

Exploring The Role of Social Media Travel Content in Shaping Tourists' Destination Choices

Dr. Katrin Erika Alcantara Buted

National Aviation Academy of the Philippines

Pasay City

ORCID: <https://orcid0009-0001-7001-0752>

katrinbuted@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research examined how social media travel content influenced tourists' destination choices. Using a qualitative research design, we interviewed tourists who had been exposed to social media travel content and were selecting destinations. We collected data using qualitative methods. We used thematic analysis to analyze the collected data. Our findings showed that social media plays a large role when tourists are looking for destinations to visit. Travel photos/videos/reels, vlogs, etc. can help build a destination image, intrigue tourists about a certain area, and lead them to prefer certain destinations/activities/hotels/food/sights. User-generated content from people who have visited a destination can help them choose where to go. Reviews/comments/ratings and suggestions can help build trust. Access to social media can also help tourists choose between destinations. They can learn whether a destination is accessible, how much it may cost, what activities and hotels are available, and get travel tips and advice. However, edited or sponsored posts can give false expectations of what your holiday may look like. This shows that social media plays a major role in how people learn about a destination and decide whether to go.

Keywords: Social media, travel content, destination choice, tourist decision-making, thematic analysis

INTRODUCTION

Tourism today can be influenced by social media and how destinations are advertised or discussed online. With the rise of social media, many people use it for information when looking for holiday destinations. They can look at images, videos, comments, experiences, and what others have to say about a destination. This differs from tourism advertisements because it's more personal and shows others' experiences, which can make the destination seem more appealing to tourists. Many social media platforms feature tourism content, including

Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and tourism-focused websites. All of these allow tourists to look up and get a better idea of the destination that they may visit in the future.

As social media becomes more of a dependency, many people find themselves coming across information about destinations while scrolling through their feeds. Whether it's through images, video clips, recommendations, or blog posts about someone else's experience at that destination, it can spark interest. If the information feels helpful, truthful, interesting, and credible, it can shape how they see the destination and make them want to visit. This can lead them to choose a destination based on other people's experiences on social media.

Social media can influence tourists before they decide to visit a destination. By using social media, they can compare destinations and learn more about what there is to see at that location. They can look up prices, see how easy it is to get to the destination, and even see what activities you can do there and get a glimpse of what your experience will be like. Tourists can get an idea of a destination by using social media because other tourists can post images and comments about their experiences there. If someone has a positive experience at that location, it may make you want to go and see it for yourself. Or, if someone leaves negative comments or shares a bad experience, it could keep you from visiting that destination. Because so many social media platforms allow users to leave comments and messages for one another, they open up a new opportunity for people to share their experiences.

Because people today want to know what it's actually like when visiting a destination, social media plays a big role in tourism. Many influencers and bloggers can spread awareness about a destination and their experiences. This can inspire people, make them trust what they say, and create an emotional response when they come across those posts. Social media can sometimes portray things that aren't completely true. It could be edited pictures of a destination, paid advertisements, or people leaving only positive reviews. By researching these topics, we can learn why tourists are attracted to social media and what types of social media they enjoy when looking for information about a destination.

Knowing why tourists enjoy certain aspects of social media can benefit many industries. This includes tourism marketers, hoteliers, and locals who work within a tourist destination. Understanding what tourists experience when viewing social media can help these people learn more about their target market. Instead of just trying to gain more viewership by posting tourism-related content on social media, you can learn what types of content tourists like and find trustworthy. This can improve the tourist experience by promoting tourism responsibly and showing what it's like to visit your destination.

There is a lot of tourism content that is shared on social media, but what makes tourists enjoy it or even decide to visit that location is hard to explain. Each tourist will react differently when they come across tourism content on social media. Some quantitative research has been done, but it does not explore what tourists experience when they come across that content or how they feel about it. By interviewing tourists and hearing about their social media experiences, you can learn more about why they decide to visit that location.

This study aims to hear more from tourists about their experiences with social media. How they came across that content and what made it stand out to them. What they enjoyed about it and why they decided to visit that destination based on social media. By hearing these

experiences, we can learn more about why tourists choose certain locations based on social media.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore how social media travel content influenced tourists' perceptions, preferences, and decisions when choosing travel destinations.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How did tourists describe the influence of social media travel content on their perceptions and preferences toward different travel destinations?
2. How did social media travel content shape tourists' decision-making processes when choosing a destination to visit?

