

**USER-GENERATED CONTENTS (UGC) AND FOREIGN TOURISTS` DECISION
TO VISIT NEPAL**

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RECOMMENDATION

CERTIFICATION

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, Biplov Chaudhary Tharu, declare that this GRP is entirely my own original work. I have given appropriate credit to any sources I have used or referred to in my work. I also understand that if at any time it is shown that I have significantly misinterpreted material presented to SOMTU, any credits awarded to me on the basis of that material may be revoked.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATU	Attitude towards UGC
CGM	Consumer Generated Media
DM	Decision Making
E-WOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
IQ	Information Quality
NTB	Nepal Tourism Board
PSC	Perceived Source Credibility
PT	Perceived Trust
UGC	User-Generated Contents
US	Users Satisfaction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Foreign tourists` decision to visit a destination is influenced by various factors such as destination image, pull and push factors, and marketing tools used to promote the tourism destination. One of such marketing tools is User-Generated Contents (UGC) which is used by many foreign countries in promoting their tourism industry. In the context of Nepal, it is new and strong marketing tool which can be utilized to uplift the Nepalese tourism industry to its potential. This study aims to assess the impact of User-Generated Contents (UGC) on decision making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal. Based on the literature review, variables related to UGC like perceived trust, attitude, information quality, source credibility and user satisfaction with previous experiences were identified for study.

This research study is based on Descriptive research design. The data was collected through physical distribution by researcher and sending out questionnaire via electronic medium. Primary source of data collection was used for survey with the help of self-administered questionnaire structured using seven-point Likert scale. The population for the study were foreign tourists who are currently visiting Nepal or have visited Nepal before (Excluding Indian nationals). Among them, foreign tourists mostly based in Kathmandu valley were considered for the sample in this study. This study was conducted with a sample size of 266 foreign tourists and data were analyzed through the use of IBM SPSS 26.

The result of the study shows that Perceived trust towards UGC has significant impact on the decision-making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal. However, there is no significant impact of attitude towards UGC on the decision-making process of the tourists. Likewise, perceived source credibility and information quality of UGC are most significant dimensions of perceived trust towards UGC which influences tourists` decision. While, user satisfaction with previous experiences has no such influence towards perceived trust and decision making of the tourists. Perceived trust towards UGC is considered the most important aspect of User-Generated Contents that influences foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal. So, Nepal Tourism Board and tourism businesses should prioritize promoting user-generated contents that fosters trust among the foreign tourists and enhances Nepal's reputation as a desirable tourism destination.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Decision making is the act of choosing an option from several alternatives. Decision making is a crucial ability required in different aspects of life, such as business, politics, and personal affairs (Daft & Marcic, 2017). Foreign tourists visiting a destination make their decisions through five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1968; Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). During the information search stage, tourists gather information from various sources, including UGC, which can influence their perception of Nepal. Decision making process of tourists is highly influenced by the User-Generated Contents and its dimensions such as trust and attitude towards UGC (Ayeh et al., 2013). User-generated content (UGC) refers to any type of content that is created by users of a product or service, rather than by the company or brand itself. UGC can take many forms, including text, images, videos, reviews, and social media posts, and it is typically shared on social media platforms, websites, or other channels where consumers engage with brands (Beveridge, 2022). In tourism sector of Nepal, the role of UGC is very important because tourists' travel planning behaviour and decision depends on recommendation from family/friends and influencing contents on social media (Poudel & Phuyal, 2016).

The study commences a review of literature on Perceived trust towards UGC and Attitude toward UGC, WOM marketing, and trustworthiness of electronic WOM. The studies by Cox et al. (2009) and Ayeh et al. (2013) have investigated the role of UGC in travel planning behavior. Cox (2008) found out that foreign tourists consider UGC while making their final decision on destination and hence consider UGC as useful source of information. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the impact of UGC on the decision-making process of foreign tourists in Nepal. The lack of research on the impact of UGC on foreign tourists' decision-making process in Nepal is problematic because UGC can be a powerful and cost-effective marketing tool for tourism businesses in Nepal. By understanding the role of UGC in foreign tourists' decision-making process, tourism businesses can leverage UGC to attract more tourists to Nepal.

Hence, it is precisely in this context that the aim of this study is to determine the role of UGC on foreign tourists' decision-making process to visit Nepal. In particular, this thesis aim is to determine the factors related to UGC that impact the decision-making process of foreign tourists` visiting Nepal. Factors such as trust towards UGC, attitude, information quality, source credibility, and user satisfaction also impact their perception (Cox et al., 2009; Filieri et al., 2015). The on-site experience quality can affect tourists' satisfaction and loyalty towards the destination. Tourists' feedback through UGC and other platforms can influence Nepal's reputation (Engel et al., 1968; Kotler and Armstrong, 2021). Positive experiences may lead to recommendations, while negative experiences may discourage others from visiting. The research states that there is need to identify the impact of UGC on foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal because understanding the impact will let identify the factor of UGC which has highest contribution in influencing the decision of tourists. This will provide best position to offer some alternatives to the problem.

UGC is a very strong marketing tool for marketing of tourism destination, travel information and growth of tourism business in Nepal. Through UGC, individuals can share their experiences, opinions, and beliefs about products or services with other people (Ahuja, Michels, Walker, & Weissbuch, 2007). Unlike traditional advertising, which is often viewed with scepticism, UGC is generated by individuals who are perceived as unbiased and trustworthy sources of information. Travelers have bypass tourism operators and agents and have started to rely on UGC mainly travel reviews to plan their trip (Fotis et al., 2012). This is because UGC is based on real experiences and opinions, rather than the carefully crafted messages of corporate advertising. As a result, tourism businesses that leverage UGC in their marketing strategies can create more meaningful connections with their audiences and increase brand loyalty.

Specific research questions and hypotheses are developed to explore UGC's influence on consumer travel decisions. This study has examined the role of User-Generated Contents such as Blogs, Videos, Images and Reviews on the decision of the foreign tourists (excluding Indian nationals) to make Nepal as their next visit destination. The findings from this study will provide Nepalese tourist marketers ideas about less costly, reliable and strong marketing tool and how it can motivate foreign tourist to visit Nepal.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Cox et al. (2009) studied the role of User- Generated Contents in tourists` travel planning behaviour considering the factors such as Trustworthiness and attitude towards UGC. Filieri et al. (2015) studied on the perceived trust towards UGC integrating information quality, perceived source credibility of UGC and User satisfaction from previous experiences. Likewise, Ayeh et al. (2013) conducted research on predicting the intention to use consumer-generated media for travel planning. However, only few researchers have investigated specific impact of such factors on foreign tourists' decision-making processes in the context of Nepal. Various research has been carried out on the tourist behaviour, influencing factors of UGC and tourism businesses of Nepal but limited study has been done on the most rapidly emerging and growing marketing tool called User-generated contents and its impact on foreign tourists` to visit Nepal. Due to lack of research in this field, its importance is not known among the Nepalese tourism marketers. The old and traditional marketing tool are not enough to promote Nepal as one of the best tourism destinations in the world. Hence, the specific purpose of this study is to ascertain the extent to which Perceived Trust and Attitude towards UGC impact foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal.

In foreign countries, Travelers have bypass tourism operators and agents and have started to rely on UGC mainly travel reviews to plan their trip (Fotis et al., 2012). It has become one of the best marketing tools for growth of tourism industry as it has been developing rapidly due to innovation and technology. Nepal is rich in every aspect of tourism be it adventure, nature or food and culture. However due to lack of research on the use of UGC and marketing tool, it is still behind not utilized up to its potential. Being a less-costly and strong marketing tool, UGC can play important role in increasing number of tourists visiting Nepal. For this there is need to determine the role of UGC in influencing decision of tourists to visit Nepal. The findings of this study will be very useful for tourism business in determining appropriate marketing tools for utilizing the tourism resources of Nepal to its potential.

1.3 Research Questions

The study has addressed the following issues specifically:

- Is there an impact of Perceived Trust and Attitude towards UGC on Foreign Tourists` Decision to visit Nepal?

- Is there an impact of User satisfaction from previous experiences, Perceived source credibility and Information quality of UGC with perceived trust towards UGC?
- What aspects of UGC has most significant contribution in influencing foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal?

1.4 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to analyze the impact of User-Generated Contents (UGC) on decision making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal. The study aims to measure the impact of Perceived trust, Attitude, Source credibility, Information quality and user satisfaction from UGC on Decision making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal.

The Specific objectives of the study are:

- To assess the impact of Perceived Trust and Attitude towards UGC on foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal.
- To determine the impact of User satisfaction from previous experiences, perceived source credibility, Information quality of UGC on Perceived trust towards UGC.
- To identify the most significant aspect of User-Generated Contents that impacts the foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

Cox et al., (2009) suggest that non-UGC sites such as tourism websites are considered more trustable and credible source of information than UGC sites. A study by Burgess et al. (2009) suggests that the level of trustworthiness and source credibility of the postings and comments made by consumers is high because it shows the real experiences by real people. Perceived credibility of the source increases the trust of the consumer towards UGC and if travellers perceive source as credible, they also believe that contents are reliable and avoids spammers who post through fake accounts (Filieri et al., 2015). Thus, we propose:

H1: Perceived Source Credibility positively influences perceived trust towards UGC.

The information becomes more valuable when it is free from promotional content from hotel managers, and instead, it relies entirely on the genuine feedback of customers. The credibility of the information is a significant factor in its usefulness in aiding informed decision-making (Chen, Sia, Luo, & Cheung, 2009). Filieri et al. (2015) suggests that

trustworthiness of UGC sites depends on the information quality of the UGC. Similarly, a study by Ukpabi and Karjaluoto (2018) show that tourists while searching for information on UGC consider the content with similar interest more trustworthy. Therefore, we hypothesize as follows:

H2: Information quality positively influences perceived trust towards UGC.

Filieri et al., (2015) suggest that the satisfaction of customers comes from receiving useful, and valuable assessment out of the UGC derived from the content creators. While, Jamaludin et al. (2021) argues that user satisfaction is obtained if the expectation level is met by a consumer. Satisfaction act as mediating variable between motivation and destination loyalty of tourists. If motivation factor is integrated with the objectives to meet expectations, satisfaction can be provided to the consumers which in turn increases trust toward the UGC. Thus, we propose:

H3: User Satisfaction from previous experiences positively influences perceived trust towards UGC.

The level of trust that travelers place in the information obtained from UGC websites plays a critical role in how effective these platforms are in influencing their travel decisions (Cox et al., 2009). Confidence in UGC websites influences their decision-making, and previous studies have shown that UGC is more credible than information from travel agencies, news media, and authorized destination blogs (Filieri, 2015). Tourists in the tourism industry trust UGC, such as personal experiences and opinions, more than official data (Kamariotou, Kitsios, Mitsopoulou, & Moustaka, 2022).

H4: Perceived trust towards UGC positively influences Decision making of tourists.

Travellers consider it valuable when travel operators interact with travelers' comments on websites. Although state tourism websites are highly trusted, allowing real travelers to contribute UGC could further enhance the effectiveness of these websites (Cox et al., 2009). If travelers have a positive attitude towards utilizing UGC, they are more likely to rely on it when planning their travels (Filho et al., 2012). Thus, we propose:

H5: Attitude towards UGC positively influences Decision making of tourists.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study will be especially beneficial for the tourism marketers and operators in Nepal in determining less costly and strong marketing tool and adapt it into their marketing channel to reach and gain large customer base. The findings of the study will help them identify the most important and non-important aspects influencing UGC and as a result, they will be able to create and customize their UGC in such a way that helps to increase their customer base and business' conversion rate. This study will also be beneficial for the government bodies related to tourism in Nepal to identify the potential of UGC in promoting various clusters of Nepalese tourism to the world. Since, this study is the only research conducted in Nepal on User-Generated Contents and foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal, it will be helpful for future researchers attempting to study various aspects of User-Generated Contents, especially in the Nepalese context. The conclusions and recommendations made by the study will help them in taking the right direction for further studies.

1.7 Limitations of Study

Some limitations of this study are:

- The first limitation is the sample size which consists of foreign tourists visiting Nepal and who have already visited Nepal and this could enhance data generalization.
- Since it is the first research conducted on User-Generated Contents and Foreign tourists` decision in context of Nepal, it was difficult to find the literatures related based in Nepal and hence the topic became complicated to understand.
- Communication barrier was seen during data collection due to language problem with some foreign tourists especially while filling up the questionnaire.
- The study is based on the User-Generated contents which have developed highly due to new innovations and technologies and this resulted into reverse opinions of tourists compared to findings of past literatures.

