model's latent constructs were re-examined for loadings and reliability. The validity of discriminant and convergent validity were examined. The final results are presented in **Table 4.13**. The item factor loadings were higher than the suggested level of 0.5 (Hair et al., 1998). Results showed that all of the AVE values approached to 0.5 and CR scores were greater than the commonly recommended level of 0.7 (ranging from 0.78 to 0.94) respectively (Peterson, 1994). The square root for each construct (see **Table 4.14**) is greater than its correlation with other factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the 31-item measuring scale demonstrated considerable construct validity and reliability.

Table 4.13 Confirmatory factor analysis results for factual UGC, emotional UGC, destination image, tourist satisfaction, word of mouth and revisiting intention.

Variable and items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (AVE)
Factual User-generated content (FUGC)		0.78	0.55
FUGC1: UGC makes me know that Gulangyu is the world's cultural heritage site	0.83		
FUGC2: UGC makes me know more about the history of Gulangyu	0.82		
FUGC3: UGC makes me know the latest activities and events in Gulangyu (e.g.UGC provide me more information related to the musical and cultural activities on the island)	0.53		
Emotional User-generated content (EUGC)		0.92	0.61
EUGC1: UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beautiful	0.72		
EUGC2: UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu Island has a great sense of history	0.74		
EUGC3: UGC makes me be deeply attracted by its beautiful natural scenery and historical buildings	0.81		
EUGC4: UGC makes me think that I like this destination (Gulangyu) very much	0.84		
EUGC5: UGC inspires my interest in traveling to Gulangyu	0.78		

EUGC6: UGC inspires my interest in visiting the historical and cultural building in Gulangyu	0.77		
EUGC7: UGC makes me feel that it should be worth travelling to Gulangyu	0.79		
Destination image (DI)		0.86	0.47
DI1: Gulangyu has outstanding universal values	0.62		
DI2: Gulangyu is a prominent example of Chinese cultural diversity	0.67		
DI3: Gulangyu is part of the most unique culture of China	0.66		
D4: Gulangyu has had a great impact on the people of the world.	0.69		
DI5: The international community has a responsibility to protect this heritage	0.72		
DI6: Gulangyu is very important to China and the world	0.73		
This is a place where "you must visit"	0.69		
Tourist satisfaction (TS)		0.91	0.72
TS1: Generally, I am satisfied with the experience of Gulangyu	0.79		
TS2: The Gulangyu trip fully met my expectation. (x)	0.70		
TS4: Gulangyu was a wise choice as the destination of my trip. (x)	0.69		
TS5: I felt very happy with this trip to Gulangyu	0.88		
TS6: I felt relaxed during my trip to Gulangyu	0.84		
TS7: I enjoyed my trip to Gulangyu	0.88		
Word of mouth (WOM)		0.88	0.48
WOM1: I would like to recommend Gulangyu to my family and friends	0.79		
WOM2: I would like to recommend some worth-visiting scenic spots on Gulangyu to others	0.83		
WOM3: I would like to recommend the good hotels where I have stayed in during this trip to others	0.61		
WOM4: I would like to recommend the delicious food that I have tried on this trip to others	0.75		
WOM5: I would like to recommend souvenirs bought on Gulangyu to my family and friends	0.70		
WOM6: I would like to share travel tips with others	0.70		
WOM7: After this trip, I would like to share my travel experience on the Internet	0.52		

Revisiting intention (RI)		0.94	0.79
RI1: I intend to visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	0.92		
RI2: I have plans to visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	0.90		
RI3: I hope I can visit Gulangyu again in the next two years	0.92		
RI4: I may visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two years	0.80		

Table 4.14 Inter-construct correlations.

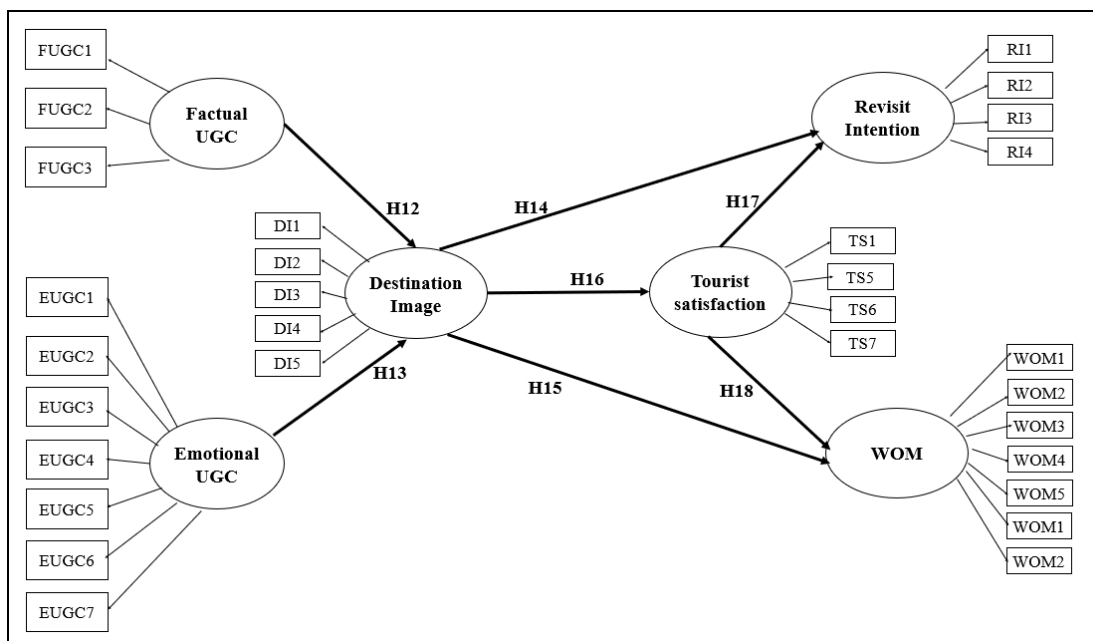
	FUGC	EUGC	DI	TS	WOM	RI
1. Factual UGC (FUGC)	0.74					
2. Emotional UGC (EUGC)	0.60***	0.78				
3. Destination Image (DI)	0.40***	0.59***	0.69			
4. Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	0.38***	0.58***	0.61***	0.81		
5. Word of Mouth (WOM)	0.46***	0.62***	0.68***	0.73***	0.69	
6. Revisiting Intention (RI)	0.26***	0.43***	0.54***	0.71***	0.66***	0.89

Note: AVE=Average variance extracted. The square root of AVE is shown on the diagonal of the matrix in boldface; interconstruct correlation is shown off the diagonal.

4.6.3 Hypothesis testing

The statistical significance of the path coefficients was evaluated after a structural model was formulated to accommodate the observed data. The following structural relationships were examined in relation to the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 2: (1) the direct effects of UGC on destination image; (2) the indirect effects of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour (WOM and revisiting intention) through destination image; (3) the indirect effects of UGC on loyalty behaviour tourist satisfaction. In the structural model, UGC were still conceptualized and evaluated as two latent variables, namely factual UGC and emotional UGC. The structural relationships are shown in **Figure 4.4**.

Figure 4.4 Structural model for the effects of UGC on tourist loyalty behaviour



The proposed structural model was tested using SPSS software AMOS 21.0 with the maximum likelihood estimation method. The fit indices of the structural equation model demonstrated that the model fitted the data well ($\chi^2=1231.682$, $df=457$, $CFI=0.906$, $TLI=0.898$, $RMSEA=0.066$). The results of hypotheses testing the effect of UGC on tourist loyalty are shown in **Figure 4.4** and **Table 4.14**. The findings suggest that UGC indirectly influences tourist loyalty via destination image and satisfaction. Moreover, the results demonstrate that factual UGC and emotional UGC positively affect tourists' perceived value of the destination, with emotional UGC having a greater influence.

Figure 4.5 Structural equation model with estimated path coefficient about UGC's impacts on tourist loyalty behaviour.

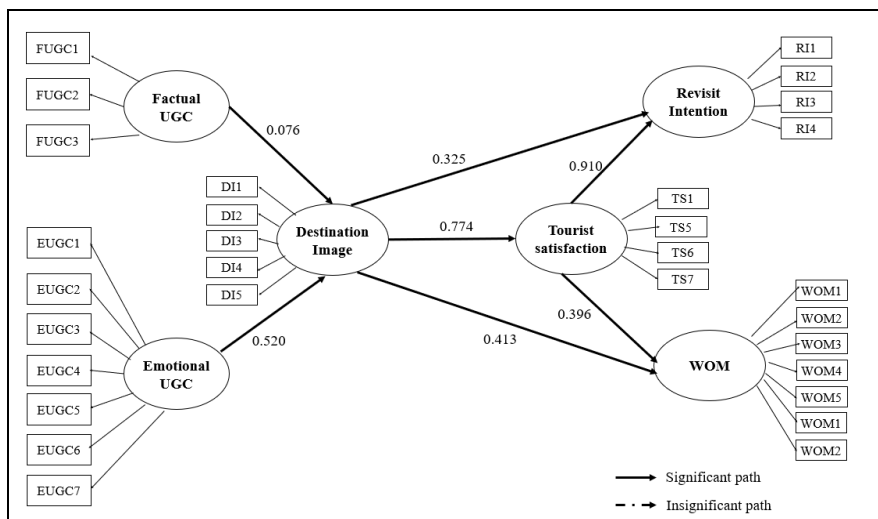


Table 4.15 Path coefficients in the structural equation model test of the UGC’s effect on tourist loyalties.

	Std. Es- timates	t value	Conclusion
H12. Factual Information → Destination image	0.076	2.415*	Supported
H13. Emotional Information → Destination image	0.520	9.288***	Supported
H14. Destination image → Revisiting Intention	0.325	0.325**	Supported
H15. Destination image → Word of Mouth	0.413	6.122***	Supported
H16. Destination image → Tourist Satisfaction	0.774	9.967***	Supported
H17. Tourist Satisfaction → Revisiting Intention	0.910	10.527** *	Supported
H18. Tourist Satisfaction → Word of Mouth	0.396	7.290***	Supported

Note: R²Tourist Perception= 0.37; R²Revisit Intention= 0.52; R²Satisfaction= 0.40; R²Word of Mouth= 0.48.

*p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001.

Hypothesis 12 proposed that factual UGC and destination image were correlated. More specifically, it was hypothesized that tourists’ sharing of factual information about the destination would positively influence potential tourists’ perception of the destination. This hypothesis was supported by a path coefficient of 0.076 from factual UGC to destination image and significance at the .05 level,

Hypothesis 13 examined the relationship between emotional UGC and destination image. It proposed that tourists shared emotional UGC on social media has a significant positive effect on tourists’ perceived destination image. The results revealed that emotional UGC positively influenced the image of a destination. The path coefficient was 0.520, which was significant at the .001 level. Hypothesis 13 was therefore supported.

Hypothesis 14 posited that destination image will positively influence tourists revisiting intention. The analysis confirmed the relationship ($\beta=0.325$, $p < 0.01$), implying that the more favourable destination image as perceived by tourists, the more revisiting intention tourists will have.

Hypothesis 15 proposed that destination image has a positive impact on tourist recommendation intention. The test of the hypothesis returned a positive and statistically significant path coefficient value ($\beta=0.413$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that the more competitive destination image as perceived by tourists, the better the tourists’ perceived quality of the destination.

Hypothesis 16 examined the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction. It was hypothesized in this study that destination image would positively affect tourist’ satisfaction with their travel destination. There was a strong positive correlation between destination image and satisfaction.

Thus, Hypothesis 16 was supported.