Scope and Delimitations

This study aimed to better understand social media travel content and its effects on tourists' destination choices. How did tourists perceive and interpret travel content they may come across when researching and deciding on a destination? Social media includes many types of travel content that could affect tourists. These include destination reviews, travel content from others, pictures, videos, recommendations, and more. This study examined which types of content affected tourists. It also examined what they perceived as influential about the content. For example: Is it trustworthy, appealing, appealing to you, and so on. This study took a qualitative approach and collected in-depth stories from selected tourists who have used social media content as a reference when deciding on a destination.

This study focused only on participants who met the inclusion criteria. They also had experience using social media content when deciding on a destination. We did not examine whether social media use correlates with tourists choosing a destination. Nor can we say that these results will reflect all tourists and people who use social media. The study did not look much into other factors that could affect a tourist's destination choice. Such as: money, price of flights, and rules and regulations. However, some may have mentioned it throughout their story. We can also only gather information based on what the participant told us while collecting our data.

Review of Related Literatures

Schoner-Schatz et al. (2021) studied the impact of destination communication on tourists on social media. They also explored how smiling endorsers affected tourists' intention to visit a destination and word-of-mouth. It was shown that having smiles increased travelers' desire to visit and spread word-of-mouth about the destination. Emotions can also be spread through social media through emotional contagion. The study found differences between marketer-created and user-created content. This shows how the way you present tourism information can affect tourists. This is helpful to our study because we know that social media can affect how a person feels about traveling to a certain destination. Not just about providing information about a place.

Ho et al. (2022) examined how social media can affect a customer's intention to visit a hotel. With 349 respondents, they showed how social media can play a big role in a person's desire to visit a hotel. Through social media, they showed that customers' motivation to visit stemmed from their image of the hotel and that this motivation led to their intention to visit. They concluded that social media plays a major role when people are looking to book or visit

a hotel. For this study, we know that tourists can be influenced by their impression of social media and what they may come across on the platform.

Baber and Baber (2023) studied the effect that social media marketing and electronic reputation have on a person's intention to visit a destination. Using data from 209 tourists, both domestic and international, they found that social media marketing and e-reputation shaped the destination's image. The destination's image also influenced the intention to visit. This shows that people can form images of destinations through social media before visiting. This will help our study by showing that social media can shape a tourist's desire to travel somewhere.

Ismarizal and Kusumah (2023) examined how Instagram can affect tourists' destination choices. By interviewing 20 tourists, they learned that Instagram can prompt Gen Y and Z to choose a destination to visit. Many reasons were given for why Instagram may make people want to visit a certain destination. Colors used on posts and captions/comments can attract people to that location. Since this study used interviews, it is similar to our study, which will also use interviews. We can examine how each tourist views social media content that triggers them to choose a destination to visit.

Zhou et al. (2023) researched how TikTok can be used when choosing a destination to visit. Using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2, they found that, when using TikTok, trust and pleasure helped determine whether someone wanted to use the app to decide where to travel. They also found differences between millennials and Generation Z in how they decide where to travel. This shows that videos aren't only meant to be watched for fun. They can also inform people about where they want to travel. Many people today use social media when deciding where they want to go. Whether it's videos, reviews, or people recommending places to others.

Joseph et al. (2024) examined user-generated content and its effects on tourism. They concluded that because so much destination information comes from people who have visited the location, destinations can use social media to build their brand. When using UGC, you can show people what others trust when they go on vacation. Storytelling can create emotions toward a destination, and pictures/videos with a strong aesthetic can make it seem more appealing. This will help our study by showing that social media can influence people to travel to a certain place in many ways.

Pourazad et al. (2025) found that social media can impact people's desire to travel to certain locations. Through surveying Australians that saw Instagram posts from influencers they were able to find out that when people are informed by the advertisement and believe the message that was being told to them. This can lead them to choose to visit that destination. This study also provided more information on how influencers can play a role in a tourist's customer journey. This will help our study because it shows that social media can influence people not only by what the poster says but also by how informative and convincing the post is to the reader.