1.8 Structure of the study

The study report consists of five chapters that exclude the preliminary section, references, and appendix. The first chapter introduces the study's background, research problem, objectives, significance, hypotheses, and limitations. The second chapter presents a summary of existing literature on User-Generated Content (UGC), including studies on

Perceived Trust, Attitude towards UGC, User satisfaction from previous experiences, Perceived source credibility, and Information quality of UGC. This chapter also compares and contrasts various studies on travel planning behaviour, tourism marketing and decision making related to UGC. The third chapter explains the research methodology and tools used to validate the research model. The fourth chapter analyzes the study's findings, and the final chapter draws logical connections between the findings and the existing literature, providing recommendations for future researchers.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is associated with the presentation of various theories and literatures that are associated with the study of User-Generated Contents, Perceived trust towards UGC, Information quality, User satisfaction with previous experiences, Perceived source credibility and Attitude towards UGC. The chapter is divided into two parts: Theoretical Review, and Empirical Review.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This section presents various theories that are related with the study. Some of the related theories are: General Consumer Decision Making Model, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

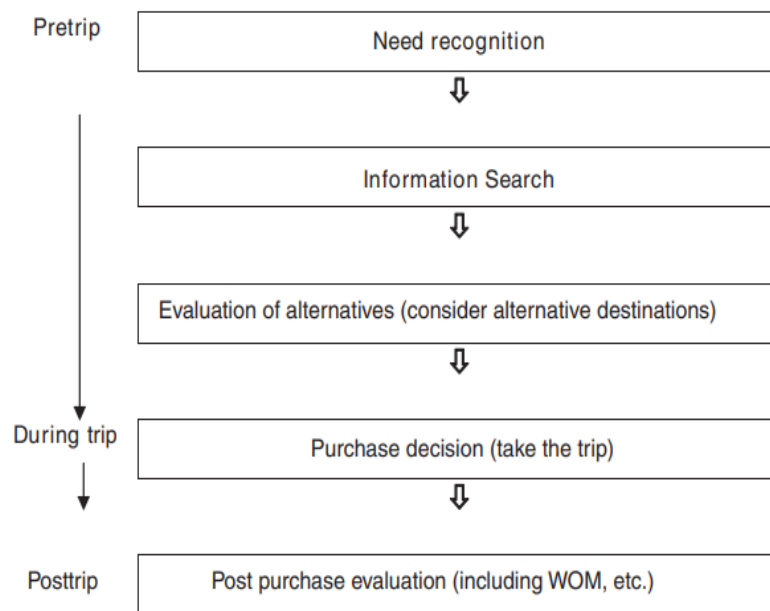
2.1.1 General Consumer Decision Making Model

The consumer decision-making model (CDM) is a well-known framework that outlines the process consumers go through when making purchasing decisions. This model was first introduced by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell in their 1968 book "Consumer Behavior: Theory and Practice," and has since become a widely accepted model in marketing research and practice. The model describes how consumers become aware of a need, search for information, evaluate alternatives, make a purchase decision, and evaluate their purchase experience. It typically consists of five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1968; Kotler & Armstrong, 2021).

As shown in Figure 1, first, consumers recognize a problem or need that requires a solution. Once a problem is identified, the consumer begins to search for information about potential solutions. This could involve gathering information from personal experience, seeking advice from friends or family, or conducting online research. After gathering information, the consumer evaluates the available options and decides which product or service best meets their needs. At this stage, the consumer considers a variety of factors, such as price, quality, and brand reputation. Once a decision has been made, the consumer makes a purchase and enters the post-purchase evaluation stage. This involves reflecting on the purchase decision and assessing whether or not it met their expectations.

Figure 1

The Travel Planning Process



Source: Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1990) and Woodside and Lyonski (1989).

Overall, the general consumer decision making model provides a useful framework for understanding how consumers make purchasing decisions and can help marketers to develop effective marketing strategies that target each stage of the process (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021).

According to Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002), travelers tend to gather and evaluate various forms of travel information early on in the decision-making process to reduce the risk of making a poor destination choice. Hence, it is important for tourism organizations to understand how consumers search for and assess information at different stages of the travel decision-making process (Choi, Lehto, & O’Leary, 2007). Research by Pan and Fesenmaier (2006) reveals that travel consumers usually seek information on ten crucial sub-decisions, such as travel partners, destination, expenses, activities, transportation, and dining options. Although User-Generated Content (UGC) are a relatively recent addition to the travel planning process, they are likely to have similar impacts on consumers as traditional travel sites. UGC have the potential to influence consumers' decisions at various stages of the travel planning process. Pure blogs, for instance, have the potential to enhance the marketing

efforts of a particular country or region by positively affecting visitors' intentions to visit and actually planning a trip (Lin & Huang, 2006). Ultimately, UGCs power lies in their ability to serve as an online source of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) information.

2.1.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) is a theoretical framework that explains how users adopt and use new technology. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a widely used theoretical framework for explaining and predicting user acceptance and usage of information technology (Davis, 1989). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a user's intention to adopt a new technology is influenced by their perceived usefulness and ease of use (Liaw, 2002). TAM also recognizes that external factors such as social influence and resource availability can affect a user's perception of the technology (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). The model has been widely researched and validated in both academic and practical settings (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In the present study, this means that the attitudes and intentions of potential travellers to use a particular UGC platform for travel planning are influenced by their perceptions of the platform's ease of use and usefulness for this specific purpose.

In the case of user-generated content (UGC), TAM suggests that users' attitudes and intentions towards creating and sharing UGC are influenced by their perceptions of how easy and valuable it is to generate and share content on a specific platform. Thus, users are more likely to engage with UGC platforms that they perceive as providing utility and being user-friendly. To put it differently, the perceived ease of use and usefulness of a UGC platform are crucial factors that impact users' willingness to create and share content on it (Cheung & Vogel, 2013).

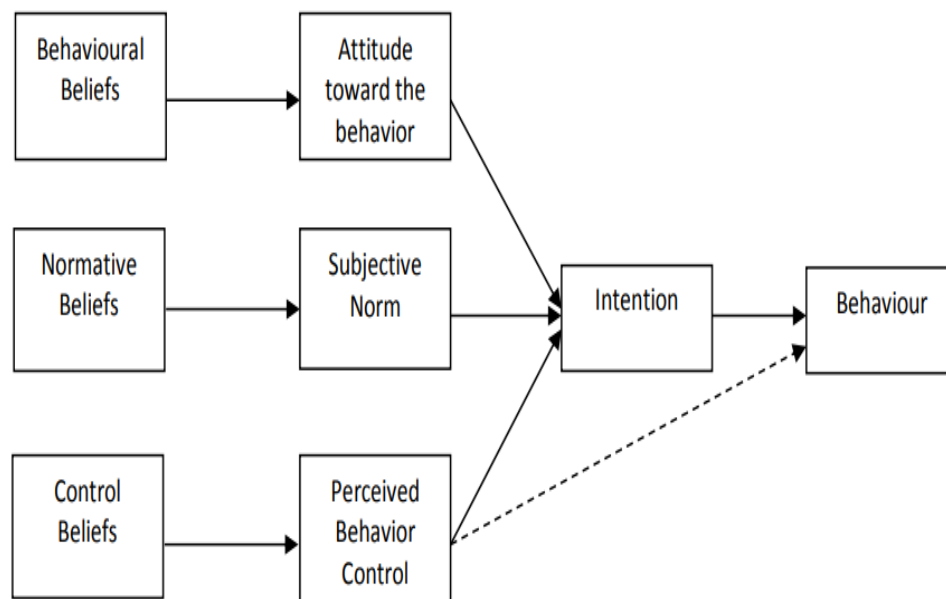
The present study defines perceived usefulness as the degree to which potential travelers believe that using CGM would improve their travel planning experience. For individuals seeking travel information, the usefulness of CGM is dependent on its ability to aid in travel planning and decision making. Based on this, it is assumed that perceived usefulness has an impact on travellers' attitudes and intentions to use CGM for travel planning (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013).

2.1.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposes that an individual's intention to engage in a specific behaviour is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991) as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Theory of Planned Behaviour



Source: Fishbein and Ajzen (2010)

In the context of creating user-generated content (UGC) for tourism, TPB suggests that attitudes towards UGC creation, subjective norms related to UGC creation, and perceived behavioural control over UGC creation are all influential factors (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Attitudes describe a person's favourable or unfavourable feelings towards creating and sharing tourism-related UGC. Subjective norms refer to a person's perception of the expectations and opinions of others towards UGC creation for tourism. Perceived behavioural control relates to an individual's belief in their ability to create and share UGC associated with tourism. These elements have a significant impact on the intention of individuals to create and share tourism-related UGC (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

Tourism service providers must have a clear understanding of the factors that shape individuals' travel decisions, how attitudes are developed, and the role of various reference

groups in shaping travel behavior (Moutinho, 1987). Filho et al., (2012) proposed a model that identifies critical factors such as attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control that are likely to influence the intention of travelers to utilize user-generated content (UGC) when planning their travel. By incorporating these factors, the model aims to provide insight into the drivers of UGC consumption in tourism and enable service providers to develop effective marketing and planning strategies.

To summarize, TPB provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the factors that motivate people to create and share UGC related to tourism. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control are all crucial in determining the intentions of individuals to engage in this behaviour (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

2.2 Conceptual Review

To conduct a conceptual review on the relationship between user-generated content and foreign tourists' decision to visit Nepal, it is necessary to review the existing literature on each topic independently. Previous research has identified various factors that impact foreign tourists' decision to visit Nepal, including the determinants of visit destination which include country's natural beauty, cultural richness, adventure activities and friendly people. Other determinants such as itinerary planning and destination choice of tourists are also reviewed.

2.2.1 Natural beauty

Various studies have investigated the connection between the natural beauty of Nepal and its influence on tourists' decision-making processes. Nepal is well-known for its stunning natural surroundings, including the tallest mountains in the world, national parks teeming with diverse plant and animal life, rivers fed by snow, amazing trekking paths, breath-taking lakes, and friendly locals. Natural beauty, particularly the Himalayas, are significant motivator for tourists visiting Nepal (Himalayan Glacier Adventure and Travel Company, 2022). Xiao et al. (2020) found that visual content such as photographs and videos of Nepal mainly Himalayas had a greater impact on tourists' destination choices than text-based content. The perceived authenticity of UGC is also important, as Xiang, Du, Ma, and Fan (2017) found that authentic content positively influenced tourists' decision-making processes.

Overall, the literature suggests that the natural beauty of Nepal plays a vital role in attracting tourists, and UGC can significantly impact their perceptions of this beauty.

2.2.2 Adventure activities

The literature indicates that adventure activities, including trekking, mountaineering, and rafting, are a significant factor in attracting tourists to Nepal. According to Sigala, Christou, and Gretzel (2012), tourists engaging in adventure activities were found to generate more user-generated content (UGC). Hasan and Neela (2021) also noted that tourists participating in adventure activities were more likely to share their experiences on social media. Visual UGC, such as photographs and videos, has been found to have a significant impact on tourists' perceptions of adventure activities in Nepal. Xiao et al. (2020) also found that visual content had a more significant influence than text-based content on tourists' perceptions of adventure activities.

Overall, the literature suggests that businesses and tourism authorities in Nepal should leverage UGC, particularly visual content, to promote adventure activities.

2.2.3 Cultural richness

The cultural richness of Nepal is a significant contributor to the country's tourism industry, and it attracts tourists from all over the world. The authentic cultural experiences depicted in UGC can positively influence tourists' perceptions of destination image. Not only can UGC promote cultural richness, but it can also increase the visibility of cultural events and festivals, as noted by (Xiao et al., 2020). This can attract more tourists interested in cultural experiences. Besides, written UGC, such as travel blogs and online reviews, can also play a role in influencing tourists' decision-making processes, especially when it contains cultural information and recommendations (Jarratt, Sharpley, & White, 2017).

Overall, UGC related to cultural experiences can be an effective tool in promoting Nepal's cultural heritage and attracting tourists interested in cultural tourism.

2.2.4 Friendliness of people

User-generated content (UGC) can be beneficial in promoting Nepal's friendly culture and attracting more visitors interested in experiencing this aspect of the country. As per Kim and Kim (2019), UGC can foster a sense of social presence and connectedness, which can have

a positive impact on tourists' attitudes and behaviors towards a destination. When tourists share their encounters with friendly and welcoming Nepalese locals, it can influence others to visit and experience it themselves. Moreover, Adnan, Subhani, and Rashid (2018) found that positive online reviews and comments about the friendliness of Nepalese people can enhance the perceived image of Nepal and influence tourists' decision-making process.

Therefore, it is recommended that businesses and tourism authorities in Nepal encourage tourists to share their experiences with friendly locals on social media and utilize UGC to showcase the country's hospitable culture.

2.2.5 Destination choices of tourists

Several studies have explored the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on tourists' destination choices, which includes recommendations and reviews from other travelers. UGC has been found to have a positive influence on tourists' perceived quality, value, and satisfaction with a destination, which in turn, increases the likelihood of them selecting that destination (Xiang, Du, Ma, & Fan, 2017). Additionally, UGC can generate a sense of social presence and connectedness, thereby impacting tourists' attitudes and decision-making process (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

In this regard, UGC can significantly impact tourists' destination choices by providing information, enhancing their perceived quality and value of a destination, and creating a sense of social presence and connectedness.

