FACTORS INFLUENCING DESTINATION IMAGE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PRE-PURCHASE PERIOD OF TOURISM IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract. *Due to the technological advancements, people start depending on social media for various matters. As social media provides a tool for developing an image of the destination, it became an essential component in the process of decision-making regarding traveling. This study aims to investigate the influence of user-generated content (UGC), Information Quality (IQ) and Tourist's Motivation (TM) on destination image through social media in the pre-trip period of tourism in Pakistan. Empirical analysis was conducted by using survey method through online Google forms. Data was collected from social media (Facebook) users who were the members of the Facebook tourism groups in Pakistan. The findings of the study revealed that UGC does not significantly affect the destination image in the pre-purchase period. Whereas, information quality and tourist's motivation significantly affect the destination image of Pakistani tourists. The research concludes that tourist's motivation before experiencing tourism and the information they are exposed to plays a significant role in developing destination image in the tourism market. Furthermore, this research contributes to the tourism sector of Pakistan by providing information regarding factors developing destination image. This information may help in developing positive image of the destinations in Pakistan. Also, this study contributes by providing tourism sector an understanding of the tourist's behaviours in pre-purchase period of travelling in Pakistan.*

1. Introduction

Tourism is considered as a practice which involves traveling of an individual or a group outside their home, city or country for entertainment or business purposes (Adnan Hye & Ali Khan, 2013). Whereas, industry of tourism is considered a revenue generating industry which provides job opportunities, preserve culture, and entertain people (Garg, 2013). According to survey conducted in 2018 by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), there is a growth of 5% in arrival of international tourists in the year 2018 which reaches 1.4 billion mark (UNWTO, 2019). According to the same report, Asia has recorded highest arrivals of the tourists and the highest growth in tourism revenue with 7% increase in 2018. Therefore, there is a huge increase in tourism activities in every part of the world.

Not surprisingly, in tourism sector there is a major part of social media. Xiang and Gretzel (2010, p. 180) defined social media as "Internet-based applications that carry consumer-generated content encompasses media impressions created by consumers". Whereas, Chung and Koo (2015, p. 219) defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that exist on the Web 2.0 platform and enable Internet users from all over the world to share ideas, thoughts, experiences, perspectives, information, and forge relationship". Moreover, According to the annual report by wearesocial.com, from October 2018 to 2019 there is an increase of 328 million of active consumers of social media sites, which means 48% of total world population uses social media actively (Kemp, 2019).

Due to the technology advancements, trends of tourism are also changed i.e., from word of mouth (WOM) towards e-word of mouth (e-WOM). Social media creates a bridge of communication between the potential tourists and tourism sectors (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). While, the access to information helps the people to make decisions regarding experiencing tourism. Moreover, with the change of trends, the way people search information, share and make decisions out of it are also changed. For that reason, social media is treated as significant source of information as it helps the travelers in taking decision (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). According to Chung and Koo (2015) social media applications i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram allows people to share their travel statuses and stories and also express their feelings about it.

Facebook is the highest consuming application in comparison with other social networking sites (SNS). According to report by Smith (2019) there is an increase of 2.375 bn active users of Facebook monthly. From which more than

1bn are using Facebook from their mobile devices. 1.49bn of Facebook members are daily users. Worldwide, 26.3% of the online population uses Facebook. Steinfield (2009) argued that active Facebook consumers are more satisfied with the information access as compared to the less active Facebook users. It is investigated in the studies that when individual's gain information from their friends and family on Facebook, there is 15% higher chance to make decision for availing services (Hudson, 2015). Hence, content created by the people have a great impact in decision making phase of tourism.

It is believed by the scholars that there is a major role of UGC in pre-purchase period of tourism (Akehurst, 2009). There is no disbelief in that UGC provides consumers and traveling agencies multiple amounts of information which has a great significance in understanding the tourism spots. Moreover, it is also assumed that the reviews which are posted by the users are of more credibility in comparison with the reviews posted by the travel agencies and companies. In other words, UCG provides a better communication strategy for the consumers to take decisions and create perceived images of destinations in pre-purchase period (Lianto, 2014).