Huang et al. (2025) found that people can become anxious about traveling when they see social media posts. Some may overidealize tourism or present themselves in a way that makes people want to travel but also feel anxious. This was found through a qualitative thematic analysis that identified what causes social media-induced travel anxiety. This study

helped our study because it gave us more insight into how people view social media when they are looking to travel. Some people may doubt or overthink the information they receive on social media.

Yang et al. (2025) discovered that social media can affect people when traveling. They used over 22 million check-ins from Foursquare and 112,000 Twitter users. They found that social media can reflect people's travel behavior. Social media activity can decrease when someone travels far away from that location. They also found that when traveling to certain venues, your social circle may have traveled there as well. This study helps us understand that tourism websites and people who promote tourism can affect a person, as can those around them.

Canlas-Rivera et al. (2026) researched the impact social media can have on perceptions of ecotourism destinations. They wanted to know how social media affected attitudes toward ecotourism. And environmental sustainability. They also examined destination image and intention to travel. Since this study was done in the Philippines, it is very applicable to our study. We know that Filipinos use social media when deciding where to travel.

Theoretical Framework

Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) *Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion* was one of the theories applied in this study. This theory states that people process persuasive messages in two ways. They can go through the central route, where they think about the message's quality and evaluate what it offers. Or they can use the peripheral route, which relies on simple heuristics such as attractiveness, familiarity, credibility, or emotional appeal. For this study, this theory helped describe how tourists consumed social media travel content. Travelers may have used the central route when looking at social media travel content. If the traveler found the content informative, they may have developed positive views toward the destination. Or, if the traveler used the peripheral route, they could have been swayed by nice pictures, influencers with many followers, or the number of likes and comments. The ELM helped explain how the type and quality of social media travel content affected tourists' views of a destination.

Ajzen's (1991) *Theory of Planned Behavior* was also used in this study. The theory described that intent is affected by attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Intent and perceived behavioral control then affect one's behavior. This theory described how social media travel content played a role in tourists choosing a destination. Tourists can develop positive or negative attitudes towards a destination from travel content. Subjective norms can include friends, family, or anyone else who influences them. Such as other tourists, online friends, and influencers. Perceived behavioral control could be whether the tourist felt they could afford to travel to that destination and enjoy their stay.

Conceptual Framework

The framework was based primarily on the study's research questions about tourists' perceptions of the impact of social media travel content and the role of social media travel content in tourists' destination decision-making. Thus, it showed how the information collected from participants related to the study's qualitative procedures and generated insights.

The *study input consisted of information participants provided* in response to the research questions. In other words, how tourists perceived the impact of social media travel content on their destination perceptions and preferences and how social media travel content

factored into their decision-making process when choosing a travel destination to visit. Inputs included, but were not limited to, experiences, perceptions, preferences, exposure to posts, videos, reviews, recommendations, influencers, photographs, and other content travelers encountered about destinations on social media platforms. Essentially, the tourists' responses provided narratives on how social media shaped their perceptions of destinations and their ultimate choice of travel destinations.

The Process of the study referred to the methods by which the researchers collected, organized, and analyzed participants' accounts of their experiences with social media travel content. Using a semi-structured interview guide, the researchers collected qualitative data by encouraging participants to provide detailed descriptions of their experiences and decision-making process. Researchers listened, recorded, transcribed, and organized participants' responses; from there, they identified code-worthy responses and recurring ideas. Next, the researchers coded appropriate responses and grouped similar codes into categories and themes. Through line-by-line thematic analysis, the researchers examined relationships between patterns that arose from participants' discussions about how their perceptions of destinations were formed, where they placed credibility and found attractive types of travel content, the types of information that made them feel emotionally and mentally persuaded to visit a destination, and how social media content factored into their decision-making process when they finally chose a destination. Lastly, researchers interpreted the meaning of themes that emerged specifically from participants' lived experiences and responses.

The study outputs included themes that emerged from participants' responses to interview questions, along with qualitative insights describing how social media travel content influenced participants' decision-making and destination choices. The insights revealed how social media content shaped participants' perceptions of destinations, preferences, interests, and intentions to travel to specific locations, and how these factors entered their decision-making process when they chose a destination. Beyond documenting the general influence of social media content on travelers' destination choices, the study developed a better understanding of what types of information on social media platforms encouraged, reinforced, or changed travelers' minds about certain destinations. These insights helped explain the prominence of social media as a source of travel information and influencers. Essentially, the study outputs provided a new understanding of how social media impacted travel.