Hypothesis 17 postulated that tourist satisfaction will positively influence their revisiting intention to destination. The results of the test of hypothesis established a positive and statistically significant path from satisfaction to revisit intention ($\beta=0.91$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the more satisfied the tourists are with their travel experience, the more likely they revisit the destination.

Hypothesis 18 posited that tourist satisfaction will positively influence tourists' intention to recommend the destination to others. The result established a positive and statistically significant path from satisfaction and recommend intention ($\beta=0.396$, $p < 0.001$). The more satisfied tourists are with their travel experience, the more likely they are to recommend the destination to others.

4.7 Summary

The objective of this chapter was to present the results of the quantitative study at the first stage, so it focused on the analysis of questionnaire data. Data analysis was followed by a systematic presentation of the results. An analysis of demographic variables provided a first step in describing respondents' profiles and trip characteristics. Next, a preliminary analysis of the use of UGC by tourists for pre-stage trip planning was reported and the usage of UGC among different types of tourists (first-time tourists vs repeat tourists) was compared.

The proposed conceptual model was validated with two structural equation models in order to assess the impact of UGC on tourist behaviour during and after a trip. Before formal model testing, the data was screened for normality. The variable values were recoded to ensure that there was no extreme deviation from normality. Each research construct was first measured individually. EFA was used to analyse the underlying structure of each construct, followed by CFA analysis to combine findings into two overall measurement models. The underlying structure of UGC has been identified as two-dimensional, while destination image, tourist perceived usefulness of UGC, destination selection, tourist actual purchasing behaviour, tourist satisfaction, WOM and revisiting intention were verified to be unidimensional, as envisaged.

Afterward, two structural equation models were tested and found to be good fit for the data, as evidenced by the assessed fit indices. In both two structural models, the path coefficients were determined to be statistically significant. To comprehend the impacts among the constructs holistically, direct and indirect effects are provided. The hypotheses were checked again in order to see whether they were still supported by the model testing results.

CHAPTER 5: THE FINDINGS OF STUDY 2: UNDERSTANDING HOW TOURISTS CONSTRUCT TRAVEL EXPERIENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA AT THE POST-TRAVEL STAGE

The chapter presents qualitative data analysis results derived from the study. Findings delineate the potential of sharing of travel experiences back to social media at the post-travel stage can contribute to co-creating destination value. First, the recurrent themes of travel experience in travel blogs are identified and described. Second, how tourist construct and share travel experiences with online travel communities are explored. The results elucidate how tourists' post-travel experience-sharing behaviours results in the co-creation of destination value. Finally, the role of travel blogs as a kind of UGC shared back to social media at the post-travel stage in the destination value co-creation process are discussed.

5.1 Content of travel experience in travel blog

A total of 97 travel blogs were selected for this study. Table 5.1 shows the details of the travel blogs selected for inclusion in this study. In the 97 blogs selected, 64 (66.0%) blogs have between 500 and 2,500 Chinese characters, and 8 (8.2%) blogs have between 2,500 and 3,500 Chinese characters. 25 blogs (25.8%) have more than 3,500 words. In terms of the number of photos on travel blogs, over half (48 travel blogs) of them have more than 30 pictures. Only 15 of the selected travel blogs contain fewer than 10 pictures. 30 other blogs have between 11 and 30 pictures. Also, the types of travellers and the number of tourists this blog has helped can be found on Mafengwo.com. Tourists who travel alone (32.0%) and with friends (24.8%) dominate the 97 selected blogs. There are also a few bloggers who are couples (16.5%) or traveling with their families (25.7%). Most travel blogs can help 500-2000 other tourists, as shown in the table below. On the whole, the selected travel blogs are rich in content and diverse in the types of tourists.

Table 5.1 Selected travel blog details.

Blogger travel with	n	The number of words per travel blog post	n
Alone	31	501-1500	40
Friends	25	1501-2500	24
Couple	16	2501-3500	8
Family	25	>3500	25

The number of photos of per travel blog post		No. of tourists helped by the travel blog	
<10	15	<500	17
11-20	20	501-1000	36
21-30	10	1001-2000	13
31-40	3	2001-3000	5
>40	45	>3000	24

When analysing 97 travel blogs, content centred on tourist-destination interaction were observed. Travel experiences at Gulangyu were related to five different types of tourism products and services: food and restaurants (65 codes), transportation and routes (50 codes), hotel and accommodations (33 codes), tourism attractions and fun places (75 codes), and shopping and purchases (45 codes). These contents uncovered how the destination is consumed by tourists when traveling. Table 5.2 presents a few examples of data extracts with applicable codes, categories and themes. Three distinct themes in travel blogs were identified, namely motivation, memorable travel experiences, and advice, which revealed how tourists perceive and evaluate the destination. The following sections explain these three themes and demonstrate how they can be used to cocreate destination value.

Table 5.2 Examples of research codes.

Data extracts	Codes	Categories	Themes
My classmates and I went Gulangyu this time mainly to <u>take graduation photos</u> . Both motor vehicles and bicycles are forbidden on the island, which gives <u>a sense of tranquillity</u> <u>Sunlight Rock</u> is my favourite spot on this trip. (B-01)	1.Taking photos 2.Sunlight Rock 3.Feeling of tranquillity	1.Activities 2.Tourism attraction 3.Emotion	1.Motivation 2.Activity preference 3.Destination emotional experience
Our family visited Gulangyu Island this time mostly <u>to explore local cuisine</u> , however, my daughter really enjoyed the <u>beach</u> and the <u>aquarium</u> on the island. During the holidays, there are a lot of tourists. Visitors who intend to visit Gulangyu must remember to <u>buy tickets in advance</u> . (B-06)	1.Exploring local cuisine 2.Beach 3.Aquarium 4.Buying tickets in advance	1.Activities 2.Tourism attraction 3.Tourism attraction 4.Knowledge of travel	1.Motivation 2.Activity preference 3.Activity preference 4.Travel advice
Comments for B-82: We are planning to take children to stay in Gulangyu for two days, will it be more appropriate to buy package	1.Tickets of tourism attraction	1.Knowledge of travel	4. Travel advice

tickets? B-82: It is still recommended to <u>buy tickets separately</u> because <u>the scenic spots in the package</u> are far from away each other, and if children have limited energy, you may not be able to visit all the attractions.			
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Note: underline indicates how the code is extracted from the travel blog text.

5.1.1 Travel motivation for the destination

A travel blog describes how bloggers relate to a destination and how they evaluate it. Motivation is thus an essential part of bloggers' storytelling because it reveals why tourists travel to a destination under the influence of internal psychological forces (push factors) (Crompton, 1979) and how they are pulled by the external effects of the destination's attributes (pull factors) (Kim & Lee, 2002). Most bloggers begin their stories by describing what motivates them to travel because choosing a destination is the first step to preparing for a trip. In the 97 travel blogs selected, 24 bloggers explicitly mentioned travel motivation for visiting Gulangyu. Bloggers chose to visit Gulangyu for a variety of reasons, including (1) indulge in local food (2) relax (3) take photos (4) enjoy the weather (5) shop (6) find a sense of Taiwan, which cannot be visited by Chinese nationals due to Chinese government travel restrictions to the island since July 2019.

5.1.1.1 Local food

Food plays an essential part in Chinese people's daily lives and this is mirrored in Chinese tourists' travel decisions. Some Chinese visitors to Gulangyu express a desire to experience local authentic, and place-appropriate cuisine. There can be multiple reasons why tourists choose Gulangyu as a travel destination, but it is surprising that for a cultural tourism site, some tourists emphasized the local cuisine as their primary motivation for visiting the site. Some of the informants observed:

“Gulangyu is an island that is ideal for quiet and relaxing, but we chose it as this trip destination because it has lots of great local food” (B-68, a traveller with friends)

“After travelling to Gulangyu several times, I really missed the taste of the local food, so this summer I travelled there again and tried a new open restaurant.” (B-33, a student traveller)

Local cuisine is a crucial aspect to understanding the local culture, because it reflects the lifestyles of its people. In order to better experience the local

food, some bloggers (B13, B18 and B 74) mentioned that they prepare 'food maps' on the island ahead of time based on reviews of other tourists' comments or travel blogs. For example, B-74 prepared a lot before the trip so that she would know where to eat and what to eat.

"I chose Gulangyu as my destination mainly because of the variety of southern Fujian snacks available on the island. To prepare a food list that is worth tasting in Gulangyu, I even read many travel blogs and other tourists' recommendations for restaurants in historical buildings before my trip." (B-74, a young couple)

5.1.1.2 Photo taking

In the preparatory phase, after reading other travellers' travel stories, the primary reason for visiting Gulangyu is to take photographs is highlighted six times (B1, B25, B30, B77, B81 and B90). For these travellers, taking photos plays a symbolic role in creating their own personal meaning and serves as a means of achieving self-presentation. The typical statements are:

"Gulangyu is famous for its Victorian architecture, so a lot of tourists say that visiting Gulangyu is like re-visiting the past. After seeing other travellers' posted photos online, this time, we hired a local photographer in advance. We traveled to Gulangyu and prepared to take a set of vintage photos for keeping our memories of youth. " (B-25, a university student who will graduate)

"Having seen other people's photos of Gulangyu, I was greatly attracted. My boyfriend and I planned to take our wedding pictures in Gulangyu for a long time." (B-30, a young couple)

5.1.1.3 Relaxing

Relaxing is a very rich motivation. Relaxing can refer to spending a few weeks in the warmer climate of Gulangyu in the winter when northern China gets cold. Blogger B-70 and B-91 explained that they visited Gulangyu in part to escape the cold weather and to relax. The B-91 travel blog have encouraged some prospective tourists to visit the destination for the same reasons.

"The first reason I came to Gulangyu was that I'd like to escape the cold in the northern winters and have a rest. I also really missed the Minnan snacks. " (B-70)

"I travel to Gulangyu for a few weeks this time mainly because the winter in northern China is too cold." (B-91)

One tourist left comments for B-91: "Every year, I went to Hainan Island

for spending the winter. After reading your travel blogs, I think I can spend this winter in Gulangyu. ”

Relaxing can also refer to getting away from pressures and responsibilities. Some tourists mentioned visiting Gulangyu just for the sake of staying in a hotel and enjoying the slow life or hanging out at specialty shops without any purpose.

“I have been to Xiamen many times for business, but every time is in a hurry to come and go. I never had the chance to stay in the Gulangyu to wander, this time I intend to come again and enjoy the slow time here.” (B-74).

“Gulangyu is a lazy island. My friends and I took a two-day vacation there to shop and hangout at specialty stores and enjoy a very slow journey.” (B-20)

5.1.1.4 Shopping

Shopping was one of the reasons some tourists visited Gulangyu. But for tourists, shopping is not the sole travel motivation, and it is always accompanied by other travel motivations. Travel blogger B-82 described he visited Gulangyu primarily to rest and purchase some local products.

“Gulangyu Island has a lot of specialty snacks and souvenir shops. I came to Gulangyu Island to relax after my exam this time. I also bought some specialty snacks from Gulangyu Island, such as squid ribbons and Gulangyu pies for my family. ” (B-82).

Some tourists mentioned traveling to Gulangyu in order to buy snacks and souvenirs that are recommended by local celebrity shops online. For example, the B-47 reported that he traveled to Gulangyu for a weekend in order to purchase some internet-recommended local snacks that he could not get outside the island, such as Chinese vegetable shortbread and Chinese black-tea shortbread, to bring home to his family.

5.1.1.5 Similar sense with Taiwan

Two bloggers mentioned that Gulangyu offers a similar feeling to Taiwan. Gulangyu, as the alternative destination, arouses their interest to visit because Taiwan and Gulangyu are part of the southern Fujian culture. When they shared their unique travel motivation and other respond, they may visit Gulangyu for the same reasons.