2.2.6 Itinerary planning

Previous research has investigated how user-generated content (UGC) affects the planning of tourist itineraries, which involves acquiring information about different tourist destinations, attractions, and activities. Studies have found that UGC is a crucial source of information for tourists, as it assists them in making informed decisions about their itinerary (Bieger & Wittmer, 2006). UGC can offer first-hand details about the quality of various tourist attractions, accommodations, and services, as well as provide insights into local culture and customs (Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016).

Furthermore, UGC has a significant impact on tourists' itinerary planning by influencing their choice of destinations and their preferences for specific tourist attractions and activities

(Xiang, Du, Ma, & Fan, 2017). Tourists may also use UGC to validate their itinerary plans or seek recommendations from other travellers (Kim & Lee, 2019).

To sum up, UGC plays a vital role in the itinerary planning of tourists by offering them valuable information about various tourist destinations, attractions, and activities.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Perceived source credibility and Perceived Trust towards UGC

Consumers trust websites with reviews and Blogs than professional guides and travel agencies as they are perceived as more credible source than traditional marketing (Akehurst, 2009). Similar to opinion of Akehurst (2009), Burgess et al. (2009) suggest that User-generated content (UGC) is highly valued by consumers as it is based on real experiences shared by real people, making it more credible than potentially biased content from marketers. While there may be fake content posted by those with a vested interest, UGC is generally considered to be more relevant and authentic source. However, it is always important to exercise caution and verify the authenticity of UGC, as not all content may be genuine or unbiased. It is recommended to consult multiple sources and do additional research before making important purchasing decisions based on UGC.

Manap and Adzharudin (2013) have similar opinion regarding source credibility which suggests that when it comes to travel information, user-generated content (UGC) in social media channels is often viewed as an additional source of information rather than a primary one. While UGC can provide valuable insights and personal experiences, it may not be considered as credible as other sources of information such as professional travel guides or official tourism websites. Similar opinion to Manap and Adzharudin (2013), a study by Filieri et al. (2015) suggest that consumer trust towards consumer-generated media (CGM) is influenced by website quality, information quality, and customer satisfaction. However, source credibility and user experience are not found to have a significant impact on consumer trust towards CGM.

In this regard, it is important for companies and organizations to focus on providing high-quality information and ensuring a positive customer experience when using CGM to promote their products or services. This can help to establish trust with consumers and improve their overall perception of the brand.

2.3.2 Information quality and Perceived Trust towards UGC

Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders (2010) suggest that the quality of information present in user-generated content (UGC) is a significant factor in determining the level of trust that users place in such content. They found that UGC with higher information quality was more likely to be trusted by users, whereas UGC with lower information quality was less likely to be trusted.

Similar to the findings by Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders (2010), a study by Lin and Lu (2011) shows that the trust users place in user-generated content (UGC) is significantly influenced by its perceived credibility which was determined by factors such as the reputation of the author and the accuracy of the information presented in the content.

Likewise, Information quality has been found to influence consumer trust towards consumer-generated media (CGM). The quality of information provided in the CGM can greatly impact how credible and trustworthy it is perceived to be by consumers. Consumers are more likely to trust CGM that contains accurate, relevant, and comprehensive information that helps them make informed decisions (Filieri et al., 2015).

In this regard, the information quality of UGC can have a significant impact on users' trust towards it. Therefore, it is important for online platforms to ensure that they have measures in place to promote high-quality UGC and to help users distinguish between high-quality and low-quality content.

2.3.3 User Satisfaction with previous experiences and Perceived Trust towards UGC

The study by Huang and Chen (2013) revealed that consumers who had positive experiences with UGC related to a particular destination were more likely to trust other UGC associated with that destination. This suggests that customer satisfaction from previous experiences can play a significant role in shaping consumer trust towards UGC.

Similar to the findings by Huang and Chen (2013), a study by Cheung, Lee, and Rabjohn (2008) suggest that the perceived credibility of user-generated content (UGC) related to a tourism destination can be influenced by customer satisfaction. Their study found that satisfied customers were more likely to perceive UGC as credible, which led to higher levels of trust towards that content.

Therefore, these studies suggest that customer satisfaction from previous experiences can play a significant role in shaping consumer trust towards UGC, as consumers may rely on their own positive experiences to form trust in UGC associated with that destination.

2.3.4 Perceived Source Credibility and Information Quality of User-Generated Contents

The relationship between perceived source credibility and information quality of user-generated content (UGC) has been studied by several researchers. Studies have found positive correlation between perceived source credibility and UGC information quality.

According to Filieri et al. (2015), there is a positive relationship between perceived source credibility and information quality of UGC. The study showed that the perceived credibility of the source of UGC affects users' perception of the quality of information provided, which in turn impacts their trust in the UGC. In other words, users are more likely to trust UGC if they perceive the source to be credible and the information to be of high quality.

Similarly, Dedeoğlu (2019) found a positive association between perceived source credibility and the perceived usefulness and enjoyment of UGC in social media. Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that perceived source credibility is an important factor that affects how users evaluate UGC.

In this regard, the relationship between perceived source credibility and information quality of UGC is complex and can be influenced by various factors.

2.3.5 Perceived Source Credibility and Users Satisfaction with previous experiences

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between perceived source credibility and user satisfaction with previous experiences of user-generated content (UGC). In a study by Filieri et al. (2015), it was found that perceived source credibility has a positive impact on users' satisfaction with TripAdvisor, a popular online travel community that heavily relies on UGC. The authors contended that users' trust in TripAdvisor is influenced by their perception of the credibility of the UGC available on the platform, which subsequently affects their satisfaction with the platform. Similarly, Muda and Hamzah (2021) found that while perceived source credibility has indirect positive impact on user satisfaction with UGC and purchase intention.

Overall, the link between perceived source credibility and user satisfaction with previous UGC experiences is intricate and can be influenced by a variety of factors. Nevertheless, perceived source credibility is considered an essential factor that influences user satisfaction with UGC.

2.3.6 Information Quality and User satisfaction with previous Experiences

The relationship between information quality and user satisfaction with previous experiences of user-generated content (UGC) has been investigated in several studies. According to Filieri et al. (2015), information quality has a positive relationship with users' satisfaction with TripAdvisor. The study suggested that users' satisfaction with the platform is linked to their perception of the quality of information that is available on the platform, which is primarily sourced from UGC. Users' satisfaction with the platform is heavily dependent on the quality of information that they can access, and UGC plays a significant role in this regard.

Conversely, Xie et al. (2019) found that while information quality has a positive effect on users' satisfaction with UGC, this effect is moderated by other factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use.

The relationship between information quality and user satisfaction with previous experiences of UGC is complex and can be influenced by various factors. Nevertheless, information quality is considered an important factor that affects users' satisfaction with UGC.

2.3.7 Perceived Trust towards UGC and Decision-Making Process of Foreign Tourists

A study by Akehurst, (2008) suggest that consumers trust reviews and blogs because they are seen as more credible and trustworthy than traditional marketing materials. They allow consumers to make more informed decisions about their travel plans, and they provide a more authentic and unbiased view of the experiences of other travelers.

However, a study by Cox et al., (2009) suggest that State tourism websites are regarded as more reliable sources of information than user-generated content (UGC) sites. UGC users tend to place greater value on independent reviews from third-party websites and blogs, rather than on social media platforms. Therefore, it is important for travel businesses to maintain a positive reputation on non-UGC sites, and to engage with users on third-party

websites and blogs to establish trust and credibility in the eyes of potential customers (Cox et al., 2009).

Down the line, Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013) have a differing opinion which states that the majority of internet users do not rely on consumer-generated media (CGM) for planning their travels. However, those who are aware of the factors that affect the credibility of CGM may be willing to use it if they perceive it to be helpful, effortless, and enjoyable.

Filieri et al., (2015) explains the factor affecting the trust towards UGC stating that the trustworthiness of consumer-generated media (CGM) is influenced by the quality of the website, the information provided, and the level of customer satisfaction. When a CGM website is perceived as trustworthy, it can influence travel consumers to follow the recommendations of other users, and this can lead to positive word-of-mouth marketing.

However, Kitsios et al., (2022) have similar opinion as Cox et al., (2009) which states that social media platforms and tourism websites are generally considered to be more secure and trustworthy by users in the tourism and hospitality industry.

In this regard, travel businesses must make CGM platforms more user-friendly, informative, and engaging, to encourage travelers to use them in their planning process. It is essential for travel businesses to focus on enhancing the quality of their CGM websites, ensuring the information provided is accurate and relevant, and addressing customer feedback to enhance their overall satisfaction.

2.3.8 Attitude toward UGC and Decision-Making Process of Foreign Tourists

According to study conducted by Cox et al. (2009), user-generated content (UGC) users give more weight to independent traveller reviews found on third-party websites and blogs compared to those found on social networking sites. This implies that UGC users consider reviews from independent sources more valuable than those found on social networking sites when making decisions related to travel.

However, Ayeh et al. (2013) suggests that most internet users do not utilize consumer-generated media (CGM) for travel planning. However, individuals who are aware of the factors that determine the effectiveness of CGM may be more inclined to use it if they believe it to be useful, convenient, and enjoyable. This indicates that people who recognize the value

of CGM for travel planning may be more likely to use it if they perceive it as easy and enjoyable.

User-Generated Contents influences travellers` intention to use UGC while making travel plans based on their attitude towards UGC (Mendes Filho et al., 2012). Similarly, UGC adoption, or the extent to which users engage with and contribute to user-generated content (UGC) platforms, is influenced by a range of factors related to user characteristics. One such factor is attitude, which encompasses a person's beliefs, values, and overall disposition towards UGC (Ukpabi & Karjaluo, 2018).

Han, Lee, and Lee (2019) came with same conclusion that the way foreign tourists have attitude towards user-generated content (UGC) can greatly influence their decision when choosing a travel destination. UGC posted on social media and travel review websites can have a major impact on how tourists view a destination's attractions, culture, and overall appeal. Studies have shown that tourists with positive attitudes towards UGC are more likely to be swayed by travel-related content on these platforms and consider the destination in question for their travels.

In this regard, Attitudes towards user-generated content (UGC) can play a significant role in the decision-making process of foreign tourists when choosing a travel destination. Research has found that UGC can greatly influence travellers` perceptions of a destination, particularly in terms of its attractions, culture, and overall appeal.

2.3.9 Perceived Trust and Attitude towards UGC

Several studies have explored the relationship between perceived trust and attitude towards user-generated content (UGC), which are important factors that shape users' behavior towards UGC. Cheung et al. (2014) found that perceived trust has a positive effect on users' attitude towards UGC in online travel communities.

Hence, the relationship between perceived trust and attitude towards UGC is positive and can be influenced by various factors and perceived trust is still considered a crucial factor that affects users' attitude towards UGC.

Table 1*Summary of Literature Review*

Authors	Variables	Findings
Akehurst (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility • Trustworthiness of UGC 	Consumers trust websites with reviews and Blogs than professional guides and travel agencies as they are perceived as more credible and trustworthy than traditional marketing.
Burgess et al. (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of the UGC. • Source credibility of the UGC. • Nature of Recommendations in online environment 	UGC are real experiences by real people. So, they are considered relevant and trustworthy as some fake content may be posted someone with vested interest.
Cox et al. (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in UGC versus other sources of travel information, • Importance of various types of UGC • Attitude towards UGC. • Stages of Trip planning process when UGC are used. 	State tourism websites and airlines sites are considered more trustworthy than UGC. Independent traveller reviews in third party websites and blogs are given more importance by UGC users than social networking sites.
Ye et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratings on online user-generated reviews • Hotel online bookings or business performance 	Traveller reviews plays important role in increment of online hotel bookings. Room rate has a negative impact on the average number of online bookings and hotels in larger cities receive more online bookings.

Ayeh et al. (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived Ease of use • Perceived Usefulness • Perceived enjoyment • Attitude • Perceived trustworthiness • Perceived similarity 	Majority of internet users do not use CGM for travel planning while individuals who know about relevant factors determining CGM may use it if they realise doing so is useful, easy and Fun.
Manap and Adzharudin, (2013)	Authenticity and Credibility of User-Generated Contents	UGC in social media channels are not considered as credible and trustworthy source of travel information but is taken as additional source as a part of information search process.
Alcázar et al. (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive dimension of image • Affective dimension of image • Behavioural intentions 	UGC have significant impact on the cognitive dimension of image and finally on future behaviour of tourists.
Simms (2022)	Trip Characteristics of online user-generated contents	Trip characteristics played key role when it comes to travellers' engagement with user-generated content for travel planning where majority turned to UGC when visiting the destination for the first time.