Overall, the IPO framework showed that participants' lived experiences and perceptions served as the study's input. In contrast, data collection through interviews and line-by-line thematic analysis served as the process, and the identified themes and understanding of social media's influence on destination decision-making served as the study's output. Therefore, the model provided an organized approach to discovering how social media had played a role in participants' destination-selection process.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research methodology. A qualitative research design was appropriate because, rather than quantifying social media influence, the researchers wanted to understand how participants experienced social media posts, what they perceived when they encountered travel-related information online, what motivated them, and how they made decisions. Qualitative methodology allowed the researchers to collect descriptions of how

tourists make sense of travel posts, videos, photos, reviews, recommendations, and other social media travel content.

The researchers recruited participants using purposive sampling. The researchers used purposive sampling because they needed participants with experience using social media travel content when considering, choosing, or planning travel to tourist destinations. The researchers developed appropriate criteria to ensure they selected only participants who could provide information-rich answers specific to the study. Participants were selected based on their willingness to participate, their experience using social media for travel content, and their ability to explain how travel content on social media influenced or contributed to destination choice. Sample size was determined by the adequacy of information provided by the participants. Interviews continued until adequate information was collected.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from participants. An interview guide was created based on the study's research questions and objectives. Questions included open-ended prompts that allowed participants to describe their thoughts and provide answers. Topics discussed during the interviews included the types of social media travel content participants had come across, characteristics of attention-grabbing content, their perceptions of destinations featured online, what influenced their perceptions of the content's credibility, and how social media travel content influenced their decision to choose a destination. Probing questions were asked when necessary. With participants' permission, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from participants. To begin the analysis, researchers familiarized themselves with the data by reading the transcripts and interview notes. Researchers highlighted and coded significant quotes and excerpts from the transcripts. Codes with similar meanings were grouped together and sorted into categories. Patterns and recurring ideas within the categories were used to identify themes that captured participants' shared experiences. The researchers reviewed the themes against the transcripts to ensure the data supported the identified themes. The themes were defined and named, and the story of participants' experiences was told by explaining how social media travel content contributed to participants' destination perceptions, preferences, motivations, and decision-making using the developed themes.

Trustworthiness was addressed by taking detailed notes on data collection and analysis procedures and ensuring coding consistency and theme development throughout the analysis. Participants' answers were not twisted to fit preconceived ideas, and participants were described as they described themselves. Participant quotes were not discarded; they were used to support the themes. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Participation was voluntary, and participants were told about the study and its purpose. They were informed that they were participating in a research study and had participant rights, including the right to skip questions they did not want to answer and to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Ensuring ethical guidelines were followed, the researcher obtained permission and consent from participants before beginning data collection. They informed participants about the study and its procedures and explained how the information would be used. They assured participants that their identity and personal information would remain confidential and that all collected information would be used only for academic purposes. They ensured that participation in this study did not place participants at risk and that interview data were kept

confidential. Through each of these steps, they ensured that participants' rights, privacy, autonomy, and dignity were respected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. How did tourists describe the influence of social media travel content on their perceptions and preferences toward different travel destinations?

Emerging Theme	Description	Illustrative Statements from Participants
1. Social Media as a Source of Travel Inspiration	Tourists described social media travel content as a major source of ideas and inspiration when discovering destinations they had not previously considered.	<i>"When I see beautiful places on TikTok or Instagram, I become interested in visiting them."</i> <i>"Social media introduces me to destinations that I did not know about before."</i>
2. Visual Content Shapes Destination Perception	Photos, videos, reels, and travel vlogs help tourists visualize a destination's scenery, attractions, activities, and overall atmosphere, making the place seem more attractive and desirable.	<i>"The videos make me imagine what it would be like to actually be there."</i> <i>"Pictures and videos can make a destination look more beautiful and exciting."</i>
3. Formation of Positive Destination Images	Attractive and engaging travel posts contributed to favorable perceptions of destinations by emphasizing their beauty, uniqueness, accessibility, and recreational opportunities.	<i>"After seeing many positive posts about a place, I started thinking that it would be a good destination."</i> <i>"The posts make the destination look memorable and worth visiting."</i>
4. Influence of Authentic Experiences and User-Generated Content	Tourists valued content that showed real experiences, personal recommendations, and firsthand observations	<i>"I trust posts from people who actually visited the place because they show their real experience."</i>