“I've been in Taiwan in the past, and really enjoyed the local food. I'd love to go back, but the current policy makes this inconvenient. So I

chose Gulangyu because it feels like Taiwan.” (B-78)

One tourist left comments for B-78: Taiwan has always been my planned travel itinerary. As you said, due to various reasons, it seems impossible to travel there so far. As an alternative tourist destination, I might go to Gulangyu Island first.

5.1.2 Memorable travel experience at the destination

Travel bloggers commonly record their travel experiences in chronological order, so the most memorable experience during the trip usually makes up the main body of the blog (Tse & Zhang, 2013). Travel experience in travel blogs connects to tourists' memories of their trips (Kim & Chen, 2019). Chinese tourists typically record their memorable travel experiences in Gulangyu by describing their preferred activities and emotional experiences at the destination.

5.1.2.1 Activity preference

Travel bloggers describe their preferred activities by comparing different attributes of a destination after their real visit to the destination, and they share their favourite activities with other members of online travel communities. Activity preference narratives reflect functional values on the degree to which tourism product, activity, or service has desirable characteristics, is unique, and performs as expected by tourists. As travel bloggers are composed of various types of tourists, they use different types of tourists' cognitive perceptions to evaluate how certain destination attributes led to their satisfied destination experiences.

The analysis results reveal that majority tourists visited several places in Gulangyu, but certain tourism activities were popular with certain types of tourists. Young tourists and couples were often attracted to landmarks on Gulangyu, such as Sunlight Rock and Shu Zhuang Garden, which they deemed to embody local culture and history (B2, B6, B18, B19, B23, B3, B53, B45, B70, B75 and B94). Several bloggers stated that they learned a lot about history and culture from visiting historical buildings since the mix of Chinese and Western architectural styles is not usually seen outside of Gulangyu Island.

“My husband and I like Sunshine Rock and Shuzhuang Garden best. They are the must-visiting places if you come to Gulangyu. There are few Chinese classic gardens like Shuzhuang Garden outside Gulangyu Island.” (B-53)

“My friend and I were deeply impressed by the historical buildings on Gulangyu Island, such as Zhuang Shu Garden, since our major is histo-

ry. During this visit, we learned more about the international historical community of a century ago.” (B-45)

The beaches and aquariums are more appealing to families with young children than historical sites and attractions, since these venues are more interesting and suitable for children to visit. Although there is little information about aquariums on Gulangyu official websites, tourists traveling with children have reported finding them unexpectedly and having a wonderful time there (B1, B3, B13, B15, B25, B81 and B63). The reason is as B-25 explained:

“It is quite hot on Gulangyu island in summer, and the winding paths make it difficult for the children to visit the historical buildings. The aquarium that was accidentally found is very air-conditioned, and the children enjoyed watching the marine animals there.”(B-25)

Travellers with young children who posted and shared about their trips on Gulangyu may dispel the doubts or worries for other prospective tourists may have that Gulangyu island is not suitable for taking young children. Bloggers shared how they enjoyed spending time with their children at the aquarium and playing together on the beach because such activities on the island enhance the parent-children bond (B-04, B-33, B-39, B40, B-43 and B-95).

“Originally, I wanted to take children to see historical buildings, however I found that there is an aquarium in Gulangyu with sea lion shows. My son loved it very much and we enjoyed our parent-child time there.” (B-33)

“What impressed me most on this trip was to find small fish in the aquarium and build castles on the beach with my daughter. I wasn’t usually able to do that because I was usually busy with work. Now I feel that my daughter loves me more and more.” (B-04)

Unlike visitors from outside, local residents in Xiamen like visiting Gulangyu Concert Hall best (B07, B28, B44, B62 and B91), where internationally renowned pianists often perform in public. Local tourists also strongly encourage other music lovers to visit this attraction. For example, B-07 wrote that:

“This is my third time taking my youngest daughter to Gulangyu, also known as the Island of Pianos in Xiamen. She enjoys the performance very much. The concert here is highly recommended for tourists who like music.” (B-07)

At the same time, B-07's sharing was liked by many community members, and some tourists left a message asking about where the concert schedule can be found. B-07 replied some readers that the schedule could be found on the official website of Gulangyu concert hall.

5.1.2.2 Destination emotion experience

Memorable travel experiences are often linked with tourists' emotional responses, such as joy and relaxation that result from activities or specific characteristics of a destination. Destination emotional experience refers to the impressions and feelings that a tourist has for the destination (Mohd et al., 2019). Tourism destinations are rich in attributes able to evoke certain emotions. The emotional value of a destination is the utility and derived from tourists' feelings, attitudes or perceptions generated by elements of the destination (Chekalina et al., 2018).

The emotional value can be co-created when travel bloggers convey positive feelings and emotions towards the destination. In the case of Gulangyu, the selected blogs exhibited overall positive feelings and emotions of the destination. The beautiful scenery (B-02); the sense of tranquillity (B-60) and slow pace (B-68); and the architectural harmony of the Chinese and western buildings in Gulangyu (B-57) led to the satisfaction of these travel bloggers. Furthermore, tourists' emotional experiences are often related to specific characteristics of the destination (e.g., the feeling of quiet is related to criss-crossed streets on the island). Some statements include:

“The streets on Gulangyu Island are short and crisscrossed, making it extremely quiet. The air here is fresh, and the trees are in blossom, making the scenery is particularly beautiful.” (B-01)

“A variety of Chinese and Western architectures on Gulangyu Island, such as the Chinese traditional temples and the European consulate buildings, are all exuding a feeling of romantic, which make me fall in love with this place deeply.” (B-56)

Travel bloggers can share emotional value with other community members (potential tourists) through destination emotional experience narratives. When travel bloggers document how ordinary things, such as flowers, streets, beaches and buildings, can inspire potential tourists to create an emotional bond with a destination. Therefore, the appeal of a tourism destination will be enhanced to potential tourists, thereby contributing to the creation of an emotional value for the destination. In the example below, a travel blogger recounted her emotional experience at Gulangyu and how she felt

about some specific elements of the destination. She then receives comments from community members and thanks for sharing the 'slow time' at Gulangyu, which inspired them to aim for similar experiences.

“Without automobiles or bicycles, Gulangyu island is a perfect place for couples to wander and experience slow life here...Sitting in the cafe and playing with the cats, I enjoy such a lazy and quiet holiday in Gulangyu”.
(B-60)

One tourist left comments for B-60: My boyfriend and I are looking for a vacation destination where we can relax and enjoy a slow weekend. Let's just bask in the sun and wander around the hotel. Your sharing makes us look forward to traveling to Gulangyu and having a similar experience.

5.1.3 Travel advice about the destination

Gulangyu travel bloggers often ended their blogs with travel advice. Typically, travel advice is related to the troubles or inconveniences they encountered while traveling, covering topics such as transportation, tickets, accommodation, and weather. Bloggers who offer travel advice based on their travel difficulties do not seek specific solutions or emotional support, but to offer advice and provide an informative warning message to other potential tourists with the intention to help other tourists.

Gulangyu island is only accessible by ferry, so advice on purchase of ferry tickets was repeatedly mentioned in the selected travel blogs. Even though the official website reminds tourists that they should purchase ferry tickets to Gulangyu online in advance, many tourists experienced problems booking ferry tickets. One tourist wrote about her encounter with buying ferry tickets:

“My friend and I did not know that the boat tickets to Gulangyu can only be booked through the official website. After we got to the pier and booked tickets through the official website, we couldn't buy the boat ticket in the morning. I strongly recommend that tourists buy boat tickets from the official website in advance.” (B-77)

Likewise, B-60 and B-94 encountered similar troubles, so they strongly advised tourists to book ferry tickets well in advance to avoid having their plans changed, especially during the summer holidays when travel to Gulangyu is at its peak.

“Our family had originally planned to book boat tickets to Gulangyu three days later, but tickets were sold out in the morning. I suggest other

tourists book boat tickets one week in advance, especially during the summer holidays, in order to avoid changing travel plan.” (B-60)

Travel advice, as a word-of-mouth process, often offers unique solutions to the "problem" of intangibility of tourism products (Klein, 1998; Zhang et al., 2010) since a prospective tourist may not fully understand a destination before they travel. Value is derived from interactions between bloggers (real-visit tourists) and other virtual communities (potential tourists). By learning from bloggers' experiences and answering other tourists' questions about travel advice given in blogs, travel blogs offer tourists an opportunity to exchange specific knowledge regarding holiday plans and consumption skills at a destination.

For many Gulangyu tourists, deciding whether to buy individual tickets for each tourism attraction or to purchase a package deal is a hesitant decision (B39, B51, B75 and B89). While package tickets can offer greater savings, they are primarily suitable for tourists who stay longer at Gulangyu island. B-82, a family traveller, used his experience to suggest:

“Gulangyu island is quite big with many attractions that are worth visiting. We bought the package tickets, but we didn't visit all the places due to a lack of time. I suggest that tourists should buy tickets separately if they intend to stay just one day.” (B-82)

In the comments section of travel blog, several community members then asked relevant questions about the ticket purchase and B-82 responded with some suggestions. Below is an example.

One tourist left comments for B-82: We are planning to take children to stay in Gulangyu for two days, will it be more appropriate to buy package tickets?

B-82: It is still recommended to buy tickets separately because the scenic spots in the package are far from away each other, and if children have limited energy, you may not be able to visit all the attractions.

To learn more about specific travel advice mentioned in travel blogs, potential tourists can leave a message and directly ask specific questions to bloggers. For example, a community member asked B-98 why she advised booking nearby hotels when taking the little children. B-98 replied that there are no automobiles allowed on the island, so it would be difficult to take both the suitcase and the baby carriage at the same time to walk longer distances.

5.2 Destination value cocreation through travel blogs

5.2.1 Motivation and destination value cocreation

Motivation typically involves a descriptive recount of tourists' needs and subsequently outlines the value of the destination as a pull motivator for tourists (Wu & Pearce, 2014). In the travel blogs, the bloggers (real-visit tourists) who mentioned motivation may co-create destination value because their motivation emphasizes the appeal of specific characteristics of the destination from a tourists' gaze. When tourists and tourism destinations as an overall provider have different perspectives on interpreting the value of destination, destination value co-creation occurs.

Few bloggers indicated that they visited Gulangyu primarily for cultural reasons. However, Gulangyu is famous for its varied architecture and multicultural history and was inscribed as a cultural World Heritage Site in 2017. On its official website (<http://www.glysyw.com/>), the local government provides a great deal of detailed information about Gulangyu Island's world cultural heritage, as well as its history, buildings, celebrities, film and music related to the island (**See Figure 5.1**). This finding differs from previous cultural tourism research which indicates that people come to heritage sites mainly for cultural tourism, such as sightseeing and visiting architectural heritage, and are attracted by the World Heritage status (Chen & Huang, 2018a; Remoaldo et al., 2017). A possible reason is that when tourists (travel bloggers) revisit their travel experiences, they may adopt a different perspective from the destination organizations to interpret the destination value and place more emphasis on utility and functional value based on their own perspective as tourists. For example, many motivations for visiting Gulangyu mentioned in travel blogs are enjoying the local food and taking photos rather than learning about its history and visiting historical buildings.



Figure 5.1 The Gulangyu official website.