As tourism sector is generally dependent on the images of the destination, the tourism marketers started focusing on developing a constructive DI as it increases the tourism spot worth (Allameh, Khazaei Pool, Jaberi, Salehzadeh, & Asadi, 2015; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). It is examined in the studies that competition among the destinations usually based on the images they hold (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001). Destination with the positive and attractive image have more chances to be selected in phase of taking decision as compared to the destination with negative image (Goodrich, 1978). Hence, it is very essential to form an image of the tourist's spot which can attract the consumers and help them in making decisions in pre purchase phase of the tourism (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

As tourism DI plays a vital role in the period of decision taking, it is essential for the tourism sector to build a constructive image of the destinations which help the tourists in making decisions. While tourism business is revenue generating sources of the territory for underdeveloped and developing countries (Eugenio-Martin, Martín-Morales, & Scarpa, 2004). Hence it is also discovered by the studies that majority of the work on DI is in Western context. As Pike (2002) reviewed research papers from the year 1973 to 2000 and concluded that out of 142 research papers, only 25 papers were in Asian context. Therefore, the present research focuses the context of Pakistan to fill this contextual gap.

Generally literature claims that there are several gaps in research on image formation of destinations through social media i.e. Facebook (Kim et al., 2017). Firstly, DI has been mostly studied and examined in Western context (Bhat & Darzi, 2018). Secondly, DI formation through social media has received relatively less consideration from the researchers (Kim et al., 2017). As DI formation is the combination of both internal and external factors, there is a need to emphasize on the whole image of the tourist's spot (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Most of the studies on DI formation through social media found in tourism literature are conceptual studies without empirical evidences. Therefore, there is a need to examine empirically DI formation in social media i.e. Facebook (Kim et al., 2017). Hence present study attempts to fill the gap by finding DI formation through social media (Facebook). This study attempts to fill this literature gap, by further examining the relationship between TM (Internal factor), UGC and tourist IQ (External factors) and DI formation of the tourists in pre-purchase period in social media (Facebook).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 User Generated Content and Destination Image

Destination image is defined by Crompton (1979, p.18) as "The sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination". Whereas, Tasci and Gartner (2007) defined destination image as "an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination" (p. 200). Similarly, for Gibson, Qi, and Zhang (2008) destination image is "the mental pictures that individual's hold regarding a place or a product" (p. 429).

In the early 2000s, tourism marketers have researched destination image to raise the tourism industry. Tourism literature have highlighted destination image and its role in selecting destination for tourism (Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002). Enhancing the destination image was the major concern for the tourism industry to attract the tourists. This is because the destination image plays a crucial role in the decision making phase of traveling (Cai, 2002). Therefore, there is the significant role of destination image in tourism industry. Furthermore Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) find out that destination image creates a link between an individual and a destination, which helps the potential tourists to visit a tourism destination.

The relationship between UGC on social media and destination image is both theoretically and empirically justified (Alcázar, Piñero, & Maya, 2014). As it is found in the research by Filieri and McLeay (2014) that internet has become the major information source for the tourists as it performs a role of the major tool in business industries. UGC provided on social media platforms is considered as the major advancement for tourism industry (Cox, Burgess, &

Sellitto, 2008; Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Therefore, the destination image is formed through the social media by discovering UGC. According to Marine-Roig and Clavé (2016), UGC provided on social media significantly affect the tourist DI. Furthermore, in the previous literature researchers concluded that UGC on social media has direct and significant effect on DI. Therefore, it can be assumed that UGC on social media has direct and significant effect on destination image in the Pakistani context.

H1:   There is a relationship between user generated content and destination image.

2.2   Information Quality and Destination Image

Information quality (IQ) is defined as "information that is fit for use by information consumers" (Huang, Lee, & Wang, 1999, p. 43). Whereas, IQ is also defined by Brien (1991, p. 7) as "the characteristic of information to meet the functional, technical, cognitive, and aesthetic requirements of information producers, administrators, consumers, and experts". While according to Lee, Strong and Kahn (2002) IQ is defined as "the information which is satisfying to consumers".

Studies have justified the relationship between the quality of information related to tourism destination image both empirically and theoretically (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim et al., 2017). Literature on destination image plays role in the establishment of tourism industry, which suggests a positive relationship between information source and tourism image formation (Beerli & Martín, 2004). Studies have found that when a user get information from different sources it influences their destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Li, Pan & Zhang, 2009). Also, Um and Crompton (1990) have found that destination image is influenced by recommendations of family, friends in addition to promotional information given out by tourism suppliers. Furthermore, studies also suggest the "characteristic of information" sources i.e. variety, amount and the "contextual aspects of IQ" to be crucial factors for destination image formation with users (Frias, Rodriguez, & Castañeda, 2008; Vich-i-Martorell, 2004). Therefore, some researchers (e.g., Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Kim et al., 2017) contend that information quality has a positive and direct relationship with the destination image. Therefore, it can be assumed that tourism information quality in social media (Facebook) has direct and positive impact on destination image in the context of Pakistan.