Nastase and Felea (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel planning process • Social media websites • UGC websites • Online and offline information sources. 	<p>Tourists find User generated contents advantageous mainly travellers reviews and appreciate the detail of information provided by travel service providers. UGC websites are taken as an additional source of information rather than only source of information.</p>
Filho et al. (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude toward using UGC • Normative norm toward using UGC • Perceived Behavioural control toward using UGC • Intention to use UGC when making travel planning 	<p>User-Generated Contents influences travellers` intention to use UGC while making travel plans based on Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)</p>
Amaral et al. (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of UGC posted • Expertise level of expert reviewers • Tourist choice of tourism service providers 	<p>UGC helps in promotion of restaurant and reduces uncertainty in travellers` decision to choose a restaurant during a trip no matter what the geography and the location is</p>

Cox et al. (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness and Concerns of UGC sites • Stages of trip planning process when UGC sites are used • Trust in UGC versus other sources of travel information • Importance of types of UGC • Attitude toward UGC 	Information on UGC sites can cause travellers to alter their existing travel plans but UGC are not considered as credible and trustworthy as existing sources such as state tourism websites.
Lu and Stepchenkova (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service quality • Destination image and reputation • Experiences and behaviour • Persuasive power of E-WOM • Tourist Mobility Patterns 	UGC and content analysis are the leading data type and research method employed, respectively for computational researchers that specialize in tourism and hospitality.
Bakhtishodovich et al. (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media and crowdsourcing contexts • Social media and crowdsourcing technologies • Tourist satisfaction • Destination branding 	Social media and crowdsourcing both positively impacts the tourism services, guest interaction and helps in branding of tourism destinations.

Fileri et al. (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived website trust • Perceived source credibility • Information quality • Website quality • Customer satisfaction • User experience with CGM and proficiency • Recommendation option and word of mouth. • User Satisfaction with previous experiences 	<p>Website quality, information quality and customer satisfaction influence consumer trust towards CGM but source credibility and user experience do not. Trust towards a CGM website influences travel consumers to follow other users' recommendations and fosters positive word of mouth.</p>
Marchiori and Cantoni (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior experience with the destination • Baseline image for specific destination topic dimensions • Exposure to online contents • Confirmation/disconfirmation of prior beliefs. 	<p>Having visited a destination does reduce the likelihood of changing the opinions after being exposed to online social media content. Younger and less well-educated people, and those who have not visited a given destination, are more likely to change their opinion about it based on a brief exposure to UGC.</p>
Zhou et al. (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel customer reviews • Photo information Travel • Cost between destination 	<p>Most of the travellers rely on a large number of ratings and reviews and consult variety of internet-based sources prior to making a travel purchase.</p>

Bhusal (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist decision making process • Planning phase • During the travel experience • After the experience • Destination image and tourist behaviour 	<p>Interaction with tourist on social media shows that peoples` opinion, thought and experiences align with tourists` perception toward Nepal as volunteer tourism destination. Tourists` opinion on online community plays important role influencing other tourist in decision making process.</p>
Gurung and Goswami (2017).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination image • Different formats of UGCs • Perception regarding different scopes • Different platforms used for UGC 	<p>Local`s friendliness and hospitality, Restaurant and café, Cleanliness and hygiene, Natural beauty, Cultural/historic attractions have built positive image of Sikkim Whereas Nightlife entertainment and road condition have scored negative image about the Sikkim.</p>
Ukpabi and Karjaluoto (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source characteristics • User Characteristics • Content characteristics • Adoption: Intention to use • Response: Ease of use, usefulness and attitude 	<p>UGC adoption is determined by attributes relating to the user, the source, the content, and response variables. Trust predicted attitude more than the other determinants</p>

2.4 Research Gap

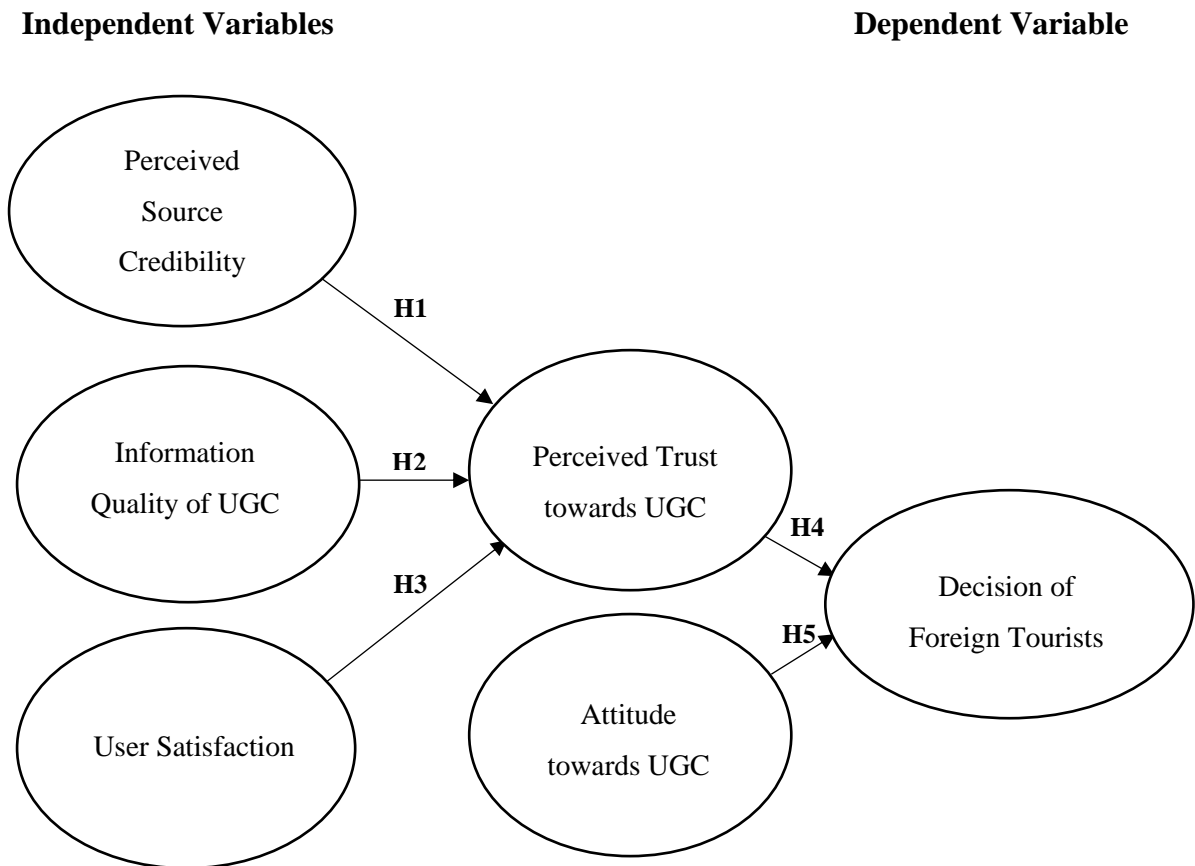
As per the previous research on User-Generated Contents, it is not clear whether UGC plays important role in the foreign tourists` decision to visit a certain destination (Akehurst, 2009; Cox et al., 2009; Ayeh et al. 2013; Manap and Adzharudin, 2013). For instance, Cox et al. (2009) studied the role of User- Generated Contents in tourists` travel planning behaviour and their research concluded that non-UGC sites such as state tourism websites are considered more trustworthy than UGC sites. While, Ayeh et al. (2013) conducted research on predicting the intention to use consumer-generated media for travel planning which concluded that individuals who know about relevant factors determining CGM may use it if they realise doing so is useful, easy and Fun. As per the limitations of the previous studies, only 3 studies have investigated the impact of User-Generated Contents on travel planning decision and are almost a decade old (Cox et al., 2009; Ayeh et al. 2013; Nastase & Felea, 2014). It can be also seen that most of the researchers have considered only UGC sites such as Trip advisor for study (Akehurst, 2009; Cox et al., 2009; Ayeh et al. 2013; Manap & Adzharudin, 2013; Nastase & Felea, 2014). Hence, there remains a gap in the research to conduct research on the User-Generated contents and decision-making process of foreign tourists` in the context of Nepal. Poudel and Phuyal (2016) suggested that research is needed on the destination activities, each demographic characteristics of tourists and its influence on consumer behaviour of choosing the destination. Therefore, this study tries to fill the research gap by considering the limitations of the previous research and providing an accurate understanding into the specific impact of UGC on foreign tourists' decision to visit Nepal, which contributes to enhancing Nepal's tourism.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework shows the overall view and relation of the dependent variable and independent variables. In the study, here are five independent variables and one dependent variable. Similarly, one independent variable is the measure of other three variables and the relation between them is studied. The conceptual framework is derived by combining the variables of two past literatures, Cox et al. (2009) and Filieri et al. (2015). For the study, the conceptual framework is shown figure 3. In the figure 3, the proposed hypothesis 1 to 5 are shown and tested in this study.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework



Adapted from: Cox et al. (2009) and Filieri et al. (2015)

2.6 Operational Definitions of Variables

2.6.1 Perceived Trust

Perceived trust is a subjective and context-dependent construct that varies across individuals and situations. It reflects an individual's belief in the dependability, expertise, and ethical standards of a particular entity (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). It is a multi-dimensional construct that includes sub-constructs such as includes perceived source credibility, information quality and users' satisfaction with previous experiences (Filieri et al., 2015).

Furthermore, perceived trust is developed through items such as information offered are sincere and honest, UGC made in search of mutual benefit of both reviewer and customers and trustworthiness of UGC. The sub-constructs combine of items such as credibility and

reliability of source, usefulness, value, relevancy, completeness, satisfaction and experience from the UGC (Filiari et al., 2015). Items that can be used to measure user perceived trust towards UGC include Likert-scale questions such as “I think that the information offered by UGC was sincere and honest.” As a result, perceived trust is a dynamic construct that can change over time as individuals gather new information and revise their perceptions. (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; McKnight & Chervany, 2001). The measurement scale used is ordinal scale with seven-point Likert scale questions.

2.6.2 Perceived source credibility

Perceived source credibility pertains to an individual's personal assessment of how trustworthy and knowledgeable a source is in conveying factual and dependable information (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). It is a multi-dimensional concept that comprises of various measuring concepts such as credibility, experience from UGC, trustworthiness, and reliability of the UGC (Filiari et al., 2015). In addition, perceived source credibility can be influenced positively or negatively by these items. Items that can be used to measure perceived source credibility include Likert-scale questions such as “The UGC providers were credible, experienced, trustworthy and reliable.” The measurement scale used is ordinal scale with seven-point Likert scale questions.

The scope of perceived source credibility of UGC can vary depending on the type of content and the context in which it is being evaluated. It can range from individual social media posts to entire websites or online platforms (Hovland & Weiss, 1951).

2.6.3 Information Quality

Information quality is defined as the level to which information is suitable, relevant, and understandable for a particular task or purpose, and is accurate, complete, and timely (Ballou et al., 1998; Wang and Strong, 1996). The concept includes measuring concepts such as timeliness, relevancy and completeness to the needs, usefulness and value addition to the tourists from use of UGC (Filiari et al., 2015). Items that can be used to measure information quality include Likert-scale questions such as “The information in UGC was timely, relevant and complete for my needs.” The measurement scale used is ordinal scale with seven-point Likert scale questions.

Information quality plays a vital role in decision-making and problem-solving. It impacts how individuals perceive and utilize information, which in turn influences their outcomes and behaviours (Wang & Strong, 1996). Therefore, ensuring information quality is critical for organizations, individuals, and information providers.

2.6.4 User Satisfaction with previous experiences

User satisfaction can be defined as "the overall positive feeling and evaluation of a user towards their previous experiences with a product, service, or website" (Martínez-Navalón et al., 2021). Measuring concepts related to user satisfaction includes satisfaction with the information received from the UGC and previous experiences, satisfaction in terms of searching and using UGC (Fileri et al., 2015). Items that can be used to measure user satisfaction include Likert-scale questions such as "I am satisfied with my previous experiences from UGC." The measurement scale used is ordinal scale with seven-point Likert scale questions. The scope of user satisfaction can vary depending on the context of the UGC being evaluated. For example, user satisfaction with previous experiences from UGC may focus on ease of use, usefulness, quality and easy searching.

2.6.5 Attitude

Attitude can be defined operationally as a predisposition that is learned and consistent, and which prompts individuals to react positively or negatively towards an object or situation (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It involves a combination of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements that influence how an individual evaluates, feels about, and responds to a specific stimulus or circumstance. Attitudes can be explicit or implicit, and may be conscious or subconscious. Taking notice of UGC when provided by independent travellers, Limited use of UGC, UGC by unknown people and ordinary travellers` view of destination are the measuring concepts related to attitude towards UGC (Cox et al., 2009). The measurement scale used is ordinal scale with seven-point Likert scale questions. Items that can be used to measure attitude include Likert-scale questions such as "I only take notice of UGC when it is provided by independent travellers".

2.6.6 Decision-Making

The process of decision making can be operationally defined as the cognitive activity of choosing one option from several alternatives based on certain criteria or goals (Simon,

1957). This involves recognizing the issue or opportunity, gathering and assessing relevant information, exploring available choices, and selecting the optimal course of action. Decision making can be either logical or intuitive, structured or unstructured, and can be impacted by various factors such as emotions, prejudices, and cognitive shortcuts.