In this regard, travel bloggers' descriptions of the reasons for traveling can co-create destination value, because bloggers' motivation emphasizes the appeal of specific characteristics of the destination from a tourists' perspective, which may often be overlooked by destination marketers. Although the primary value of Gulangyu lies in its history, culture, and architecture, the tourists' gaze is focused on local food in the alleyways, restaurants in the old buildings, and the aesthetics of historical architecture which are all part of its cultural significance. Moreover, some salient pull factors of a destination may be enhanced and turned into new attractiveness after being repeatedly mentioned in bloggers' descriptions of motivation. In the examples given in 5.1.1 finding parts, some travel bloggers stated that the reviews, recommendations, and photos of other tourists had directly or indirectly affected their cognition and perceived value of the Gulangyu Island. As they explained their travel motivation and mentioned peer influence in their blogs, their motivation may further reinforce certain attributes of a destination (e.g., variety of local food on Gulangyu) to other tourists (readers). Accordingly, these seemingly invisible interactions between tourists, which are not in the form of visible C2C dialogues, constitute an essential element of destination value that could meet tourists' needs and wants.

Travel bloggers describe why a destination appeals to them in a complex way (Wu & Pearce, 2014). Travel motivation is not only influenced by pull factors such as a destination's facilities and service but may also include a number of other elements such as its location and climate, as well as comparison with alternative destinations. When tourists describe their niche travel motivation and other tourists comment on it, their motivation may contribute to new pull factors and add value to a destination. This viewpoint is illustrated by the above examples in 5.1.1 taken from the blogs of informants 91 and 78 which demonstrate how bloggers' niche travel motivation may affect other tourists' visiting intention. This one-way interaction between bloggers and potential tourists leads to a co-creation of destination value when other potential tourists agree with a blogger's explanation and express a desire that they will visit the destination for similar reasons.

5.2.2 Memorable travel experience and destination value cocreation

Travel bloggers contributed to destination value co-creation when they described their preferred activities and evaluate how specific destination attributes enhance their destination experience with community members. A tourist destination has a number of attributes that attract tourists (Horowitz, 1980), but destination management organizations may not be able to identify all destination attributes and accordingly examine how well they perform for all tourists. However, travel bloggers are composed of various types of tourists, and their sharing can create elements for special interest tourism and increase the possibility of attracting more diverse types of tourists to a destination. As a World Heritage site, non-local tourists are normally more interested in its historical buildings and rarely pay attention to the concert hall on Gulangyu. In the examples above, when local tourists mentioned that world-renowned musicians often perform at Gulangyu, it sparked the interest of other tourists and Gulangyu will have the chance to attract more music lovers. Moreover, some attractions or activities may lack pertinent details on the official tourism website (e.g., the aquarium and beaches on Gulangyu), but are accidentally discovered, favoured and recommended by travel bloggers, thereby increasing potential tourists' cognition about the destination.

On the other hand, recalled destination experience typically involves tourists' emotional responses, such as joy and relaxation that result from favourite activities or the destinations' specific characteristics. These emotional experience discourses show how ordinary things, such as flowers, streets, beaches and buildings, connect tourists with place and create an emotional bond. Emotional value is expressed and conveyed through tourists' destination emotional experience, such as feelings, attitudes or perceptions associated with the destination. Travel blogs that describe memorable personal experiences, therefore enhance the appeal of a travel destination to potential

tourists in the group of online travel community users, thereby contributing to co-creation of both functional and emotional value for the destination.

5.2.3 Travel advice and destination value cocreation

The sharing of travel advice includes knowledge-related aspects, such as relevant holiday attributes (e.g., tickets, hotels and other attractions) and consumption-related skills at the destination. Bloggers demonstrate their knowledge based on real holiday experiences and advise and guide potential tourists, who are in the process of choosing a holiday destination to make informed decisions and prepare adequately for what might arise on their trip. Consistent with previous studies (Casais et al., 2020), the finding indicates that social media can strengthen social interaction or peer-to-peer communication where consumers may exhibit a high level of altruism and provide others with useful information that may influence potential tourists' future travel decisions, behaviours and destination experience (Crougns et al., 2014).

Value is derived from interactions between bloggers (real-visit tourists) and other virtual communities (potential tourists). By learning from bloggers' experiences and answering other tourists' questions about travel advice given in blogs, potential tourists' consumption skills at the destination are enhanced. As a result, travel advice shared by travel bloggers can contribute to co-creating relational value for a destination, since such advice can help potential tourists avoid unpleasant experiences and unnecessary troubles at a destination.

5.3 Summary

This chapter synthesizes and combines the study data in order to address the research questions. It further explores how tourists construct their travel experiences, as well as their capacity to co-create destination value, at the second stage of analysis. To address this problem, 97 travel blogs were analysed and revealed three distinct themes that have the potential for co-creating destination value: motivation, memorable travel experiences and advice. The results indicate that tourists and destination markers interpret destination value differently in motivation. The sharing of memorable travel experiences and advice with readers and fellow tourists improves the level of tourist destination engagement. In the next chapter, the findings of the two phases are integrated and the results of this study are described in detail.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This chapter reviews the research questions posed in the study and provides a discussion of the conclusions presented in Chapter 6. The results from the two phases of the study will help to provide a better understanding of the role of UGC in influencing a tourist's decision-making process and post-decision sharing behaviour. The discussion is related to relevant literature, thus providing a comprehensive framework for the impact of UGC on tourist behaviour and linking it to underlying research issues.

6.1 General Discussion

This thesis investigates the impact of social media on tourists' behavior, exploring the interaction between social media content and tourists' decision-making, as well as the implications for all parties (e.g., social media platforms, tourists, and destinations) involved in this dynamic exchange of mutual influence. It examines how UGC on social media influences tourists' decision-making process before and after a travel decision, as well as how tourists' satisfaction and loyalty are affected. On the other hand, it delves into the later stage of the decision-making process, exploring how tourists who have been influenced by social media content share their travel experience back to the platform after their trip. This contributes to the enrichment of online UGC and further influences the decisions of other consumers, thus creating a cyclical process of social media content and tourists' decision-making behavior. A detailed analysis of the role of social media in cultivating tourism loyalty and destination management is also included in the thesis.

The findings from the first phase of quantitative research indicate that UGC on social media significantly impacts tourists' decision-making process and purchase intention. As a key source of tourism information, social media can shape tourists' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism products and purposes, ultimately affecting their choice of destination and purchase of tourism products. The study found that different types of social media content influence tourists' decision-making process and purchase behavior in different ways (directly or indirectly). This confirms that social media content narrative transportation is effective and can influence tourists' perceptions towards destinations and travel products. However, the degree of influence on actual decision-making behavior depends on both the type of social media content and the different types of decision-making, which can be explained by the dual system.

Moreover, the quantitative results indicate that social media has a significant influence on tourists' decision-making behavior, extending even to the post-

decision stage and affecting consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This influence is mainly achieved through indirect means. Further, the qualitative research revealed that tourists nowadays have the opportunity to share their experiences with purchase decisions on social media once their trips are over, which is a significant influence on the decision-making and goal setting of other tourists in the current era of social media.

In the second phase of qualitative research, the examination of how tourists shared their travel experiences back to social media was conducted. This provided insight into the interaction between tourists' post-decision social sharing behaviors and UGC on social media. Travel blogs were analyzed to examine tourists' sharing of travel experiences and interactions with other consumers. It was found that motivations, memorable experiences, and travel advice were most frequently shared topics, which are useful for providing information to other tourists, and they can influence their decisions and influence destination management. Specifically, travel experiences shared on social media can provide pre-decision tourists with valuable information for researching destinations, as well as offering useful advice and tips which can be utilized by destination managers to better understand the perceptions of their destinations among travelers. Thus, destination management strategies can be shaped and improved accordingly.

To conclude, the two phases of the study provide insights into the entire process of how UGC affects tourists decision-making process and post-decision sharing behavior. The results of this study will be discussed in detail in the next section to address each research question.

6.2 How do tourists use for UGC affect their perceptions and travel arrangements?

6.2.1 How do tourists refer UGC for their travel arrangements?

Research Question 1 explores how the use of UGC by travellers affects their perception and behaviour. Empirical results show that most travellers refer to travel information shared by other travellers on social media before travelling. The UGC can help prospective travellers learn more about destinations and related tourism products and services through a narrative transportation mechanism. At the same time, the UGC is also an important basis for travelers to plan their trips and make other travel decisions, further affecting their cognitive and decision-making behaviour. This study found that different types of UGC have different mechanisms to influence different decisions by travellers.

The empirical findings indicate that UGC information is most often used by

tourists when they are looking for restaurants (23.12%), hotels (19.84%), and transportation (13.6%) respectively. Interestingly, these UGC facilitated tourist travel planning activities are somewhat inconsistent with the survey conducted by Öz (2015) on the application and use of social media in tourism. They found that the top three activities used by visitors were destination information, attraction information and hotel information. In part, this may reflect the difference between information from social media messages and tourist-generated content. UGC is based on tourists' real travel experiences without much promotion intention, so it often focuses on specific components of travel, such as hotels or transportation, whereas social media often contains travel advertisements that promote destinations and attractions. The empirical study also revealed that tourists rely on UGC to find tourism-related information in a relatively broad scope. For example, the UGC can be used by tourists to find information about attractions, the best travel routes, ways to save money on tickets, and details about local customs. The findings showed that tourists used UGC to find tickets, recommended travel routes, and travel tips, accounting for 8.24%, 7.44%, and 2.08%, respectively.

Moreover, this study compared the use of UGC by first-time visitors and repeat visitors. Results showed that there was no significant difference between first-time visitors and repeat visitors in using the UGC for their travel arrangements. Restaurant (24.43%), accommodation (22.92%) and transportation (18.14%) remain the top three activities to consider when repeat visitors use UGC for travel arrangements. The results indicated that in contrast to other travel components, such as information about tourism sites and airline tickets, these three travel components are well-differentiated or higher-priced (Leung et al., 2013; Öz, 2015), which requires a high level of engagement and review of the UGC by tourists at an early stage of decision-making process to minimize the risk of making the wrong decision. On the other hand, it shows the UGC's ability to provide genuine tourism experience for the general public and there is therefore a major source of information for repeat visitors. Revisiting destinations by reviewing the experience of other travellers can help repeat travellers unlock more travel possibilities. In this way, the UGC creates value for potential visitors and past visitors.

6.2.2 How UGC influence the actual decision-making behaviour of tourists?

By integrating narrative transportation and dual-system theory, the present study proposed a new model of tourism decision-making. Through narrative transportation mechanism, this study confirms that UGC on social media can influence visitors' perceptions of destinations and confirm the mediating role of UGC in narrative persuasion. This study also found that travellers' decision-making behaviour is affected differently by different types of UGC. Fac-

tual UGC can directly trigger tourists' intuitive (system 1) or analytical (system 2) decision-making patterns, while emotional UGC can only trigger visitors' intuitive decision-making patterns and has less impact on triggering visitors' intuitive decision-making patterns. The specific findings of this study are discussed below.

First, this study found that factual UGC had a direct impact on tourists' destination choice ($\beta=0.171$, $p<0.05$) and actual purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.246$, $p<0.001$). There was no direct positive relationship found between emotional UGC and tourists' destination choice ($\beta=0.134$, $p>0.05$) and purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.158$, $p>0.05$). These results indicated that factual UGC is more likely to trigger the intuitive decision-making system of tourists, while emotional UGC is less likely to do so. This can be attributed to the fact that factual UGC provides tourists with a certain degree of credibility and reliability, encourages tourists to make a decision based on facts or figures (e.g. ticket price and Cruise schedule). Emotional UGC is often subjective and not necessarily based on verifiable facts. Therefore, it is less likely to trigger the tourists' intuitive decision-making system. These findings are similar to those of Wong et al. (2016), who found that the extent to which tourism narratives influence audiences by imagining a trip to a destination varies with the narrative's content. In their study, they found that narrative can influence tourists' perceptions of a destination, but its impact on the tourists' behaviour intention to visit depends on the themes of the narrative content. The findings of this study might also be further explained by the fact that factual UGC provides more concrete and detailed information about the attributes or physical environment of a destination, such as ticket prices and information about tourism attractions, which can directly decrease visitors' cognitive effort and empower them to make a decision heuristically. Compared to factual UGC, emotional UGC offers tourists more about a perceived feeling or sensory impression that reflects their state of mind, such as a sense of the beauty of a destination. In other words, when tourists consult emotional UGC, especially inexperienced tourists, they tend not to make their decisions heuristically, but to seek additional information to assist them in making decisions.