H2:   There is a relationship between Tourism information quality and destination image."

2.3   Tourist Motivation and Destination Image

Tourist's motivation is defined as "psychological or biological needs of an individual which controls and integrate their behaviour and activities" (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 46). Whereas, according to Crompton and McKay (1997) tourist's motivation is defined as "Individual's state of tension or disequilibrium which is generated by internal psychological factors such as needs and wants". Furthermore, Yoon and Uysal (2005) cited motivation as "psychological/biological needs and wants, including integral forces that arouse, direct, and integrate a person's behaviour and activity" (, p. 46).

The relationship between tourist motivation and destination image is both theoretically and empirically justified (Li, Cai & Lehto, 2010). According to the research done by Crompton (1979) the tourist's behaviour in the whole process of destination image formation can be explain by understanding tourist's motivation. It is believed by the researcher that motivation is the main predictor of image formation which controls it before visiting the tourist's spot (San-Martín & Del-Bosque, 2008). Furthermore, to clearly understand the formation process of destination image, there is a need to figure out the existing relationship between both variables i.e., motivation and destination image (McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995) cited in Li et al. (2010).

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) empirically tested the relationship between motivation and destination image in the context of an image formation model. The most notable finding of the study is that motivation has direct and significant effect on image formation of the destination. On the bases of these findings, Beerli and Martín (2004) studied the factors which influence destination images. The model described that motivation is considered as best predictor of destination image formation and found that motivation has direct and significant impact on destination image. In the recent study researcher concluded that motivation has direct and significant effect on destination image formation (Li et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be assumed that motivation has direct and positive effect on destination image in Pakistani context.

H3:   There is a relationship between tourist's motivation and destination image.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The proposed framework for current study is grounded on the integration of the destination image formation theory (Gartner, 1993). The current framework proposes a set of relationships among the independent/ external factors (IQ and UGC), internal factor (TM) and dependent variable (DI). These constructs are linked together in the form of a destination image model to explain the relationships (direct) among them. IQ, UGC and TM are the variables, whose influence needs to be examined together investigating destination image

through social media (i.e., Facebook) in the context of Pakistan. This new model (Figure 1) therefore represents an additional contribution to knowledge in contemporary literature on destination image formation through social media (i.e., Facebook), in the context of Pakistan.
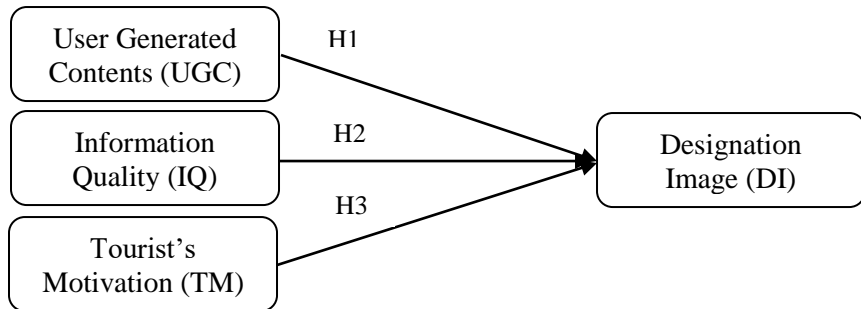

Figure 1   Theoretical Framework of the present study

3. Research Context

Tourism industry is connected with various major industries and plays a part in growing national economy of the country. It provides opportunities for foreign investments and local developments. Furthermore, tourism plays a key role in economic gains. Pakistan is considered as one of the tourism countries which have various tourism spots. The prominent tourism destinations of Pakistan are Gilgit, Swat, Chitral, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Murree, Neelam valleys historical and archaeological sites and mountainous ranges. Pakistan has great potential and offers different opportunities for tourists, such as trout fishing in the glacial water of Gilgit-Baltistan and River Swat, Shandur Polo traditional tournament, paragliding, rock climbing, trekking, jeep and camel safari in the Cholistan desert, wild boar hunting and crabbing in the Arabian Sea (Tribune, 2019).