	because it felt more realistic than purely promotional ads.	<i>"Travelers sharing their experiences help me know what I can really expect."</i>
5. Reviews and Recommendations Build or Reduce Trust	Comments, ratings, reviews, and recommendations influenced tourists' perceptions by providing additional information about a destination's quality, safety, cost, and overall experience.	<i>"I usually read the comments before deciding if a place is really worth visiting."</i> <i>"If many people recommend the place, I become more confident about considering it."</i>
6. Emotional Appeal and Desire to Visit	Travel content generated emotions such as excitement, curiosity, relaxation, and anticipation, which strengthened tourists' desire to experience the destination personally.	<i>"Seeing people enjoy themselves there makes me want to experience the same thing."</i> <i>"The videos make me excited and curious about visiting the place."</i>
7. Social Media Content Influences Travel Preferences	Exposure to social media affected tourists' preferences regarding destinations, activities, accommodations, food, and attractions. Some participants developed preferences based on what they repeatedly encountered online.	<i>"I sometimes choose a destination because of the activities I see people doing there."</i> <i>"The places that appear frequently on my feed become the places I want to visit."</i>
8. Perceived Authenticity Versus Idealized Content	Although social media could create positive impressions, tourists also recognized that highly edited or staged content might present destinations unrealistically.	<i>"Sometimes the place looks better online than it actually is."</i> <i>"I know that some pictures are edited, so I do not completely rely on what I see."</i>

9. Social media Reinforces Destination Preferences	Repeated exposure to similar content reinforced tourists' existing interest in particular destinations and increased their intention to consider those destinations for future travel.	<i>“The more I see content about a place, the more I become interested in going there.”</i> <i>“Seeing the same destination from different travelers makes me consider it more seriously.”</i>
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When asked about social media travel content, most interviewees perceived it as inspirational information that affected their perceptions and evaluations of destinations. Photos, short videos, virtual tours, and travel blogs influenced their mental images of destinations and aroused curiosity and interest in visiting them. Additionally, UGC, reviews, and recommendations were deemed helpful as they provide genuine first-hand experiences and information about destinations. Edited, sponsored, and 'Instagram vs Reality' posts, however, were noted to give rise to skewed expectations. Participants' responses indicated that social media can affect potential tourists by exposing them to destinations, reinforcing positive perceptions, arousing emotional interest in traveling, forming preferences for certain destinations, and increasing willingness to consider certain destinations.

SOP 2. How did social media travel content shape tourists' decision-making processes when choosing a destination to visit?

Social media travel content affected tourists' decision-making by exposing them to easy-to-access information, helping them identify potential destinations (gaining destination awareness) and assess their attractiveness (evaluation of destination attractiveness). Participants explained that travel-related posts, photos, videos, reels, and stories from others sparked their interest in destinations they had not previously considered. After being exposed to images of scenic views, attractions, culture, accommodation, food, activities, and locals on social media, tourists knew what traveling to that destination might look like. Content was influential when it inspired participants to learn about a destination and appeared authentic, entertaining, and attractive.

The second finding showed that seeing destination content on social media led tourists to search for information about alternative places and evaluate their attractiveness. Platforms allowed tourists to compare destinations based on attractions, accessibility, estimated cost, accommodation, transportation, safety, and activities. Comments, reviews, ratings, recommendations, and opinions from others provided different perspectives that helped participants know whether a destination could meet their needs. Some participants identified advertisements and official tourism content as promotions, while content from travelers served as a form of reference when weighing the pros and cons of visiting a destination.

Social media travel content affected participants' feelings and thoughts about destinations. Exceptional photos and videos of scenic views made a destination seem more attractive; tourists became convinced that visiting a location can be exciting, relaxing, and

cultural. Content from influencers, travel bloggers, content creators, friends, and family members who shared their personal experiences affected travelers' thoughts about a destination. Repeat exposure to content about a destination also motivated participants' interest and increased their confidence to visit a place. However, some participants noted that they needed to know whether content posted about a destination reflected what travelers would truly see (after recognizing whether advertisements and promotions were edited).