In terms of UGC, measuring concepts related to user satisfaction includes Easiness and effectiveness in decision-making, motivation in decision making and contribution to the knowledge about the destination (Filieri et al., 2015). The measurement scale used is ordinal scale with seven-point Likert scale questions. Items that can be used to measure user satisfaction include Likert-scale questions such as “UGC made it easier for me to make decision to visit Nepal.” In this way Likert questions were made for each item to analyse the decision-making process of tourists.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter is mostly about analyzing the data and explaining what the study's findings mean in order to reach the goal of the study. It's mostly a study of research design, population, and sample size, tools used to collect data, sources and methods of data collection, and describes the methods adopted for analyzing data.

3.1 Research Design

The study is based on descriptive research design that looks at the impact of Perceived trust towards UGC and Attitude towards UGC on decision making process of foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal. Similarly, the impact of perceived source credibility, information quality and user experience with previous experience on Perceived trust towards is also investigated through this research design. To explore the foreign tourists` view on UGC in relation to their decision-making process, a quantitative study was conducted to gather the information of the foreign tourists. The approach followed is similar to those employed in other contexts by Lin (2012), Wu, Lin and Lin (2021), Ryu et al. (2009), Venkatesh et al. (2009) and Aye et al. (2013) in predicting behavioural intention.

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The population of the study constitutes of all the foreign tourists visiting Nepal especially based in Kathmandu valley (excluding Indian nationals). Indian nationals are excluded in this study because Poudel and Phuyal (2016) argue that travel behavior of Indian tourists is different than that of other foreign tourist and there is no accurate data on their entry to Nepal due to the open border and cultural similarities between Nepal and India. Most of the tourist visit Kathmandu valley first as it is the only gateway for foreign nationals to visit Nepal via air and one of the best tourism destinations as well. So, Kathmandu valley is taken as base for collecting data.

To investigate the influence of perceived trust towards UGC on travel decision making, Filieri et al. (2015) collected 401 samples. To determine the sample size for the study, the method of Cohen (1992) was followed, which calculates sample size on the basis of Power of Analysis. To obtain the statistical power of 80%, with five independent variables, and to detect minimum R² value of 0.10 with 5% level of significance, the minimum sample size

of 150 is required (Hair et al., 2014, pp. 21–22). So, the sample size of 266 foreign tourists is selected for this study. The samples are selected at purpose, and their categorization is based on their visit to Nepal mainly Kathmandu valley. The Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) has released data stating that 614,148 tourists visited Nepal in 2022 exclusively through air travel (Shrestha, 2023). According to the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), 128,329 visitors arrived by air in the first two months of 2023, indicating a warm reception to the country's tourism industry (Press Trust of India & Business Standard, 2023).

3.3 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in the study is Purposive sampling method, where individuals are selected based on their specific characteristics or knowledge relevant to the research question. Various criteria such as age, gender, occupation, educational level, or other relevant factors can be used to select participants in this sampling method. In addition, purposive sampling may also involve selecting individuals with experience in a particular event such as foreign tourists who have visited a destination before. While purposive sampling allows researchers to obtain valuable information, it may not be representative of the larger population.

3.4 Sources of Data and Data Collection

Primary Source of Data collection was applied in the study, where data was collected with the help of a self-administered questionnaire. The main sources of data for the study were foreign tourists excluding Indian Nationals who have recently visited Nepal or are currently visiting Nepal. Data were also collected from foreign nationals who had visited Nepal before and living in their own country or studying in another country. The questionnaire was designed using ‘Google Forms’, and was sent to respondent through physical printed form and instant messaging platforms. More than eighty percent of the data is gathered using the paper questionnaire, while the remaining is taken via the online form.

3.5 Instrumentation

The questionnaire was divided into two major sections. The first section is related to the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This includes the gender of the respondents, their age and annual income range. This section also assessed the nationality of the respondents.

The second section of the questionnaire was related to various dimensions of User-Generated Contents (UGC) namely Perceived Trust toward UGC, Information Quality, Perceived source Credibility, User satisfaction with previous experiences and Attitude toward UGC. The statements were presented in a seven-point Likert scale, one being the highest degree of agreement, seven being the highest degree of disagreement and four being the neutral response. The survey instrument used in the study was developed to gather data for hypothesis testing, drawing upon established measures of concepts from both the information systems and broader marketing literature (Davis, 1989; Kleijnen et al., 2009; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Cox et al., 2009; Ayeh et al., 2013; Filieri et al., 2015). The measures used in the survey were modified to make it applicable specific context of the study. The measures were however adapted to make them applicable to the study's context. The measurement scale for Perceived Trust, Information quality, User satisfaction with previous experiences, perceived source credibility and Decision making was adapted from Filieri et al. (2015). In the same way, the scale to measure Attitude toward UGC and Perceived trust as well was adapted from Cox et al. (2009).

3.6 Data Management and Analysis Tools

The survey data was obtained in a downloadable spreadsheet format from the survey software and subsequently transformed into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for further analysis (Cox et al., 2009). In the case of the finding's primary purpose, regression and correlation are employed to investigate the strength of the variables and their link. Descriptive statistics, Demographics data analysis, Correlation analysis, Normality test, reliability test and regression were run in data analysis tool to check the redundancy, linkage, relationship and in sum bringing the output for judgement. For reducing the redundancy of the data, bootstrapping function was used to calculate correlation and regression. In addition, several tables, pie charts, and histograms have been employed to enhance the presentation of the results.

3.6.1 Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha is a widely used statistical measure to evaluate the reliability of a group of survey items in terms of their internal consistency. For the research investigation, a total of seven things are gathered. The Cronbach alpha additionally enables additional data analysis (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 2*Reliability test*

Cronbach Alpha	No of Items
0.960	24

Table 2 shows the overall alpha of 0.960. And the Table 3 shows the correlated items, total correlation and Cronbach alpha if items are deleted which shows the items if deleted are also more or equal to 0.800. The closer the coefficient is to 1.0, the greater is the internal consistency of the items (variables) in the scale. Hence, items are sufficiently consistent to indicate the measure is reliable. It also indicates that questions are redundant. In other words, foreign tourists with high perceived trust and positive attitude towards UGC tend to score highly on all items including decision making process to visit Nepal.

Table 3*Reliability test If Item Deleted and Correlate Items*

Reliability test	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Perceived Source Credibility	0.838	0.811
Information quality	0.863	0.804
User Satisfaction with previous experiences	0.862	0.823
Perceived Trust towards UGC	0.799	0.828
Attitude Toward UGC	0.199	0.937
Decision Making	0.706	0.838

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter on data analysis discusses the results of a study on the impact of Perceived trust and Attitude towards UGC on Decision making process of foreign tourists who have recently visited Nepal. It also discusses the result of study on impact of Perceived source credibility, Information quality and user satisfaction with previous experiences on perceived trust towards UGC. IBM SPSS 26 was utilized to analyze the data and appropriate measurement models and hypotheses were applied to examine descriptive and reliability statistics. However, further details on the specific data analysis techniques employed in the study, as well as the findings, are needed to fully understand the methodology and results of the research.

4.1 Analysis of Demographics factors

The table 4 elaborates the demographic profile of the respondents where respondents are categories in different demographic cluster which includes the gender, age, income and nationality. There is total 266 respondent and out of 266 respondents, 70.7 % of the respondents are male and remaining 29.3 % respondent are female. The data shows the majority of the respondents are the male.

While table 4 exhibits that the majority of the respondents are from 31 to 45 age groups which is 49.6% of the total respondents. Out of total, 38% respondents are belonging from the age group of 16 to 30 years. At the same time the least age group of the respondents is above 60 years. The respondents from 46 to 60 years are 8.3% and below 15 age group occupy the remaining 2.6%.

Moving towards the respondent's income out of the total 266 respondents, 13.2% respondents have the income of less than \$20,000. Furthermore 29.3% of the respondents have the income range between \$20,000 to \$39,000. While only 1.1% of the respondents have income more than \$100,000. Majority of respondents (44.4%) have income between \$40,000 to \$59,000 per annum. While, 10.9% have income of \$60,000-\$79,000.

Table 4 exhibits that the out of the total of 266 respondents, 20.7% respondents are from United States while 16.2% are from China followed by South Korea (13.6%) and United

Kingdom (11.3%). Apart from that, majority of respondents are from Germany (7.5%), Thailand (6%) and Sri Lanka (4.5%).

Table 4

Analysis of Demographic Factors

Particulars		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	188	70.7
	Female	78	29.3
Age	Below 15 years	7	2.6
	16-30 years	101	38.0
	31-45 years	132	49.6
	46-60 years	22	8.3
	Above 60 years	4	1.5
Income	Less than \$20,000	35	13.2
	\$20,000-\$39,000	78	29.3
	\$40,000-\$59,000	118	44.4
	\$60,000-\$79,000	29	10.9
	\$80,000-\$99,000	3	1.1
	More than \$100,000	3	1.1
Nationality	China	43	16.2
	United States	55	20.7
	United Kingdom	30	11.3
	Thailand	16	6.0
	Sri-Lanka	12	4.5
	South Korea	36	13.5
	Australia	5	1.9
	Taiwan	6	2.3
	Denmark	5	1.9
	France	5	1.9
	South Africa	5	1.9
	Bangladesh	4	1.5
	Spain	4	1.5
	Japan	3	1.1
	Philippines	3	1.1
	Vietnam	3	1.1
	Portugal	3	1.1
	Malaysia	3	1.1
	Myanmar	2	0.8
	Maldives	2	0.8
Total		266	100.0

Out of the total respondents least number of respondents are from Maldives and Myanmar (0.8%). Respondents from Australia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, Spain, Bangladesh, Taiwan, South Africa, Portugal, Philippines and Denmark also contribute least to the total number of respondents.

Important insights from the analysis of demographics factors of respondents are that majority of the tourists visit Nepal from United States, China and South Korea in recent years and they have middle income range from \$40,000 to \$59,000 per annum. Similarly, mostly youngsters and adults between age of 16 to 45 years mostly visit Nepal as they have good source of income as well as enthusiasm of exploring new adventures and ideas through tourism. It can be implied that majority of tourists visiting Nepal are male which shows their dominancy in the tourism sector.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Variables

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Source Credibility

Perceived Source Credibility	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were credible	PSC1	266	3.37	1.446
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were experienced	PSC2	266	3.29	1.633
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were trustworthy	PSC3	266	3.16	1.720
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were reliable	PSC4	266	3.08	1.768
Perceived Source Credibility	PSC	266	3.22	1.641

Table 5 exhibits the agreeableness to the statement. The Perceived Source Credibility consist the four items to analyze the source credibility. The overall mean of the Perceived Source Credibility items is 3.22 which is greater than 3.00 and it indicates that respondents are agreeableness towards the statement. Here, PSC4 got the least mean value of 3.08 and PSC1 has highest mean value indicating that the UGC reviewers were credible. The overall mean of the perceived source credibility is 1.641 shows that the items were not much spread far away from mean. Hence, it can be implied that the statements above are supported and

agreeableness of the respondents were rigid and accurate. Hence, respondents are satisfied with the source credibility of the UGC.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Information Quality

Information Quality	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was timely	IQ1	266	3.58	1.304
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was relevant to my needs	IQ2	266	3.36	1.539
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was complete for my needs	IQ3	266	3.35	1.671
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was valuable	IQ4	266	3.02	1.625
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was useful	IQ5	266	3.03	1.608
Information Quality	IQ	266	3.26	1.549

Table 6 exhibits the descriptive statistics of information quality of UGC. Information quality has five items to analyze its agreeableness. The mean of the Information quality items 3.26 which shows that they agree to that statement. Here, IQ4 got the least mean value of 3.02 and IQ1 has highest mean value. The standard deviation of the respondents is ranging from 1.304 to 1.671 which inclined the supportive deviation over the statement and overall mean is 1.549. It implies that the agreement over the statements is not much spread out and are rigid and same from all respondents. Hence, respondents are satisfied with the information quality of the UGC.

Table 7 exhibits that the descriptive statement Users Satisfaction with Previous Experiences and agreeableness over the statement. Overall mean is 3.15 and all the items have mean equal to or higher than 3 indicating that they contribute towards agreeableness to statements. US1 got the highest mean of 3.29 and the statement US2 and US3 got the 3.17 and 3 mean respectively. The overall standard deviation is 1.549. The standard deviation supports the statements. In other words, the agreement over the statements is not much spread out and are rigid and same from all respondents.