Due to the technological advancements, social media has become the most popular platform among people (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). It is considered as the medium for communication in every day routine (Luo & Zhong, 2015). It is discovered by the research that in every five users of internet, four have account on social media. Whereas, Facebook is considered as the most commonly used social media application all over the world (GlobalWebIndex, 2019). Facebook having 2.41 billion monthly active users as of June 30, 2019 & actively used Facebook through mobile devices are 1.59 billion (Statistics, 2019). Current study findings will strengthen the theoretical perspective on destination image formation in Pakistani context.

4. Methodology

The quantitative method applied for measuring the coefficient of determination between the constructs of the research study (Mark, Philip, & Adrian, 2009). Online survey has conducted to find out the influence of UGC, IQ and TM on the DI of tourists in the pre-purchase period, as it is believed that online survey is the most appropriate way to collect data from tourists through social media (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013; Senders, Govers, & Neuts, 2013). For this research the target population is the members of tourism Facebook groups (Kim et al., 2017). Three tourism Facebook groups are selected whose members are above than 10K members. The selected groups were (1) Pakistan tour and travel with 10855 members, (2) The Karakoram club with 286611 members and (3) Pakistan adventure and tourism 10224 members. Thus, the total members in these three groups are 307,690 members. The sample size was around 382 respondents, which is justified from the (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) table. According to (Comrey & Lee, 1992) a sample size of 300 is good, and 400 and above is very good. For this study the researcher used purposive sampling technique (Hua, Ramayah, Ping, & Jun-Hwa, 2017).

4.1 Data collection

Data was collected by considering an online survey using Google Form. The researcher collected data from selected tourism Facebook Groups. The researcher sent questionnaires to members in each group through Facebook Messenger. The data was collected in two months (Hua et al., 2017). The data was analyzed in SPSS. For cause and effect, regression test was run by using SPSS.

4.2 Measures

On the basis of literature, questionnaire was developed to find the relationship among the variables which the current research found. The questionnaire designed for the current research contains introductory paragraph which includes the information of the researcher and the purpose of the research. This information increases the credibility of the research (Martilla & James, 1977). Five-point Likert-type scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) was adapted from Ayeh et al. (2013). User generated content was measure using five items which are adapted from Kang (2011). Tourism information quality contains 15 items adapted from Kim et al. (2017). Tourist motivation measured using six items adapted from Khan, Chelliah, Khan, and Amin (2019). Destination image consists of 13 items, and these items are adapted from Kim et al. (2017).

4.3 Results

This section presents the demographic information of 411 respondents retained in the study. Analysis of the frequency distributions shows that majority of the respondents were males' 55.5 percent (n=228). Whereas, the representation of

females was 44.5 percent (n=183). The majority of respondents' 69 percent (n=287) were fall in the age category of 20's. Regarding the education the highest number of respondents fall in the category "graduate or more" 64.7 percent (n=277). In the term of job frequency distribution, majority of the respondent's 46.5 percent (n=191) were students. The last part of the demographic factors table showed the frequency distribution of the province from where the respondents belonged to. Results clearly indicate that highest number of participants were belonged to the province KPK with 38.2 percent (n=157). Moreover, 33.3 percent (n=137) respondents belonged to the province Punjab. Less than twenty percent of the participants were fall in category "federal" (n=62; 15.1%), followed by province Sindh (n=28; 6.8%) and Gilgit Baltistan (n=12; 2.9%). There was very little representation of Baluchistan and Kashmir with frequencies of (n=8; 1.9%) and (n=7; 1.7%) respectively. Profiles of the respondents shown in table 1.

Table 1 *Profile of the Respondents*

Demographic variable	Frequencies	%	Demographic variable	Frequencies	%
Gender			**Job**		
Male	228	55.5	Student	191	46.5
Female	183	44.4	Employee	149	36.3
Age (Years)			Housewife	22	5.4
10's	11	2.6	Self-employed	25	6.1
20's	287	69	Others	24	5.8
30's	97	23.3	**Province**		
40's	16	3.5	Punjab	137	33.3
Education			Sindh	28	6.8
Middle School	4	1	KPK	157	38.2
High School	11	2.7	Baluchistan	8	1.9
Some College	14	3.4	Federal	62	15.1
Undergraduate	105	25.5	Kashmir	7	1.7
Graduate or More	277	67.4			

4.4 Descriptive Statistic

Table 2 shows the description of the sample collected in this research. The value of lower mean (mean = 3.72) of the first independent variable "User-Generated Content" and its Standard Deviation (SD = 0.574). Whereas, the lower mean value of second independent variable information quality (mean = 3.59) and its standard Deviation (SD = 0.487). The third independent variable tourist motivation has mean (mean = 4.26) and standard Deviation (SD =

0.611). Additionally, the lower mean value of dependent variable "Destination Image" (mean = 4.01) with its standard Deviation (SD = .547).