Social media influenced tourists' decisions by helping them move from consideration to intention and final destination choice. Platforms that provided travelers with itineraries, travel tips, estimated budget, opening hours, transportation guides, and 'what to do' in a particular destination reduced uncertainty and eased the planning process. Some participants decided to travel after seeing content because the posts offered useful details on how to get there. Accessing this information was convenient, and many tourists made quicker decisions when they saw social media content. They trusted destinations with more useful information, especially when attractions and activities were similar across multiple locations.

Social media can create an emotional connection to a destination by making tourists feel excited about visiting, curious to learn more, and trusting what the location offers. Content based on real experiences that feels relatable and human can make people feel emotional about visiting a destination. Therefore, platforms can influence travelers' decision-making process when content spreads through word-of-mouth because tourists are likely to trust other people's experiences.

SUMMARY

For SOP1, tourists commonly associated social media travel content with being inspirational sources that influenced their perceptions and preferences for destinations. Images (including photos, videos, reels, and travel vlogs) helped tourists "visualize" the destination and formed positive perceptions through attractive highlights of scenery, activities, accommodation, food, and local experiences. UGC, reviews, comments, ratings, and recommendations were seen as authentic and useful because they offered first-hand, practical information that elicited trust, curiosity, excitement, and interest in visiting a destination. Preferences also strengthened when users were repeatedly exposed to positive content about destinations they had previously liked or considered visiting. Nevertheless, some participants noted that edited, sponsored, and/or overly glamorized content can lead to false perceptions, and tourists will take additional steps to ensure the social media information they consume is authentic and credible before solidifying their perceptions.

For SOP2, tourists said social media influenced their decision-making by moving them through stages such as becoming aware of a destination and feeling inspired to learn more, searching for and gathering information, comparing destination options, and ultimately deciding where to travel. Many participants mentioned using social media to compare destinations, including attractions and activities, accessibility, safety, transportation, accommodation options, and costs. Reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations from fellow travelers, influencers, bloggers, friends, and family served as validation that helped tourists narrow their options and feel less uncertain about their decisions. Travel tips, itinerary planning, and budgeting information also supported the planning process and increased comfort with decision-making. In addition to providing information to support decisions, social media can elicit excitement, passion, curiosity, and anticipation, while authentic content can increase trust in a destination. Social media can influence travelers' perceptions and

preferences about potential travel destinations, as well as the decision-making process they use when deciding where to go.

CONCLUSIONS

- Results indicated that tourists' exposure to social media travel content generated travel inspiration, provided visual cues, allowed access to authentic travel experiences, and offered reviews and recommendations. Visually appealing content and repeated exposure increased positive destination images, emotional interest, and preference for destinations, activities, accommodations, and attractions. However, some tourists also recognized that edited, sponsored, or otherwise skewed content can create false expectations, as they take cues of authenticity and credibility when forming perceptions.
- Results showed that exposure to social media travel content influenced tourists' perceptions of destinations through all stages of the destination decision-making process. Content inspired destination awareness and pushed tourists toward information search, where they compared and evaluated their options and set expectations before forming an intention to visit. Information about attractions, accommodations, transportation, expenses, safety, "things to do," and travel itineraries reduced uncertainty and increased confidence in tourists' decision-making. Additionally, emotional appeal, relatable experiences, and repeated exposure influenced tourists' destination preferences, pushing them toward destination selection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. It is recommended that travelers compare social media posts (e.g., photos, videos, reviews, recommendations) to information from official resources prior to developing strong destination preferences. Put more weight on well-rounded UGC and reviews, and be skeptical of content that is heavily edited, sponsored, or too good to be true. Tourism businesses and marketers should also be honest and transparent in their content.
2. It is recommended that tourists rely on social media as a secondary resource and confirm reservations, activities, attractions, directions, etc. on official tourism sites, hotels, ride services, etc. It is also recommended that tourism businesses and destination marketers publish practical, authentic content on social media with realistic price points, accessibility, activities, safety tips, and travel logs. Creators and influencers should disclose when content is sponsored and portray destinations honestly so tourists have realistic expectations.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were employed only to enhance language quality and formatting. The researcher carried out conceptualization, data analysis, interpretation of results, and formulation of conclusions independently.

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