It indicates that respondents are highly satisfied with the information they have received through UGC and are satisfied by the previous experiences.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Users Satisfaction with Previous Experiences

Users Satisfaction with Previous Experiences	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am satisfied with the information I have received from User-Generated Contents	US1	266	3.29	1.440
I am satisfied with my previous experiences from User-Generated Contents	US2	266	3.17	1.643
I have high level of satisfaction in terms of searching and using User-Generated Contents	US3	266	3.00	1.640
Users Satisfaction with Previous Experiences	US	266	3.15	1.574

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Trust towards UGC

Perceived Trust Toward UGC	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I think that the information offered by User-Generated contents (UGC) was sincere and honest	PT1	266	3.80	1.504
I think that the advice and recommendations given on User-Generated Contents (UGC) are made in search of mutual benefit of both reviewer and customers	PT2	266	3.50	1.796
The sources of User-Generated Contents (UGC) are trustworthy	PT3	266	3.26	1.819
Perceived Trust Toward UGC	PT	266	3.52	1.706

Table 8 shows the descriptiveness analysis of the Perceived Trust towards UGC including the variables mean and standard deviation. Among the items, the statement PT1 got the highest mean of 3.80 and the statement US2 and US3 got the 3.50 and 3.26 mean respectively. The overall mean of the perceived source credibility is 3.52 and is greater than 3 which indicates that respondents find the information offered by UGC sincere and honest, sources as trustworthy. The standard deviation of perceived trust towards UGC is 1.706. The standard deviation ranges from 1.50 to 1.819 shows that the observed data are not much spread away from the average mean. In other words, the respondents have provided same level of agreement which shows that they have high trust towards UGC.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Attitude toward UGC

Attitude Toward UGC	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I would only take notice of UGC when it is provided by independent travelers (with no involvement from travel operators)	ATU1	266	3.26	1.452
I think UGC has limited use for me when I plan my travel	ATU2	266	3.39	1.648
It is positive when a travel provider responds to traveler UGC	ATU3	266	3.13	1.540
Travel recommendation provided by unknown people are not useful	ATU4	266	3.14	1.841
The ordinary travelers` view of destination cannot be relied on	ATU5	266	3.06	1.966
Attitude towards UGC	ATU	266	3.19	1.689

Table 9 shows the mean and standard deviation obtained for each item of descriptive statistics. The overall mean of Attitude towards UGC is 3.19 which is greater than 3 indicating the agreeableness to each statement. The standard deviations are ranging from 1.452 to 1.966 and the overall standard deviation is 1.689. It shows that data are spread away from mean in case of ATU4 and ATU5. In other words, respondents have very low level of agreement on the usefulness of travel recommendation provided by unknown people and view of an ordinary traveller toward a destination. It can be interpreted that respondents find

limited use of UGC while planning the travel and they take notice of UGC when it is provided by independent travellers. Respondents agree that UGC should be credible, transparent and pure.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of Decision Making of Foreign Tourists to Visit Nepal

Decision Making	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
UGC made it easier for me to make decision to visit Nepal (Visit or Do not Visit)	DM1	266	3.31	1.375
UGC have enhanced my effectiveness in making decision to visit Nepal	DM2	266	3.12	1.496
UGC have motivated me to make decision to visit Nepal (Visit or Do not visit)	DM3	266	3.01	1.609
Information from UGC contributed to my knowledge about Nepal as a tourism destination	DM4	266	2.31	1.471
Decision Making	DM	266	2.93	1.487

Table 10 shows the decision making and its descriptive analysis. The overall mean of decision-making is 2.93. The dependent variable has interpreted with the four items and the lowest mean on the statement is 2.31. Besides that, all items showed the agreeableness to the statement provided to the respondents. Out of four items, three items have mean higher than 3.

The standard deviation of DM1 is lowest and with the least deviation the statement got the more agreeableness to the statement which is 3.31. The overall standard deviation of 1.487 shows that the respondents have provided same level of agreement which shows rigidity and accuracy of the agreement. UGC have encouraged tourists in decision making to visit Nepal. However, it did not contribute to knowledge about Nepal as tourism destination.

4.3 Distribution of Data

The normality test describes the distribution of the samples either normally disturbed or not. The normality test either collected or distributed in the bell shape or not. Here Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnova test is run to see the normality.

Table 11

Normality test

Particulars	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Perceived source credibility	0.270	266	0.000	0.835	266	0.000
Information Quality	0.277	266	0.000	0.833	266	0.000
User satisfaction with previous experiences	0.259	266	0.000	0.843	266	0.000
Perceived trust towards UGC	0.189	266	0.000	0.902	266	0.000
Attitude towards UGC	0.247	266	0.000	0.817	266	0.000
Decision making	0.224	266	0.000	0.867	266	0.000

The table 11 shows the normality test under the Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnova test. A Shapiro-Wilk test showed normality pf the data, $W(266) = 0.817$ to 0.902 , $p = 0.000$. Under the test, the significance of the all variable is less than 0.05 which confirmed that the data is not normally distributed. In other words, the respondent's data have not been generated from normally distributed population.

The figure 4 shows that the data of the respondents are not perfectly normally distributed. Although some of the items are over the bell shape of normal distribution and slightly skewed towards the left side. In other words, most people agree over the credible source of the UGC available to them.

Figure 4

Normality test of Perceived Source Credibility towards UGC

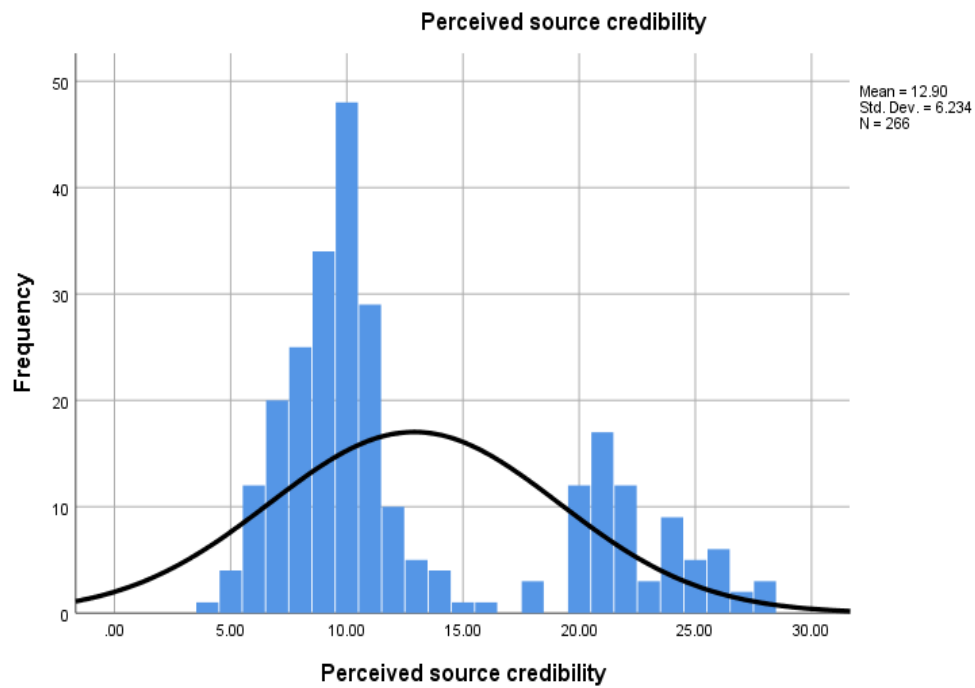
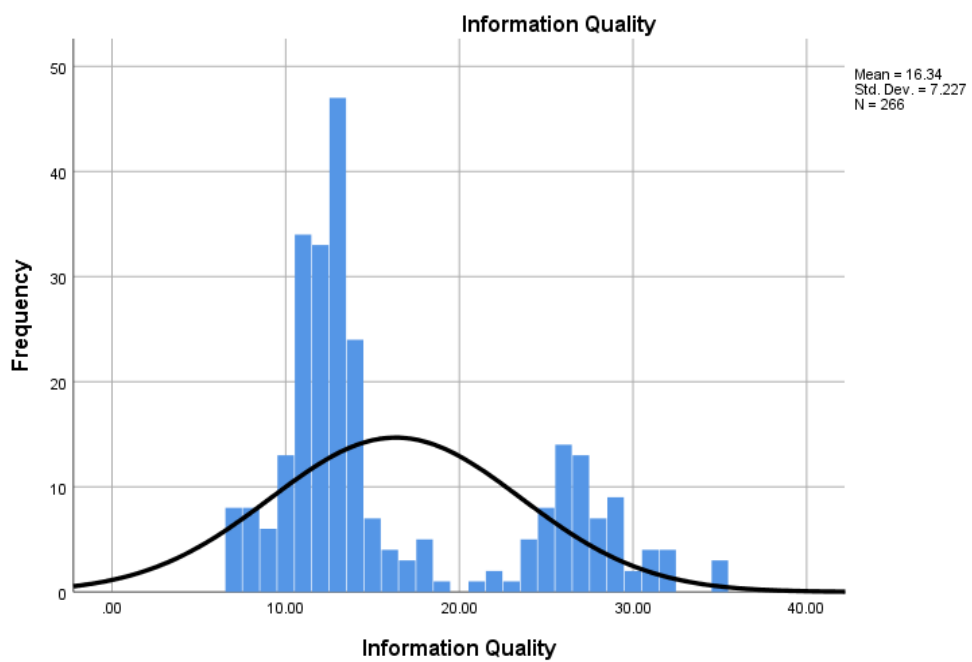


Figure 5

Normality test of Information Quality



The distribution figure 5 explains the data distribution of the respondents where the distribution is skewed left from the centre. Hence the data are left skewed. In other words, most people agree over the quality of information in the UGCs available to them.

Figure 6

Normality test of User Satisfaction with Previous Experiences

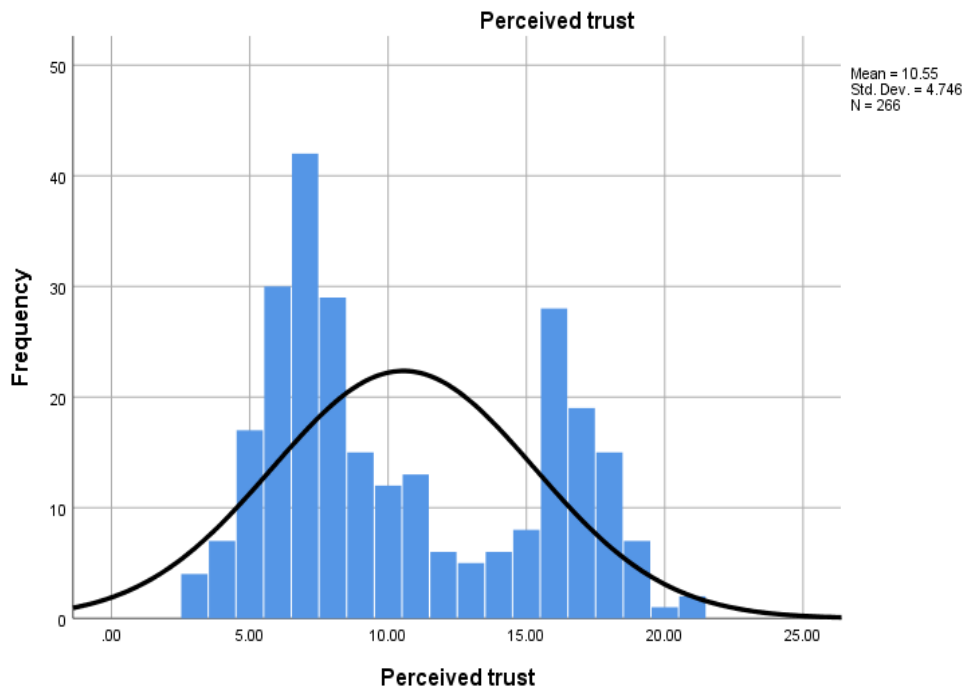


The distribution figure 6 shows the distribution of data on the User satisfaction with previous experiences. Figure shows that the distribution of the data is skewed towards the left. And the normality also shows the distribution are over the bell-shaped distribution. In other words, people tend to agree that they had satisfaction from the previous experiences of the UGC available to them.

The distribution figure 7 shows the distribution of data on the perceived trust. The figure shows that the distribution of the data is slightly skewed towards the left. And the normality also shows the distribution are over the bell-shaped distribution. In other words, people agree that they trust the UGCs available to them and find them to be useful.

Figure 7

Normality test of Perceived Trust towards UGC



The figure 8 shows that the data of the respondents are not normally distributed. Most of the items are over the bell shape of normal distribution and skewed towards the left side. In other words, tourists tend to trust such UGCs which have been provided by independent travellers.