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistic (N = 411)*

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
User Generated Content	1	5	3.72	0.574
Information Quality	2	5	3.59	0.487
Tourist Motivation	2	5	4.26	0.611
Destination Image	2	5	4.01	0.547

4.5 Reliability

Table 3 reveals the descriptive statistics for the model constructs, that is, Cronbach's Alpha of indicators. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of user-generated content, information quality, tourist's motivation and destination image achieved reliability values of 0.747, 0.868, 0.869 and 0.904 respectively. In the addition, all values of combined reliability were greater than 0.70, suggesting acceptable internal consistency (George, 2011). In conclusion, this result guarantee that reliable measurements are being taken in the model.

Table 3 *Reliability of all Variables*

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha values
User Generated Content	5	0.747
Information Quality	15	0.868
Tourist Motivation	6	0.869
Destination Image	13	0.904

4.6 Correlation

Table 4 displays Pearson's correlations among the variables. There are three (3) independent variables, user-generated content, information quality and tourist motivation and one dependent variable "Destination Image". The result show that three independent variables i.e. user-generated content, information quality and tourist motivation have positive and significant correlation with the dependent variable, i.e. Destination Image. All three variables have a significant correlation i.e. user-generated content (r (411) = 0.408, p = 0.01, two-tailed), information quality (r (411) = 0.572, p = 0.01, two-tailed) and tourist motivation (r (411) = 0.575, p = 0.01, two-tailed).

Table 4 *Correlation of all Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4
User Generated Content	**1.00**			
Information Quality	.544**	**1.00**		
Tourist Motivation	.351**	.396**	**1.00**	
Destination Image	.408**	.572**	.575**	**1.00**

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.001

4.7 Hypotheses testing

The research model in current thesis contains three (3) hypothesized direct relationship. These relationships are examined by using multiple regression analysis through SPSS. The first hypothesis shows the relation between UGC and DI. This hypothesis was insignificant (β=0.60, ρ=0.172). Thus, showing no relationship between UGC and DI. The second hypothesis shows the relation between IQ and DI. This hypothesis was significant (β=0.380, ρ=0.000). Thus, showing a significant relationship between IQ and DI. The third hypothesis shows the relation between TM and DI. This hypothesis was significant (β=0.403, ρ=0.000). Thus, showing a significant relationship between TM and DI. The outcome of SPSS for structural model is shown in table 5.

Table 5 *Hypothesis Testing*

Causal Path			β	S.E.	t	Status
User Generated Content	$\rightarrow$	Destination Image	0.06	0.04	1.37	Not Supported
Information Quality	$\rightarrow$	Destination Image	0.38	0.05	8.55***	Supported
Tourist Motivation	$\rightarrow$	Destination Image	0.40	0.04	10.14***	Supported

***Significance at the level of 0.001.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As the first hypothesis of the study is about the relationship between UGC and DI. This study reveals that UGC is not having significant relationship with DI in the context of Pakistan. As the study of Qi and Chen (2019) focused on the Macao's perceived image of destination in the Chinese tourist's mind. He concluded that UGC has a strong influence on DI of the Macao. Furthermore, Narangajavana, Fiol and Tena (2017) investigated the effect of UGC on tourism DI. They found that there is a significant role of UGC in image building of the destinations. Also, they further recommended that quality of UGC should be improved to enhance the DI. In contrast to these studies,

findings of present study disclose that UGC available on social media is not significantly influencing DI in pre-purchase period of tourism in Pakistan. Furthermore, present study is not accordance with the findings of (Alcázar et al., 2014) as their study concluded that UGC is positively significant with DI. This may be because of the contextual differences in the studies as the current study is focused on Pakistan. Due to the cultural differences tourists of Pakistan are less influenced by the UGC. This may be because of the trust level on the content available online. Tourists may have less trust level on the UGC. Whereas, Marchiori and Cantoni (2015) findings showed that less educated people are more likely to change their opinions about destination after they are exposed to UGC. Present study is in accordance with this study as high number of respondents are well educated and they are not influenced by UGC in developing DI.