Second, the empirical results showed that both factual ($\beta=0.081$, $p<0.001$) and emotional UGC ($\beta=0.472$, $p<0.001$) can play a substantial role in improving the image of a destination for potential tourists. This finding indicated that UGC plays a positive role in narrative transportation and can be a good way to bring readers into an imaginary space that seems to have been travelled to a destination. These findings support Mohammad et al. (2020) suggestion that UGC has both functional and emotional values to enhance tourists' engagement with a brand. Through words, videos, tags and comments, the UGC enables peer tourists to communicate with each other about the functional benefits of the destinations and tourism service, such as transpor-

tation accessibility, historical background, as well as the emotional value that exhibits positive feelings for the destination. In this way, both factual and emotional UGC about a travel destination can serve as a kind of interpretation of the culture traditions and environment of the destination. Such aggregated online travel narratives have the potential to substantially affect tourist destination awareness and to increase tourists' knowledge of destinations.

Third, this study found no direct effect of destination image on destination selection ($\beta=0.112$, $p>0.05$) and purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.011$, $p>0.05$), meaning that a better understanding of destinations did not translate into tourist actions. This finding is not consistent with prior studies, which have indicated that tourists' perceived destination image is a strong predictor of behaviour (Sharifpour et al., 2014; Wong & Yeh, 2009). This may be due to the fact that purchasing behaviours are a kind of tourist response that requires stronger drivers than an image (Bagozzi, 1992). Fair and reliable comments on services and products from the UGC are playing a more prominent role to trigger for making purchasing decisions. Although destination image can help tourists shape their impression of what aspects of the destination can be experienced or consumed (Lew & McKercher, 2006), as previous research has suggested, tourists' travel decisions and actual purchasing behaviours are also constrained by external factors, such as the value for money, quality of service and scheduling feasibility.

Finally, the empirical results indicate that destination image can indirectly influence tourists' destination selection ($\beta=0.198$, $p<0.001$) and actual purchasing behaviour ($\beta=0.246$, $p<0.001$) through tourists' perceived usefulness of UGC. In line with previously findings (Assaker, 2020; Lu et al., 2014), these results confirm the critical role of the perceived usefulness of UGC in tourists' travel decision-making. Furthermore, these support many of the general assumptions of economics theory regarding rational behaviour of consumers. That is, consumers who are not familiar with some products or services tend to use an analytical system of decision-making (system 2). The perceived usefulness of UGC is a response to narratives in which weighing UGC is more relevant to a specific decision (Hamby et al., 2015). According to dual-processing theory (Kahneman, 2011), the results of this study indicate that tourists are more likely to apply an analytic system when they make travel and purchasing decisions. Although UGC may offer a comprehensive understanding of destinations and attractions in a convenient form, the quantity of information available online may overload tourists, making them feel confused and lost and resulting in intangible pressure (Bellman et al., 2006; Schuckert et al., 2015) and hesitation to make a decision. As a result, tourists may not make their decision on products and service decision based entirely on the UGC. They would rather like to evaluate the usefulness of the online information and make their decision accordingly.

6.3 How does UGC affect tourists' evaluations of trips and loyalty?

Research Question 3 explores how UGC influence tourists' assessment of their trip and subsequent loyalty. Empirical results illustrate UGC's predictive power in the pre-trip period, which in turn affects the evaluation of a tourist's journey and loyalty behaviour in the post-trip phase. It further confirms that the narrative transportation mechanism of UGC on social media can affect tourism decision-making at all stages, including post-decision stage such as satisfaction and loyalty.

First, similar to the model in section 6.1.2 that tested the UGC's impact on tourist decision-making processes, empirical results show that both factual ($\beta=0.076$, $p<0.001$) and emotional UGC ($\beta=0.520$, $p<0.001$) are positively associated with destination image. The marketing literature has distinguished between cognitive and affective aspects of destination image because tourists' destination image formation processes tend to simultaneously be influenced by their cognition and emotion. When tourists plan their vacation using UGC, the virtual content serves as a cue in forming the destination images. This study is one of the first to distinguish and empirically demonstrate that two different types of UGC are both conceptually and empirically meaningful in predicting destination image formation. The results reveal that factual UGC helps to increase tourists' knowledge of the destination, such as attractions, costs, transportation, history, indicating that tourists can clearly perceive the destination image if they are able to obtain sufficient destination information before their trip. The findings also suggest that emotional UGC has a considerable influence on tourists' psychological attitudes towards the destination. The results suggest that tourists are more likely to perceive the cultural value of a destination if they look through and receive more e-WOM information through social media.

Moreover, while it is widely accepted belief that tourists will receive more relevant factual information in the pre-trip stage, they can higher perceive the value of destination image. Because, unlike physical products, tourism services cannot be experienced before they are purchased (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). However, contrary to a prior study (Jani & Hwang, 2011), this study found that the magnitude of the impact of factual UGC on destination image formation was relatively weak when compared with that of emotional UGC, implying that emotional information is the most significant determinant of destination image in the pre-trip phase.

Secondly, the results of this study show that a favourable image of a particular destination can have a positive impact on repeat visits ($\beta=0.325$, $p<$

0.001) as well as positive WOM effects ($\beta=0.413$, $p<0.001$) to potential tourists, adding further evidence that UGC could indirectly influence tourist destination loyalty through destination image. Theoretically, there is no consensus in the literature on the magnitude and direction of the relationships between different components of destination image (cognitive and affective) and tourists' destination loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014). Although destination image is found to have direct and positive impacts on destination loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), that is not a necessary predictor of loyalty. One argument holds that tourists are often motivated by novelty-seeking, so even they hold a clear and positive image of a destination and may not make repeat visits (Pearce & Lee, 2005). However, the results of this study indicate that destination image is positively associated with intention to return and willingness to recommend, reconfirming the important role of UGC in both cognitive and affective destination image formation and predicting loyal outcomes. One possible reason for these findings is that detailed and updated UGC helps tourists to explore diverse dimensions of the destination. For example, tourists who have visited the destination may visit again, because the information relevant to new exhibitions and events of the destination is updated by other tourists. Thus, UGC may inspire tourists to revisit the same destination, but acquire different travel experiences. In this respect, UGC significantly enhances tourist destination loyalty behaviour.

Thirdly, this study found that the image of a tourist destination, in addition to enhancing the willingness of tourists to return and to recommend a destination in the future, can indirectly influence the loyalty of tourists to their destinations through an intermediary variable, namely satisfaction. When tourists recognise the value of a destination and tend to project a positive image of the destination, they show a higher level of satisfaction and are more likely to promote the destination to others and visit again. The findings support the widely held and proven view in tourism that satisfaction is a key prerequisite for destination loyalty (Assaker et al., 2011; Lee & Hsu, 2013; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Therefore, it is worthwhile for destination managers to consider the role of tourist satisfaction in developing destination loyalty and invest more in their tourism destination resources, in order to continue to enhance the tourists' experiences and improve their satisfaction.

6.4 How do tourists share travel experiences back to social media and contribute to the destination value?

Research question 3 aims to explore how travellers share their experience back onto social media at the post-travel stage and how these experiences, and how this as well as interaction between travel bloggers (real tourists) and their readers (potential tourists) will further influence destination man-

agement and relevant service providers. Based on the findings of this study, when tourists post their travel experience on social media at the post-travel stage, they become important social communication agents, providing unique perspective on the destination by sharing their experiences. Destination value can also be enhanced by the perspective of travel bloggers.

The result of narrative analysis revealed that when tourists construct and share tourism experience in the post-travel stage, they often include three themes: travel motivation, memorable travel experience and travel advice. The study demonstrated that storytelling in travel blogs as a form UGC shared at the post travel stage could contribute to co-creating certain elements of destination value, which is consistent with Buhalis and Foerste (2015) recommendations that peer communication among social media users could lead to commercial outcomes by actively engaging consumers in co-creating products and services.

First, this study found that most bloggers often describe their travel motivation to a destination at the beginning of their blogs. This may not necessarily have to do with the travel services or products they expect to purchase or experience, but it contributes to co-creating certain aspects of destination value. For example, taking photos and relaxing are two of the most popular tourists' intrinsic motives for visiting Gulangyu, as travel bloggers have pointed out many times, but these motivations are not directly associated with a specific tourist attraction or service. However, they provide a better understanding of the salient features of the destination (e.g., the feeling of tranquility and retro beauty of Gulangyu) and can be considered as a new push factor of motivation in cultural tourism.

Second, this study found that memorable experiences are key components in co-creating destination values. Memorable travel experience reflects tourists' cognitive and emotional immersion in the experience, and this customer engagement contributes to value co-creation. Tourists' activity preferences are based on their reflections about their experience, and thus it is crucial to the tourist experience that many present-day travellers are quite demanding. Emotional immersion involves feeling a sense of personal relevance and connection to the destination (Mohd et al., 2019). In this study, the results are consistent with previous memory studies (Kim & Chen, 2019) and reveal how shared experiences can help build collective construction of destination images. For example, the image of Gulangyu, is a historic spot for young people, but it is a relaxing place for family tourists, with beaches. It also reflects how contemporary travellers and bloggers can create their own market segments and add value to the destination market by sharing a memorable travel experience online, interacting with a substantial following, which can have a butterfly effect on tourists' destination image recognition and their willingness to visit.

Third, this study found that travel bloggers often end with travel advice for other potential travellers. Travel advice reflects a travel blogger's attempt to convey informative information to other consumers, where destination value co-creation is accomplished through knowledge sharing. In addition to helping to minimize the risks associated with visitors, the findings suggest that travel advice can also be beneficial for destination managers and tourism firms. This enables the value destruction described by Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres (2010). In the case of Gulangyu, many visitors reported booking ferry tickets for Gulangyu and some altered their original travel plans, partly indicating that official instructions needed to be improved. If the co-creation process is not properly managed, it may lead to the misuse of tourism resources and affect the satisfaction of tourists' expectations. The problem always arises in the context of experiential co-creation. Therefore, it is important for tourism service providers to have a better understanding of the expectations of tourists and to properly manage tourism resources in order to improve the process of co-creation of on-site destination value.

Finally, this study's findings highlight the significance of tourists/customers as active actors in the value co-creation network, and UGC on social media as an important medium. This study holds that travel bloggers in online communities serve as important socialization agents. They use travel blogs to describe their travel experiences through the lens of tourists in the destination, some attributes of which are less promoted by the destination and offer travel tips that are overlooked by destination organization managers. Certainly, some bloggers' travel experience had been influenced by peer travellers. Nevertheless, their sharing behaviour will inform prospective tourists about the destinations. The outcome of tourist sharing behaviour and tourist interaction is the co-creation of destination value. Accordingly, **Figure 6.1** therefore illustrates the process by which the core and destination values of Chinese tourists' heritage tourism experience are cocreated.