Figure 8

Normality test of Data of Attitude towards UGC

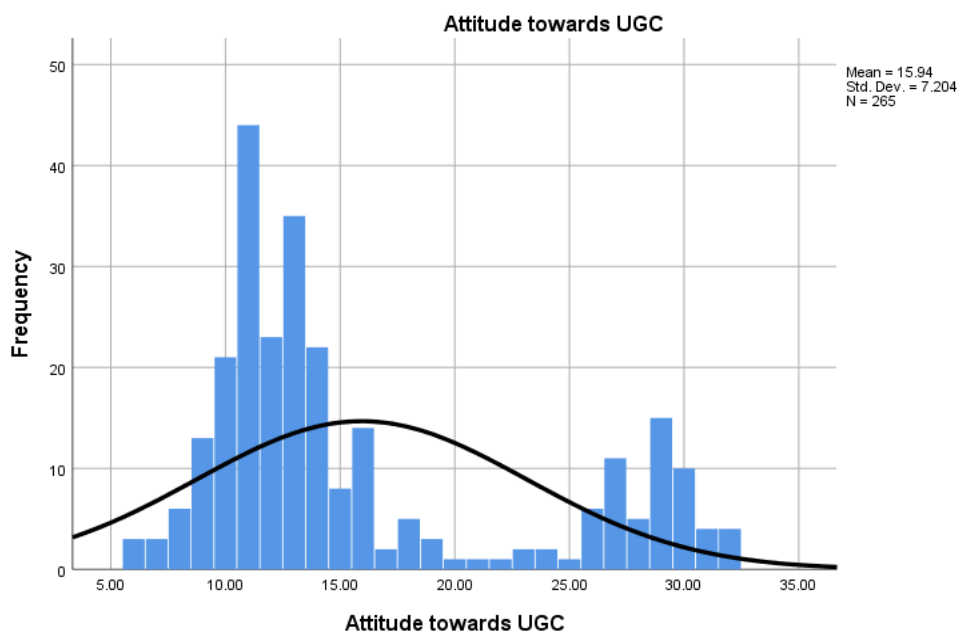
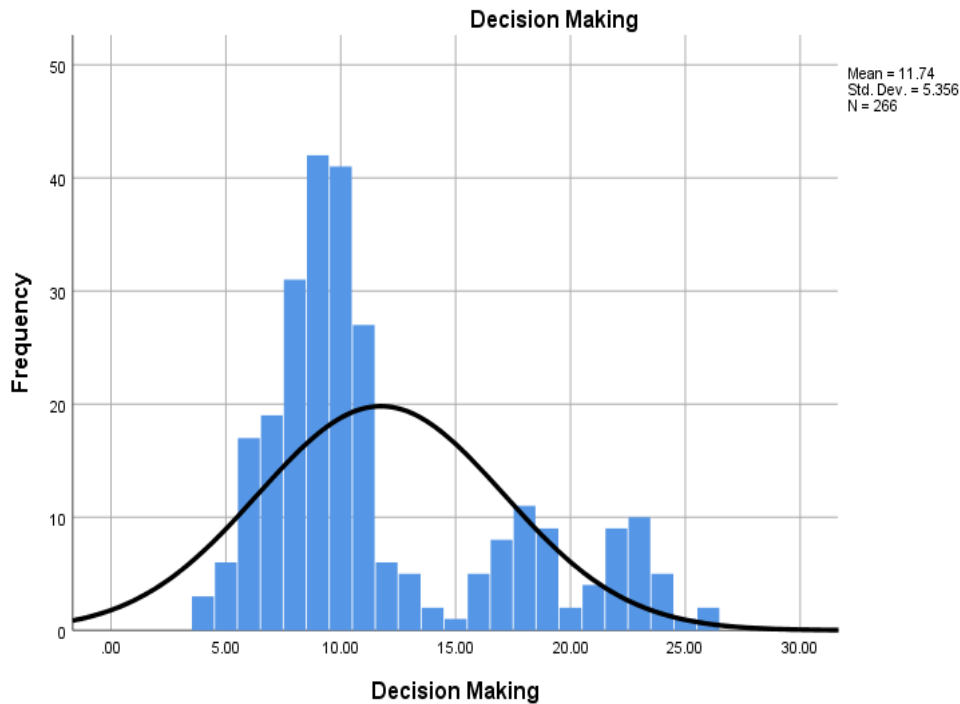


Figure 9

Normality test of Decision Making of foreign tourists



The distribution figure 9 explains the data distribution of the respondents where the distribution is slightly skewed left from the centre. Hence the data are left skewed. In other words, tourists are motivated by the UGC while making decision to visit Nepal.

4.4 Multi-Collinearity Among the Variables

One of the classical linear regression models (CLRMs) assumption is no multi-collinearity which means the no exact linear relationship among the regression variables. Variance inflation factor (VIF) test is run to test the relationship among the variables in the regression.

Table 12

VIF Test

Model	VIF
Perceived Source Credibility	6.571
Information Quality	7.479
User Satisfaction with previous experiences	8.021
Perceived trust	1.078
Attitude towards UGC	1.078

The table 12 shows the VIF value of the variables. The variables Perceived trust and Attitude have the VIF value less than 3.00 which means there is no multi-collinearity among the variables. While, perceived source credibility, Information Quality and User Satisfaction with previous experiences have VIF value higher than 3.00 indicates that there is high multi-collinearity among the variables. In other words, all the independent variables are highly correlated with each other indicating the redundancy of the questions.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation refers to the association or influence of one variable on another. It also indicates the strength of this association. A higher correlation indicates a stronger relationship and a more significant impact of one variable on the other. Correlation values range from +1 (a direct relationship) to -1 (an inverse relationship) and can also be zero (no relationship). A perfectly positive correlation means that an increase in one variable leads to a proportional increase in the other. A zero correlation implies that there is no relationship between the two variables. A correlation coefficient is considered significant if its p-value is less than or equal to 0.05.

Table 13

Correlation Matrix

Correlations	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Perceived Source Credibility	1					
2.Information Quality	0.898**	1				
3.User Satisfaction with previous experiences	0.905**	0.917**	1			
4.Perceived Trust	0.740**	0.753**	0.734**	1		
5.Attitude towards UGC	0.163**	0.222**	0.182**	0.269**	1	
6.Decision making	0.683**	0.692**	0.692**	0.748**	0.170**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 shows the correlation of the variables to the each other. The Perceived Source Credibility has the positive relation with the Information quality (0.898) and perceived trust (0.740). The correlation of Perceived Source Credibility with the Information quality and User Satisfaction with previous experiences is 0.898 and 0.905. Information quality is highly positive correlated to user satisfaction with previous experiences as compared to perceived

source credibility because there is more correlation among the information quality to User Satisfaction with previous experiences (0.917) compared to the Perceived Source Credibility (0.905).

Hence, the result indicates that perceived source credibility, information quality and user satisfaction with previous experience has significant relationship with the perceived trust towards UGC due to positive correlation significant at 0.01 level. If there is increase in perceived source credibility, information quality and users' satisfaction, perceived trust towards UGC will also increase and vice-versa.

In terms of correlation of perceived trust and attitude towards UGC with Decision making, perceived trust has positive correlation with decision making (0.748) and very low positive correlation with attitude towards UGC (0.170). Similarly, Perceived trust and attitude towards UGC have very low positive correlation (0.269) between them which indicates less redundancy in the data for analysis.

The above results indicates that perceived trust towards UGC has significant relationship with decision making at 0.01 level. So, increase in perceived trust will increase the influence of trust towards UGC on foreign tourists' decision to visit Nepal. While, Attitude towards UGC having low correlation shows that increase in positive attitude towards UGC will result very low increase in its influence towards decision making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal.

4.6 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical approach utilized to examine the connection between multiple variables. It is a modelling and analytical technique that helps establish the relationships between an independent variable (known as the predictor variable) and a dependent variable (known as the response variable).

4.6.1 Impact of Perceived Source Credibility, Information Quality and User Satisfaction with previous experiences on Perceived Trust towards UGC

Table 14

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.769	0.591	0.586	3.05298

Table 14 explains the model summary of the study. The R square carry the value of 0.591 which means variables of the model represent more than 59.1% to Perceived trust toward UGC. In other words, about 60% of perceived trust towards UGC is explained by perceived source credibility, information quality and users' satisfaction from previous experiences.

Table 15

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3525.848	3	1175.283	126.094	0.000
Residual	2442.016	262	9.321		
Total	5967.865	265			

Table 15 exhibits the ANOVA table of the model and show the fitness of the model. The significance level is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. So, the model is fit. Put another way, the observed data points are close to the model's predicted values.

Table 16

Regression Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.386	0.464	-	5.143	0.000
Perceived source credibility	0.209	0.077	0.274	2.707	0.007
Information Quality	0.255	0.071	0.388	3.593	0.000

User satisfaction with previous experiences	0.138	0.119	0.130	1.160	0.247
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Table 16 shows the regression model of the perceived trust, information quality and user satisfaction with previous experiences with perceived trust towards UGC. The regression model shows the significance level impact to the perceived trust toward UGC by Perceived Source Credibility, Information Quality and User Satisfaction with previous experiences. It can be interpreted that the information quality carries the dominance part of the perceived trust towards UGC and the perceived source credibility carries the less. While, the user satisfaction with previous experiences is not significance to the perceived trust towards UGC at the 5% level of confidence. However, Perceived Source Credibility and Information Quality have the significance level of impact to the perceived trust towards UGC.

4.6.2 Impact of Perceived Trust towards UGC and Attitude towards UGC on Decision making process of foreign tourists` to visit Nepal

Table 17

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.751	0.564	0.561	3.55047

Table 17 explains the model summary of the study which shows that more than 56.4% of the decision-making process of foreign tourists is explained by Perceived Trust towards UGC and Attitude towards UGC. Hence, it is influenced by both independent variables.

Table 18

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4287.273	2	2143.637	170.051	0.000
Residual	3315.343	263	12.606		
Total	7602.617	265			

Table 18 explains the ANOVA table and show the fitness of the model. The significance level is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. So, the model is fit. In other words, the observed data points are close to the predicted values by the regression model.

Table 19

Regression Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.436	0.645		5.328	0.000
Perceived Trust	0.865	0.048	0.767	18.133	0.000
Attitude towards UGC	-0.051	0.031	-0.069	-1.635	0.103

Table 19 shows the regression model of the independent variables and dependent variables. The regression model shows the significance level impact of perceived trust and attitude toward UGC on the decision-making process of tourists. It can be interpreted that perceived trust toward UGC dominates the decision-making process while attitude towards UGC do not have significance impact on the decision making at the 5% level of confidence. Hence, Perceived trust towards UGC plays significant role in the decision-making process of foreign tourists` to visit Nepal.

Table 20

Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statements	Beta	P-value	Result
H1	Perceived Source Credibility positively influences perceived trust towards UGC	0.274	0.007	Accept
H2	Information quality positively influences perceived trust towards UGC.	0.388	0.000	Accept
H3	User Satisfaction from previous experiences positively influences perceived trust towards UGC.	0.130	0.247	Reject
H4	Perceived trust towards UGC positively influences Decision making of tourists.	0.767	0.000	Accept
H5	Attitude towards UGC positively influences Decision making of tourists	-0.069	0.103	Reject

4.7 Findings

The major findings are summarized as:

- Majority of respondents were male which indicates that dominance of male tourists in the data collection.
- Majority of the respondents were from 31 to 45 age groups and the least respondents were from age group of above 60 years. Mostly adult tourists were respondents to this study.
- Majority of respondents had income between \$40,000 to \$59,000 per annum. While only 1.1% of the respondents had income more than \$100,000. Most of the tourists had medium income status.
- Most of the respondents were from United States followed by China, South Korea and United Kingdom. Least number of participants were from Maldives and Myanmar and Malaysia.
- Respondent agreed on having credible source and high-quality information of UGC while perceiving trust towards UGC. Likewise, respondents also agreed with having high satisfaction from previous experiences of UGC. Overall, there was high perceived trust of respondents towards UGC.
- Respondents strongly agreed on trusting the UGC while making decision to visit Nepal. Similarly, the participants had positive attitude towards UGC while making decision to visit Nepal. However, respondents disagreed of being influenced and motivated by UGC in making decision to visit Nepal.
- Respondents provided same level of agreement for all aspects of UGC which shows rigidness and accuracy in their agreement. This means that majority of the tourists trust the user generated contents and find it useful in decision making to visit Nepal.
- Data were not normally distributed and were mostly left skewed. In other words, the respondent's data had not been generated from normally distributed population.
- The data had issue of high multi-collinearity among the variables. In other words, all the independent variables were highly correlated with each other indicating the redundancy of the questions.
- Perceived source credibility, information quality and user satisfaction with previous experience had significant positive relationship with the perceived trust towards UGC due to positive correlation significant at 0.01 level. Information quality had

highly positive correlation with user satisfaction with previous experiences compared to the Perceived Source Credibility.

- Perceived trust towards UGC had significant relationship with decision making of tourists to visit Nepal at 0.01 level. Perceived trust had positive correlation with decision making and low positive correlation with attitude towards UGC.
- About 60% of perceived trust towards UGC is explained by perceived source credibility, information quality and user satisfaction from previous experiences. More than 56.4% of the decision-making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal is represented by perceived trust and attitude towards UGC.
- The model is fit. So, the observed data points are close to the model's predicted values.
- Perceived sourced credibility and information quality have the significant impact on the perceived trust towards UGC while user satisfaction with previous experiences do not have significant impact on the perceived trust towards UGC.
- Perceived trust toward UGC play significance role in the decision-making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal while attitude towards UGC do not have such impact on the decision making of the tourists.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This section presents the final part of the research and provides an overview of the discussion, conclusion, and implications of the study. The study is summarized, and its conclusions are drawn. In addition, the potential implications of the research are suggested in light of previous scholarly works in the relevant field.