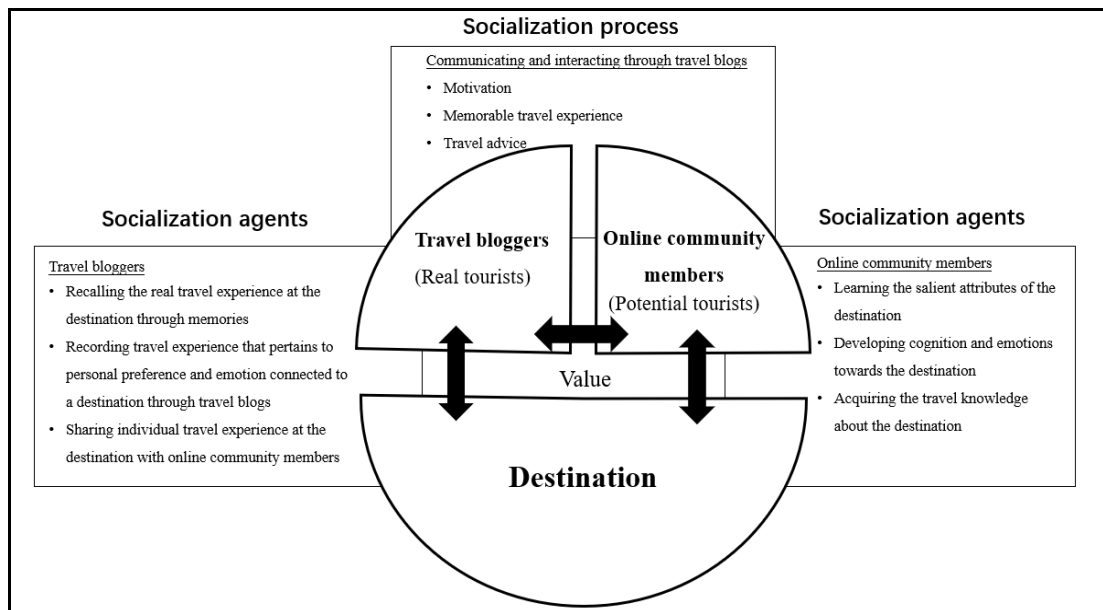


Figure 6.1 The co-creation of destination value through travel blogs.

6.5 Summary

This chapter discusses the findings of this thesis, exploring how UGC on social media influences the overall decision-making process of tourists, and how the travel experiences shared by tourist at the post-travel stage can further influence destination value and management. The results of this study confirm that UGC on social media have the positive narrative transportation and persuasion mechanism on tourist’s decisions, but different types of UGC have different mechanisms for influencing the tourists’ decision-making system. Specifically, the narrative transportation mechanism of tourists’ decision making with reference to UGC runs through the entire tourists’ decision-making process. During the pre-decision stage, UGC helps tourists gain knowledge about the tourist destination, and during the decision stage, it has a significant influence on their decisions. But for different types of decisions, tourists use UGC differently, and factual UGC is more likely to stimulate their intuitive decision-making. Meanwhile, both factual and emotional UGC can influence their rational thinking and decision-making when they find them useful. Therefore, the core hypothesis of narrative transportation-reflection-response in this thesis is supported. In the era of social media, tourists’ post-decisional behavior is also manifested by sharing their consumption or travel experiences back to social media. In the post-travel stage, as tourists transform their roles into travel bloggers, they become important socialization agents, and the activity of travel bloggers sharing their travel experiences with other potential tourist can be seen as a socialization process, which in turn can have a positive impact on co-creating destination value. As such, UGC and tourists are presenting a mutual influence relationship, where UGC influences tourists, tourists share UGC, and UGC influences others in a circular manner. To that end, this thesis provides an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of how tourism decisions are influenced by social media.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study aims to explore the impact of UGC on social media play in consumer decision-making. Using tourism industry as an example, this thesis examines how the UGC influences the decision-making process and behaviours of travellers and how the travellers who share the UGC's behaviour can best collaborate with destination values. This chapter concludes the findings of this study and their contribution to the theory. The practical implications of the study are discussed, followed by an exploration of its limitations and potential areas of future research.

7.1 Theoretical Contribution

Contributions to knowledge can be made through original concepts, theories, and research techniques. (Easterby-Smith & Thorpe, 1997). The study of social media's impact on tourism has become an increasingly important area of tourism research. This study examines the impact of UGC on tourist behaviour and how it affects the destination. This study confirms the influence of UGC digital narrative transformation on tourist behaviour and its impact on destinations. By combining information-processing, narrative transportation and dual-system theory, this study developed a holistic picture and framework for understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying social media impacts on tourist behaviour and destination management, providing new insights into traveller decision-making, co-creation of value and appropriate survey methods.

This study makes a significant contribution by assessing a travel and tourism phenomenon that is becoming increasingly prevalent but has not been well explored empirically - namely, the impacts of UGC on tourist decision-making. This study illustrates how the UGC influences the behaviour of visitors at different stages of tourism, depending on their decision-making tasks. In response to the call for a 'process model' and greater flexibility to adapt to changes in tourism practices (McCabe et al., 2016; Smallman & Moore, 2010), this study provides an initial quantitative approach to tourism decision-making influenced by the UGC. This approach can enhance understanding of the rules, casual relationships and influential factors that influence actual decisions made by visitors in real-world tourism scenarios. The results also reveal how these parameters trigger tourists to use different systems, how they influence their decisions, and how they guide tourists' actions. In this regard, this theoretical approach provides an advantage for empirical research on 'complex, defamiliarizing, rich in paradoxes' tourist decision-making (DiMaggio, 1995). In addition, the framework fills a gap in tourism literature regarding tourists' decision-making influenced by social media.

This study initially undertakes a qualitative research phase to explore whether UGC can motivate tourists to immerse themselves in a narrative world, activate different cognitive and imaginative spaces for tourists, and transfer them to an as-yet-unexperienced destination, influence their attitudes towards the purpose and product of the trip. It also seeks to understand how UGC stimulate desire for future actual purchase and visiting behavior during the travel as well as satisfaction and loyalty behavior at the post-decision stage. In order to provide a holistic picture about how social media influences tourist decision making, the author considered an exploration of this process necessary to explain how social media affects tourist decision making, including the different stages of decision making, the types of UGC, the decision tasks, and the mechanisms that influence tourists' decisions.

The researchers have found that tourists utilize a variety of social media sources and information processing strategies to aid with related travel planning. Yet many scholars assume that tourists are rational, and these empirical studies tend to focus on a single decision task at a single travel stage. In complex real-world environments, however, tourists make a wide range of decisions, and not to use the single rational cognitive process assumed in the classic decision-making model is critical to study what kinds of decision-making strategies tourists use in various real decision environments. The results of our study show that narrative transportation through UGC comments and descriptions can occur through immersion, and whether direct visitor behaviour can be influenced through narrative immersion depends on a variety of factors. Gerrig (1993) suggested that narrative transportation is a structured, gradual process. However, based on the data collected from a questionnaire survey of Gulangyu visitors, our study found that UGC can serve as a digital narrative and directly influence tourists' behavior without the need for a gradual process. Additionally, UGC can also be a gradual process, through which people can reflect and tourists can respond.

This study's empirical evidence indicates that when tourists refer to different types of UGC on social media to make different travel decisions, they apply different strategies. Factual UGC provides tourists with 'facts' about the destination, which reduces tourists' information processing effort. As a result, tourists tend to choose destinations and buy tourism products based directly on their preferences or recognition without much evaluation. Compared to factual UGC, emotional UGC provides tourists with a sense and perceptions on the destination or tourism product. While it can influence tourists' engagement in a destination, it cannot be used for heuristic decision-making, so tourists may need to consult other sources before making a final decision. It is worth noting that reflection is an important process in tourism decision-making, as cognitive load inhibits tourists from applying analytical systems to decision-making. Therefore, only when tourists find the UGC useful (reflec-

tion process) will they continue to use the analytical system to process the information until a final decision is made. These findings and proposed new models have contributed to tourism literature, increasing understanding of how tourists make decisions based on different types of information sources and all potential strategies available to them. Interestingly, when it comes to post-tourism decision-making, the empirical results of this study show that both factual and emotional UGC have a significant impact on tourists' evaluation of a trip and their loyalty to the destination, while emotional UGC has a greater impact. The results will not only help us to understand how different types of UGC perform in different tourist decision tasks, but also to build an advanced theoretical destination loyalty based on Chi and Qu (2008) studies (destination image→satisfaction→loyalty) by incorporating the impact of UGC into the model. The results show that the loyalty behaviour of tourists depends not only on the quality of tourism services or products, but also on peer communication among tourists. The findings of this paper extend the boundaries of existing research knowledge by demonstrating that UGC can influence tourists' loyalty behavior in a continuous, permeating manner, throughout all stages of their decision-making process. Specifically, UGC can affect travelers' perceived destination image at the pre-trip stage, their during-trip satisfaction, and culminate in their loyalty behavior at the post-decisional stage. This study demonstrates that the influence of social media on tourists' decisions is not limited to a single stage or decision task, but rather is correlated across the entire decision-making process.

Lastly, the UGC is also embedded in tourist sharing behaviour at the post-travel stage, thus having an impact not only on potential tourists, but also on the destination itself. Currently, few academic research has been conducted on how tourists, the subject of UGC creators, share their travel experience after their trip and how this impacts other tourists' decision-making and destination management. This study advances consumer socialization theory by focusing on this tourism context and illustrating how tourists create and share their travel experiences with other tourists after their trips. The findings of this study demonstrate that in the post-decisional stage, tourists can act as creators of UGC content and share their travel experiences back to social media. In this way, they become travel bloggers and initiate a new cycle of interactions with other potential tourists, whereby consumers are learning from each other and socializing to gain new consumer skills in the marketplace to serve their buying behavior. Additionally, the study shows how sharing UGC in the post-tourist phase provides new advice to destination management and creates new value, emphasizing the importance of the tourist/customer as an active participant in the network of value co-creators and its significant impact on the performance of the tourism market.

7.2 Practical Implications

The results of this study indicated that the UGC can both directly and indirectly influence the decision-making process of visitors throughout the tourism phase. UGC itself is therefore an important starting point for narrative persuasion mechanism. UGC containing real tourists' travel stories enable prospective tourists to review many aspects of a vacation. For destination managers, strategies should be developed to encourage and guide tourists to actively share their travel experiences on social media, showing prospective tourists the diversity of destinations from different perspectives. Destination marketers can also recruit some special travel experiencers or bloggers who can share their travel stories about the destination in detail from a visitor's perspective, raising the destination's visibility.

The results of this study imply that factual UGC can allow tourists to make heuristic decisions when they consider UGC narratives match their preferences or motivations. In addition, the results show that both emotional UGC and factual UGC have the potential to help tourists gain insight into a destination, while emotional UGC has a greater influence. Given that factual UGC information can be regarded as a valid pre-trip interpretation, which may serve as a realistic image builder for tourists who are planning to visit the destination, destination marketers should provide more up-to-date information and a more immersive experience for pre-trip tourists; for example, by using 360-degree images to provide virtual tours online on the official websites. This gives potential visitors a clearer cognition of the destination, a better understanding of the value of the destination, and a greater willingness to visit and purchase.

On the other hand, destination advertising should not only stress the major attractions and facilities a destination can offer, since it does not provide any incentive for tourists who have already familiar with them. Rather, destination managers should promote a holistic image based on the particular emotions a destination evokes. Marketing campaigns can enhance tourists' involvement in sharing more emotional experiences via pictures and videos that can be evoked by the destination (such as a historical and artistic image). Many tourist destinations have successfully demonstrated sophisticated imagery and music in their advertising to evoke an emotional response. For example, Sri Lanka encourages tourists to create visual content (i.e. photos and microfilms) about tea plantation children smiling on social networks and destination managers promote the destination with corresponding slogans, such as 'Aroma of tea, across the Pacific' and 'Smile in the Indian Ocean'. This approach has successfully opened a Chinese tourist market.

The findings of this study imply that the perceived usefulness of information

is a strong predictor of travel consumers' decision-making. Therefore, online travel websites can develop peer-reviewing systems that allow people to rate the usefulness of a review in their decision-making. Websites should also improve their platforms' keyword matching and increase their search engine optimization, which will allow them to provide the most relevant and helpful reviews – and thus the most valuable information – to website users.

Visitors' satisfaction reflects a dynamic balance between the demand (expectation) and the supply (delivery) (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). In the context of this study, satisfaction represents the quality of heritage tourism experiences that tourists perceived. As found in this study, visitors who are able to perceive the cultural value of the heritage site will develop high levels of satisfaction and destination loyalty. It is therefore important for destination managers to investigate how each destination measure is evoked and triggered by a destinations' products and service, and subsequently formulate a marketing plan that includes those expectations that positively impact tourists' visits.

This research have practical implications for value co-creation. Tourism experience is experiential. Destinations and tourism service providers are striving to engage tourists in the value co-creation process and deliver high-quality destination experiences to remain competitive in the market (Lei et al., 2020). In the era of social media, the destination, if it wants to be successful in terms of drawing in tourists, should make full use of social platforms, including travel blogs, in order to better understand tourist perceptions and behaviour and improve the level of tourist destination engagement. Although the tourism organization and destination can, directly or indirectly, impact tourist travel experience, the tourists themselves are part of the process of creating and, indeed, shaping their experiences (Heinonen et al., 2010).

Motivation is an important starting point in the destination value cocreation process as it may directly influence tourists' choice of a vacation destination. Tourists are salient co-creators of destination value. Motivation reflected in travel blogs explains how tourists are pulled by a particular set of destination attributes (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). As such, travel blogs can be a good source of information for tourism marketers to find salient attributes and identify new areas of tourists' travel interests and destination image. Destinations, including heritage sites, should analyse travel blogs in-depth in order to develop a destination that offers different or unique site-specific activities, thereby attracting a wide range of people from different segments.

Tourists' memorable travel experience is another critical component for destination value co-creation. It reflects tourists' particular enthusiasm for a destination and sets it apart from previous experiences, which may affect the directive function to revisit the destination (Kim & Chen, 2019). Thus, desti-

nation managers could identify the emotional moods of tourists in travel blogs in order to strengthen tourists' attachment to the destination and provide additional support through the design of the official website. It would also be beneficial for destination managers to re-examine the destination's tourism resources, such as restaurants, food markets, concert halls, and local exhibitions, provide appropriate technological guidance or marketing programs for such resources, and enhance the destination's image.

It is evident that travel advice originating from tourists' actual travel experience supports the aim of travel bloggers of alerting people to all sorts of issues, including salient complaining practices. Thus, there is a need for tourism organizations to actively monitor peer communication, identify the types of tourist advice provided by travel blogs on various travel issues and consider offering special travel products to meet potential tourists' demands. Such a strategy can facilitate high-quality peer communication by improving service quality and avoid a potential co-destruction of destination value.

7.3 Limitation and Future research

While this study provides valuable insights into the combined influences of two types of UGC on tourist behaviour as well as for destination, this study has several limitations that the author would like to address. First, one of this study's limitation is its incapacity to generalize the results. Gulangyu, as a case study, provided the information for this research. As a cultural World Heritage Site, the findings and implications of UGC may apply only to similar destinations. In order to extend the model's conclusions and compare results, future research could be conducted at other WHS either in China or other countries. Moreover, this study focused on individual visitors to Gulangyu. The sample used in this study was largely composed of young travelers from China, since UGC is more likely to be used to plan trips by young people. The effects of UGC may not be equally important for all tourists or destinations; thus, future research could extend this study to other cultural groups and age ranges.

The second limitation relates to the method of data collection. This study employed a mixed-method approach to collect data and separately assess the effects of UGC on tourist and destination sides. First-stage quantitative data collection is best accomplished using questionnaires because they achieve a degree of unbiased standardization to ensure high-quality data (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016). The questionnaire, however, was developed using five-point Likert-type measures and at least three questions for each construct to fulfil the SEM criterion for ordinal data. The rationale for this is because ordinal data with a large number of categories may be regarded as continuous interval data in SEM analysis without solving the ordinality prob-

lem, but the latent variable has at least three observable variables that can be analysed in SEM analyses (Byrne, 2013b). On the other hand, such a design seems to have too many questions and waste too much time for an on-site tourist questionnaire, so many Gulangyu tourists choose not to complete the survey. Such questionnaire surveys can be conducted over the telephone relatively easily.

In the second phase of the data collection, due to the COVID-19, in-person interviews with tourists were severely limited, so the quantitative data was collected from online travel blogs. Compared to interviews, narrative analysis does not involve face-to-face interaction with the visitors to better understand their underlying motives. But the online narrative analysis, which is not limited by a specific developed question, gives researchers more leeway than interviews that guide visitors, so it contributes to the study of the topic.

A second-stage qualitative data set was derived from 97 Chinese travel blogs and analysed using practice-based narrative analysis. The study is exploratory in nature; therefore, we acknowledge that the three themes discussed (motivation, memorable travel experience, and travel advice) are limited to illustrative examples rather than more comprehensive understandings of Chinese heritage tourism experiences. In future studies, other methodologies could be applied to validate and further assess these findings. Moreover, future research that explores how tourists' reviews enhance destination value co-creation and influence destination management will also contribute to the expansion of this field.

Finally, the measures of factual UGC and emotional UGC are newly developed, and their applicability should be re-examined in the future. Moreover, this study did not take into account individual distinctions, such as personality differences. Future studies could include such factors to develop a better understanding of individual differences in the relationships between UGC and tourists' travel decision-making and its different impacts on destination. There is also scope for complementing the study findings through integrating other emerging contexts, such as eco-tourism and volunteer tourism.

In addition, future research can further subdivide the information characteristics of UGC. Despite its broad classification as rational and emotional, UGC can be further subdivided into static photos, dynamic videos, and live stream through social media. The immersive experience visitors receive from different types of digital narratives may vary, which affects their behavioral decision pattern and purchase intention. Shahbaznezhad, Dolan, & Rashidirad (2021), for example, discovered that publishing emotional information in the "video" format encourages active engagement in the form of comments, but presenting rational content in the 'photo' style results in a considerably higher number of likes than comments. Further research could explore whether

different social media content formats affect visitors' immersion and destination perception, which would trigger different decision-making mechanisms (e.g. intuitive and rational).

Another important research for the future could be to consider the negative emotions triggered by UGC through narrative transportation, and how these affect tourists' behaviour. In this study, the findings suggest that UGC has a positive impact on tourists' decision-making for travel purchase decisions and building destination image. At a later stage, tourists share their travel experiences back to social media, which usually focus on unforgettable moments. However, on the other hand, when UGC increases tourists' knowledge about the product or destination, they may discover it is not suitable for them and therefore develop more negative emotions. A digital narrative can also have an immersive effect on tourists, but it may trigger different decision-making patterns. Hence, in the future, comparing how UGC may trigger different emotions and affect tourists' purchasing behavior is an important research area.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the Study:	Tourist perception of online user-generated content (UGC) on a cultural heritage site in China
Purpose of the Study:	To investigate how online user-generated travel information affect tourist decision-making and loyalty behaviour
Selection of participants:	This research considers tourists who visits Gulangyu and ever use online user-generated information to plan a trip.
Questionnaire survey:	<p>The questionnaire survey can be held at venue suitable for you.</p> <p>This questionnaire survey includes three main sections which will take about 30-35 minutes:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Release Form</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The usage of UGC about trip planning 2. The impacts of UGC on tourist decision-making before and during travel. 3. The impacts of UGC on tourist decision-making after travel. <p><input type="checkbox"/> Demographic profile</p>
Confidentiality:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The information given during the questionnaire survey will be in confidence. ● The survey will not include any personal questions. ● Your answers will be used solely for the purpose of this study and will not be revealed to any third parties. ● There are no personal, business, or other risks involved.
Results of Study:	The findings of this study will be part of my PhD study, as well as conference presentations and journal paper submissions. Within any publications, no names will be disclosed.
Review of Study:	All studies are subject to be reviewed by the University's Ethics Committee.
Contact Information of Researcher:	<p>Sophia Xu Han</p> <p>Email: sophiaxuhan@gmail.com</p>

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

**APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN QUESTIONNAIRE
SURVEY FOR THE RESEARCH**

TOURIST PERCEPTION OF ONLINE USER-GENERATED CONTENT (UGC) ON A CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE IN CHINA

I have read the “Participant Information Sheet”(1) for this research study. I _____ hereby consent to contribute to the captioned research, conducted by Ms Han Xu, by participating in the questionnaire survey.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I acknowledge that the process outlined in the accompanying information sheet has been thoroughly explained to me.

I understand that any data I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I am aware that the results of this research will be used in academic research and published.

I understand that there are no personal, business, or other risks associated with this study, and I am aware of the potential benefits I may have.

I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary.

Signature of Research participant:

(Participant)

Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Researcher:

(Researcher)

Date

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

Travellers' User-generated content Usage and Tourist Behaviour in a Cultural World Heritage Site

Part A: Screening questions

Have you ever read relevant user-generated-content (UGC) in social media when trying to ferret out travel information before this trip (e.g., tourism destinations, accommodations, restaurants, etc.)?

(1) Yes (2) No (Stop responding to surveys)

Part B:

Which of the following information about Gulangyu Island will you search for through online platforms (such as Mafengwo, Ctrip, Qunar, WeChat etc.) before travelling there?

A. Transportation B. Accommodation C. Restaurants D. Tickets
E. Tourist site information F. Travel Tips G. Recommended Travel routes
H. Recommended local tour guide I. Photos of tourist spots posted on the internet by other tourists J. Other tourists' travel blogs K. Others, please specify_____

▷ Please use the following scale in your rating to indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Part C: Factual user-generated content (FUGC) and emotional user-generated content (EUGC)

This section concerns UGC functionality for tourists.

- FUGC1 UGC makes me know that Gulangyu is the world's cultural heritage site 1 2 3 4 5
- FUGC 2 UGC makes me know more about the history of Gulangyu 1 2 3 4 5
- FUGC 3 UGC makes me know the latest activities and events in Gulangyu (e.g.UGC provide me more information related to the musical and cultural activities on the island) 1 2 3 4 5
- EUGC1 UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu is very beau- 1 2 3 4 5

	tiful								
EUGC2	UGC makes me feel that Gulangyu Island has a great sense of history	1	2	3	4	5			
EUGC3	UGC makes me be deeply attracted by its beautiful natural scenery and historical buildings	1	2	3	4	5			
EUGC4	UGC makes me think that I like this destination (Gulangyu) very much	1	2	3	4	5			
EUGC5	UGC inspires my interest in traveling to Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5			
EUGC6	UGC inspires my interest in visiting the historical and cultural building in Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5			
EUGC7	UGC makes me feel that it should be worth travelling to Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5			

Part D: Perceived Usefulness of Online Reviews (PUOR)

PUOR1	UGC provides a good reference for me to visit Gulangyu.	1	2	3	4	5			
PUOR 2	UGC is useful in helping me arrange the whole trip.	1	2	3	4	5			
PUOR3	For me, these UGC are helpful.	1	2	3	4	5			

Part E: Destination Image (DI)

This section concerns tourist perception towards the destination.