5.1 Discussion

Nowadays, innovation and technology especially in online media has been rapidly developing. Through use of such technologies, modern marketing tool, UGC also known as electronic word of mouth (E-EOM) marketing has been taking over traditional marketing everywhere. However, different factors have been affecting this modern marketing due to its sensitive online contents. This tool has also become dominant in tourism industry and tourism operators are using it for fake promotions and paid reviews to boost sales. Due to such rise in fake promotions, the reliability and credibility of UGC is threatened. The perceived trust towards UGC which is the key performance indicator has been questioned. Similarly, due to such fake promotional content, attitude towards UGC has been changing and people are reacting negatively toward it. These two factors have been chosen as main problems of study which ultimately solves the bigger problem of finding a reliable marketing tool in the field of tourism especially in the context of Nepal. Nepal being a best tourism destination is in need of reliable and strong marketing tool such as UGC to unveil its tourism potential to the world.

For the problem to be solved, the first research question addresses the impact of perceived trust towards UGC and Attitude towards UGC on decision of foreign tourist to visit Nepal. From this, two hypotheses were formed which focused on the decision making. Second research question focused on the perceived trust towards UGC in which relationship of perceived source credibility, information quality and user satisfaction with previous experiences with perceived trust towards UGC was measured. Third question focused on the most significant aspect of UGC which has contributed to the decision making of the tourists.

The result of the data analysis suggest that perceived trust has significant impact on the decision making of tourists to visit Nepal while attitude towards UGC has no such significant impact on the decision making. Similarly, the analysis from the hypotheses from the second

research question suggest that perceived source credibility and information quality of the UGC has significant relationship with the perceived trust towards UGC while User satisfaction from previous experiences has no such significant impact on the perceived trust towards UGC. In sum, Perceived trust towards UGC with its two important factors, perceived source credibility and information quality has emerged to be significant contributor to the decision making of tourist to visit Nepal.

Among the variables, the correlation is seen positive which indicated that there is significant relationship of perceived trust and attitude with decision making. In line with hypotheses, the result has been able to meet the expectations due to the support of information quality which has been strong predictor of perceived trust (McKnight et al., 2002; Filieri et al., 2015). Information quality is the most significant factor for determining the perceived trust towards UGC and it supports the claims of previous experiences which suggest that Users tend to trust user-generated content (UGC) that has higher information quality, while UGC with lower information quality is less likely to be trusted (Metzger, Flanagin, & Medders, 2010). Lin and Lu (2011). This may be due to the fact that CGM websites allow customers to share their experiences through reviews, ratings, and discussions. Higher quality content leads to better consumer perception of the website (Filieri et al. 2015).

Similarly, perceived source credibility also has significant relationship with the perceived trust towards UGC. Similar to the hypothesized association, Burgess et al. (2009) suggest that User-generated content (UGC) is highly valued by consumers as it is based on real experiences shared by real people. Furthermore, Wang and Yan (2022) argue that users are more likely to trust information that they find enjoyable and engaging, as well as information that comes from a credible source. However, Filieri et al. (2015) suggested opposite of the findings that the credibility of the source does not have a strong influence on the reliability of CGM, possibly because consumers are aware that it is easy to create fake profiles on these websites (Dellarocas, 2003). However, consumers tend to trust the overall evaluation provided by the wisdom of the crowd and believe that a few fake profiles or low-quality reviews cannot significantly influence their positive perception of CGM.

The result suggests that User satisfaction with previous experiences does not have significant impact on the perceived trust towards UGC which is similar to argument provided by Filieri et al. (2015) who implies that the receiver's experience in using CGM did not significantly predict their level of trust towards it. This suggests that trust evaluations of CGM are similar

for both experienced and inexperienced users. However, on average, users with more CGM experience tend to trust it less than novice users.

In line with hypotheses, perceived trust has significant relationship with decision making of tourists as per the results which is similar with Akehurst, G. (2008) suggest that User-generated content (UGC) can serve as a useful tool for informing tourism and marketing managers, educating consumers, and facilitating tourism transactions. A study by Nguyen and Tong (2022) shows that access to travel-related user-generated content (UGC) has been found to positively influence the desire to visit a travel destination. This is because UGC provides potential travelers with a more authentic and personalized view of the destination. However, the value of UGC may have been underestimated, despite the fact that a vast amount of travel and tourism information is available online. The challenge lies in extracting, summarizing, and presenting the information in a clear and relevant manner to decision-makers who require it. Whereby, Cox et al., (2009) implies opposite of the Hypothesis 1 stating the reason that the level of trust in UGC versus traditional sources of information varies. This difference may be due to the method of recruitment used in the present study, which did not consider respondents' usage of specific UGC sites, unlike previous studies that recruited known users of popular UGC sites (Gretzel, 2007).

Down the line, attitude toward UGC does not play significant role in decision making of tourists to visit Nepal. Similar to the results Ayeh et al. (2013) suggests that the majority of internet users do not use consumer-generated media (CGM) for travel planning. This might be due to the knowledge the people possess about the UGC. However, people who are knowledgeable about the factors that influence the effectiveness of CGM may be more likely to use it if they find it beneficial, convenient, and enjoyable (Ayeh et al. 2013). Similarly, UGC adoption is influenced by various user characteristics, including attitude, which includes a person's beliefs, values, and overall disposition towards UGC (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2018). This is due to the reason that different people have different perception and beliefs based on their values, norms and surrounding environment which motivates them. Cox et al. (2009) argues opposite that user-generated content (UGC) users give more weight to independent traveller reviews found on third-party websites and blogs compared to those found on social networking sites and find it important when tour agents respond to such contents. This is due to the trust created by independent travellers online in any other contents provided they do such activities in honest and transparent ways.

Summing up the above discussion and arguments on the impact of independent variables on dependent variables, it can be seen that perceived trust towards UGC is the most significant factor which play great role in decision making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal if supported by quality information and credible sources of UGC.

5.2 Conclusions

User-Generated Content is one of the emerging marketing tools in this era of innovation and technology. Many foreign countries have succeeded in the promotion of their tourism industry through UGC. The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of perceived trust and attitude towards UGC on the foreign tourists` decision to visit Nepal. The study also aimed to examine the relationship of user satisfaction with previous experiences, information quality and perceived source credibility with perceived trust towards UGC.

Foreign tourists trust the UGC which provide good quality of information and have credible source. However, tourists do not trust UGC in terms of their satisfaction and experience from the particular user generated content. So, foreign tourists make their decision to visit Nepal only if they trust the UGC, its source and information. The attitude of tourists toward UGC is not positive and it might demotivate them to visit Nepal. More specifically, User-Generated Contents made on tourism importance of Nepal has created good image and trust among the foreign tourists. This has been possible only due to high quality information and credible source of UGCs on tourism of Nepal. Many tourists create vlog on their visit to Nepal in which they provide honest review independently. Such contents have created good credibility of the source and provide useful information for the tourists. However, tourists are not satisfied with the previous experiences of UGC which might be either due to low rate of outflow of such contents from Nepal or it might be tourists` first experience with the UGC about Nepal.

The study has provided important insights on UGC as an important marketing tool in the field of tourism. Tourists mostly rely on the information quality and source credibility of the UGC which in turn make them perceive trust towards the UGC from Nepal. More research is needed on the UGC focusing on the attitude towards UGC and its importance as a strong marketing tool. Lastly, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and tourism operators need to focus on increasing outflow of such UGCs which creates trust among foreign tourists and build good image of Nepal as a tourism destination.

5.3 Implications

The study's findings provide practical implications for those involved in the country's tourism industry such as travel agents, tourism businesses and Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). The study's findings also have significant implications for university professors, academicians, and researchers who are involved in research and study of marketing tools related to tourism in Nepal.

Implications for Tourism marketers

As per the past literature and findings, perceived trust towards UGC and attitude towards UGC are important factors for motivating foreign tourists to visit Nepal. Among these two, perceived trust towards UGC is most influencing factor in decision making process of foreign tourists to visit Nepal.

In order to improve Nepal's image as a tourist destination, tourism businesses should promote positive user-generated content. As tourists generally trust credible source and quality information from UGCs, encouraging visitors to share their experiences through reviews, photos, and videos is important. Collaboration with influential bloggers or travel influencers with a significant following is also useful in promoting the tourism industry.

Tourism stakeholders can use social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to encourage tourists to share their experiences and promote Nepal as a tourist destination. Creating social media campaigns can also motivate tourists to share their experiences.

Prompt and professional responses to negative reviews or comments are crucial for tourism stakeholders to address any concerns and prevent harm to Nepal's image as a tourist destination.

Tourism industry professionals, such as hotel employees, tour guides, and travel agents, are vital to promoting Nepal's tourism industry. As such, it's crucial to educate them on the significance of UGC and how it can be used to promote Nepal as a tourist destination.

As a result, tourism stakeholders should take actions to promote positive and genuine UGCs, use social media to their advantage, address negative feedback, and provide training and education to tourism professionals to promote Nepal's tourism industry. This will help

tourism marketers to build perceived trust of tourists towards UGC and influence tourists in making decision to visit Nepal.

Further Research Implications

Future research can be done by focusing only on the perceived trust and examining its structure model taking various factors which influences the decision making of the tourists. Similarly, the researcher can examine the impact of perceived trust towards UGC on travel planning to Nepal take attitude as a moderating variable. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is one of the important theories related to this. So, future research can be done by linking up User-Generated Contents with behavioural intention to visit Nepal using application of TPB. Future research can be carried out focusing on the limitations of the current study.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Respondents,

Namaskar and Welcome to Nepal!!!

I am Biplov Chaudhary Tharu, an MBA pursuant at School of Management, Tribhuvan University. I kindly request you to be a participant in the survey by filling this questionnaire. I am collecting data for my MBA Thesis entitled "User-Generated Contents (UGC) and Foreign Tourists` Decision to Visit Nepal". User-Generated Contents (UGC) on Tourism Destination is original, brand-specific content created by travelers and published on social media or other channels. It is any content; text, videos, images, reviews, etc. created by independent travelers, rather than travel agents/tourism operators and plays great role in marketing of any tourism destination. Your cooperation is expected to add academic value to my thesis. The information provided by the participants will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

2. Age

- Below 15 years
- 16-30 years
- 31-45 years
- 46-60 years
- Above 60 years

3. Annual Income

- Less than \$20000
- \$20000-\$39000
- \$40000-\$59000
- \$60000-\$79000
- \$80000-\$99000
- More than \$100000

4. Nationality

- China
- United States
- United Kingdom
- Thailand
- Sri Lanka
- South Korea
- Australia
- Other:

Please read each statement carefully and select your level of agreement for the following statements from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. [7: Strongly Disagree (SD), 6: Disagree (D), 5: Tend to Disagree (TD), 4: Not sure (NS), 3: Tend to Agree (TA), 2: Agree (A) and 1: Strongly Agree (A)]

5. Perceived Source Credibility

Questions	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	SD	D	TD	NS	TA	A	SA
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were credible							
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were experienced							
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were trustworthy							
The UGC Providers/Reviewers were reliable							

6. Information Quality

Questions	7 SD	6 D	5 TD	4 NS	3 TA	2 A	1 SA
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was timely							
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was relevant to my needs							
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was complete for my needs							
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was valuable							
The information in User-Generated Contents (UGC) was useful							

7. Users Satisfaction with Previous Experiences

Questions	7 SD	6 D	5 TD	4 NS	3 TA	2 A	1 SA
I am satisfied with the information I have received from User-Generated Contents							
I am satisfied with my previous experiences from User-Generated Contents							
I have high level of satisfaction in terms of searching and using User-Generated Contents							

8. Perceived Trust Toward UGC

Questions	7 SD	6 D	5 TD	4 NS	3 TA	2 A	1 SA
I think that the information offered by User-Generated contents (UGC) was sincere and honest							
I think that the advice and recommendations given on User-Generated Contents (UGC) are made in search of mutual benefit of both reviewer and customers							
The sources of User-Generated Contents (UGC) are trustworthy							

9. Attitude Toward UGC

Questions	7 SD	6 D	5 TD	4 NS	3 TA	2 A	1 SA
I would only take notice of UGC when it is provided by independent travelers (i.e., with no involvement from travel operators)							
I think UGC has limited use for me when I plan my travel							
It is positive when a travel provider responds to traveler UGC							
Travel recommendation provided by unknown people are not useful							
The ordinary travelers` view of destination cannot be relied on							

10. Decision Making

Questions	7 SD	6 D	5 TD	4 NS	3 TA	2 A	1 SA
UGC made it easier for me to make decision to visit Nepal							
UGC have enhanced my effectiveness in making decision to visit Nepal							
UGC have motivated me to make decision to visit Nepal							
Information from UGC contributed to my knowledge about Nepal as a tourism destination							

Thank you for your precise time and support. Have a great visit to Nepal!!!