DI1	Gulangyu has outstanding universal values	1	2	3	4	5			
DI2	Gulangyu is a prominent example of Chinese cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5			
DI3	Gulangyu is part of the most unique culture of China	1	2	3	4	5			
DI4	Gulangyu has had a great impact on the people of the world.	1	2	3	4	5			
DI5	The international community has a responsibility to protect this heritage	1	2	3	4	5			
DI6	Gulangyu is very important to China and the world	1	2	3	4	5			
DI7	This is a place where "you must visit"	1	2	3	4	5			

Part F: Destination Selection (DS)

DS1	Positive reviews make me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	1	2	3	4	5			
DS2	Other tourist recommended visiting routes makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	1	2	3	4	5			
DS3	The photos which are taken in Gulangyu and posted by tourist's online, makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	1	2	3	4	5			
DS4	The travel experience shared by other tourists,	1	2	3	4	5			

makes me choose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.

DS5	The music or books recommended by other tourists about Gulangyu, makes me chose Gulangyu as the destination for this trip.	1	2	3	4	5
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Part G: Tourist actual purchasing behaviour (TAPB)

TAPB1	UGC have an impact on my hotel reservation in Gulangyu.	1	2	3	4	5
TAPB2	UGC have an impact on whether I buy tickets to visit some tourism attritions in Gulangyu.	1	2	3	4	5
TAPB3	UGC have an impact on my choice of restaurant in Gulangyu.	1	2	3	4	5
TAPB4	UGC have an impact on planning the visiting route in Gulangyu.	1	2	3	4	5
TAPB5	UGC have an impact on my choice of souvenirs in Gulangyu.	1	2	3	4	5

Part H: Satisfaction

This section concerns tourist satisfaction with their trips.

TS1	Generally, I am satisfied with the experience of Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5
TS2	I felt very happy with this trip to Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5
TS3	I felt relaxed during my trip to Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5
TS4	I enjoyed my trip to Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5
TS5	Generally, I am satisfied with the experience of Gulangyu	1	2	3	4	5

Part I: WOM

This section concerns the likelihood that tourists recommend travel products or destination to others.

WOM1	I would like to recommend Gulangyu to my family and friends	1	2	3	4	5
WOM2	I would like to recommend some worth-visiting scenic spots on Gulangyu to others	1	2	3	4	5
WOM3	I would like to recommend the good hotels where I have stayed in during this trip to others	1	2	3	4	5
WOM4	I would like to recommend the delicious food that I have tried on this trip to others	1	2	3	4	5
WOM5	I would like to recommend souvenirs bought on Gulangyu to my family and friends	1	2	3	4	5
WOM6	I would like to share travel tips with others	1	2	3	4	5
WOM7	After this trip, I would like to share my travel expe-	1	2	3	4	5

rience on the Internet

Part J: Revisit Intention

This section concerns tourists' willingness to revisit the destination.

- RV1 I intend to visit Gulangyu Island again in the next 1 2 3 4 5
two years
- RV2 I have plans to visit Gulangyu again in the next two 1 2 3 4 5
years
- RV3 I hope I can visit Gulangyu again in the next two 1 2 3 4 5
years
- RV4 I may visit Gulangyu Island again in the next two 1 2 3 4 5
years

Part K: Personal data

This section concerns your demographics. Please select the appropriate answer.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: 18-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61 and above
3. Education: Primary School and below Junior High School
Senior High School Graduate Postgraduate
4. Monthly Income: 3,000RMB below 3,001-6,000RMB 6,001-
9,000RMB 9,001-12,000RMB 12,001-15,000RMB 15,000RMB
above
5. Place of residence: Xiamen local residents Non-local residents

-The End-

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D: A SAMPLE OF SELECTED TRAVEL BLOGS IN MAFENG- WO.COM

It should be noted that the copywrite of the text and photos of this travel blog belongs to the author (贝壳梦幻世界). This appendix here serves only as a demonstration of the data source of the second phase of this thesis.

不游鼓浪屿，枉费厦门行

作者：贝壳梦幻世界 LV.21

鼓浪屿有太多太多要介绍的地方，因为我想要给你展现的，不是熙熙攘攘的龙头路，人山人海的日光岩，喧哗热闹的网红店的鼓浪屿。不然你就只看到了一栋一栋别墅，一个一个庄园，一片一片海滩，一条一条挤满人的街。看完这篇你会看到不一样的鼓浪屿！



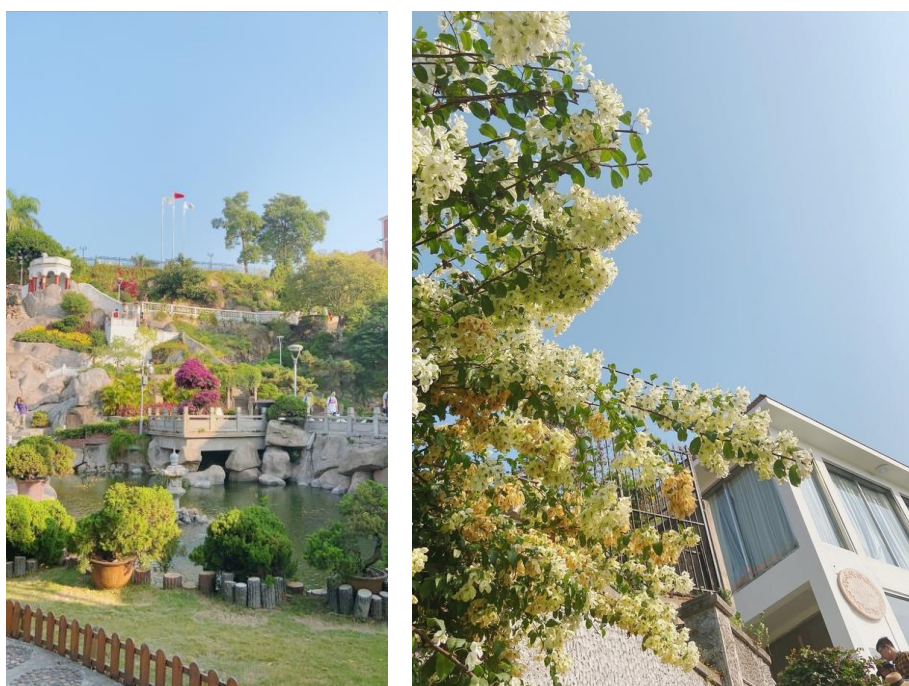
在东渡邮轮中心厦鼓码头坐船，轮渡是去鼓浪屿的唯一方式，提前在网上购票，坐船时间不长，估计最多二十分钟，鼓浪屿到港有两个码头，三丘田码头、内厝澳码头，我推荐内厝澳码头比较安静舒服。

鸦片战争以来，由于 100 余年鼓浪屿发展的独特历史，使鼓浪屿形成了具有浓厚人文景观、复杂历史情趣、诸多国家风格、中西合璧的“万国建筑博览会”。该岛因人均钢琴和小提琴拥有量居全国之首而被誉为“琴岛”、“音乐之岛”。鼓浪屿成为拥有人文景观、建筑景观、艺术与风景旅游、历史与音乐等多种精品荟萃的著名岛屿。



说到照相就多说一句，鼓浪屿非常非常非常适合摄影照相，这里有山有海有阳光沙滩，有古建筑群落小道古巷，反正走着走着就可以在某条小路某个角落照出效果惊艳的照片来，当然前提是摄影技术和器材要好。

5A 级国家旅游景区，鼓浪屿绝对是厦门必游景点，搜到的攻略说可以白天登岛晚上离岛回 厦门 住，可以省点住宿费，而我个人建议是，这里绝对值得住一晚，



先从菽庄花园说起吧，菽庄花园是鼓浪屿必到景点，需要购买门票，鼓浪屿的部分景点是要门票的，可以买套票，包含菽庄花园、日光岩、八卦楼这些景点的门票。菽庄花园原主人林尔嘉（字叔臧），菽庄花园只是林家的依海园林，鼓浪屿 上另有府邸。菽庄花园利用天然地形巧妙布局，全园分为藏海园和补山园两大部分，各景错落有序，园在海上，海在园中，既有江南 庭院的精巧雅致，又有海鸥飞翔的雄浑壮观，动静对比，相得益彰。园内还有四十四桥和十二洞天等 景点。辽阔的海域是它的亭台，隔海的南太 武山 脉是它的围墙。



明代大书法家张瑞图笔书的“海阔天空”。走过“海阔天空”，过了“四十四桥”，



海边的山上有钢琴博物馆，位于菽庄花园的“听涛轩”，陈列了爱国华侨胡友义收藏的几十架钢琴。值得一看，每半小时有演奏。立式钢琴布罗德伍德，每一个钢琴都要一个名字，都有一段故事，为了纪念胡友义先生，展馆每隔二十分钟会使用胡友义先生日常弹奏的 3 米长的吕特纳名琴，演奏先生最为喜爱的一首《鼓浪屿之波》。



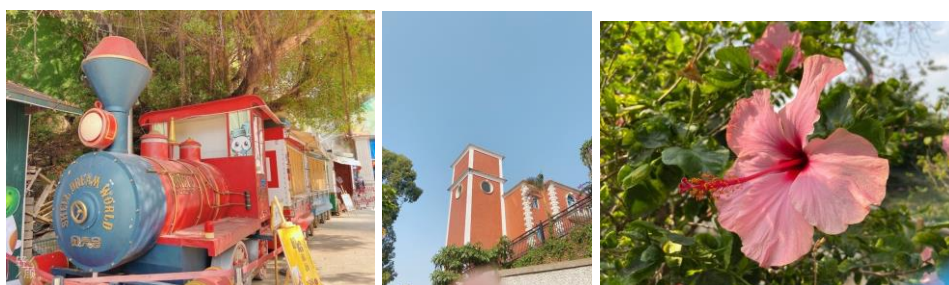


钢琴太多就不一一介绍了，钢琴博物馆出来，就直接瞎逛了，鼓浪屿很适合瞎逛，全岛都是步行街，没有机动车，自行车。

建议往山上走，越上人越少，一路拍着照片走，在鼓浪屿瞎逛的好处就是，会误打误撞的走到一些博物馆、陈列馆这类的地方，所以建议要到这里来的朋友，走完这里必游的几个大景点，就迈开步子走吧，多花一点时间在岛上逛逛，比去网红店打卡值得



路过中山图书馆，进去休息休息，蹭个空调，看看书，看看鼓浪屿的历史，逛到傍晚时分，夕阳西下，可以去菽庄花园旁边的沙滩上吹风玩水，岛上还有其他几个海滩，这个沙滩的岩石少，可以坐快艇。从菽庄花园沙滩往上上看，可以看到岛上最高点-日光岩，日光岩也是鼓浪屿重要景点。



路过马约翰操场，走到龙头路，鼓浪屿最热闹拥挤的地方，接下来就是吃吃吃环节了，龙头路和中山路一样，很多重复的店，像海蛎煎就遇见至少有三家了。

鼓浪屿也有不少网红店，说到网红店，就顺便说一说“盖章本”，大概是受齐天大圣的影响吧，国人到哪都喜欢到此一游的感觉，盖上每家知名店的印章，以收集印章的方式来记录自己的足迹。我觉得这种方式还不错，起码比拿刀刻古籍“到此一游”好得多吧！就这样漫无目的的走着，天色慢慢暗下来了，整个鼓浪屿游玩时间里，我只有两个建议，多走，多照。



本篇游记共含 1451 个文字，21 张图片。帮助了 2738 名鼓浪屿游客。