The findings of the second hypothesis reveal that IQ in social media significantly affect the DI in pre-purchase period. However, it is claimed by the scholars that the quality of information provided to the consumers have a great impact on their perception about a place or the product. Whereas, Kim et al. (2017) study investigated the relationship of IQ and DI in the Chinese context. Their study conducted empirical study to inspect the DI shaped through social media e.g., Sina Weibo. The results of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between IQ and DI. The second hypothesis of current study is in lined with the findings of Kim et al. (2017). By reviewing the literature, the current study findings are consistent with the findings of (Beerli & Martín, 2004). They empirically examined the relationship between sources of information and DI. This study was for the tourists who visited to Lanzarote. The study showed that information sources and demographic factors significantly affect the DI. Furthermore, present study findings are in lined with the findings of (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). As in their model, the overall DI is dependent on amount of information, types of information sources, age, education, and travel motivations. The findings revealed that all of these factors significantly influence the overall DI of the place. As current study has a variable IQ which is a stimulus factor, it also verifies the relationship between IQ and DI in the context of Pakistan.

Moreover, as there is less empirical evidence of the relationship between IQ and DI, present study contributes to the literature knowledge. The findings of second hypothesis of the study concludes that IQ is the significant factor in the process of developing DI. However, the DI is the main part of tourism, it is really essential to consider the factors which truly influence DI. As in the context of Pakistan, it is concluded that Pakistani tourists are more focused of the quality of information provided to them before experiencing tourism.

The third hypothesis of the study is about the relationship between TM and DI. The findings of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between TM and DI in pre-trip period of tourism in Pakistan. This hypothesis of the study is consistent with the various studies (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; San-Martín & Del-Bosque, 2008). As motivation is the internal factor, it has a strong influence on image of the destination. In present study, motivation is taken as a personal factor which is related to the tourist's perception of the destination. Furthermore, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) investigated that motivation is considered as an internal/personal factor of the overall image of the destination which positively affect the tourist's destination perception.

Moreover, the motivation of the tourists is considered as a psychological factor in the process of tourism. It is suggested in literature to investigate it in pre-trip period of tourism (San-Martín & Del-Bosque, 2008). In the same study, the research examined the influence of TM on DI. It is concluded by the researcher that there is a significant role of motivation in the process of image building. Third hypothesis of current study in accordance with the findings of their study. Furthermore, as motivation is the positive aspect, it plays an influential role in DI formation. Pakistani tourists are able to develop positive image of the destination when they feel motivated about travelling. However, it the tourists are motivated to experience tourism, then they will be able to develop a positive image of that particular destination for tourism.

6. Theoretical Contribution

The study has theoretical contributions in several ways. As Gartner (1993) proposed a theory of DI formation, which argued that overall image of the destination is dependent on multiple factors. Whereas, among these factors the most prominent factors are UGC, IQ and TM. Firstly, this study provides brief understanding of the process of DI formation and about factors influencing it. As present study developed the framework on the bases of destination image formation theory, the study contributes to the literature by testing the theory in the context of Pakistan (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). However, the theory of DI formation is based on two main factors; personal factors and stimulus factors. There is less evidence in the literature of investigating both personal and stimulus factors together in research studies. Hence this study contributes theoretically by investigating both the factors; personal factor (TM) and stimulus factors (UGC and IQ) in a single study. Additionally, current research also contributes by testing the theory on social media i.e., Facebook in Pakistani context (Kim et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the study contributes to the body of literature by providing empirical evidence by investigating UGC, IQ and TM all together on DI in the context of Pakistan. Interestingly, the research contributes in the literature by empirically examining the relationship between all three predictors on destination image, which opposes the existing knowledge of literature that UGC has an influence of DI. As present research shows that in the context of Pakistan, UGC does not influence the DI. Also, many of the studies explaining destination image formation theory through social media are conceptual studies. Whereas empirical studies investigating DI through social media are usually in Western context (Pike, 2002). Hence, this study also contributes by empirically investigating the DI through social media in Asian context.

7. Practical Contribution

In today's world, as social media is the popular medium of information and entertainment, it plays a vital role in DI formation. Nowadays the tourism destinations become famous through social media. Therefore, marketers are facing strong competition on the bases of DI on social media. This study practically contributes by providing empirical evidence of the factors influencing DI to the tourism organizations. This information will help the marketers in developing a DI of the tourist's spot, which increases the destination value.

Tourism marketers should be reviewing the content available on social media that can advantage them in understanding the perceptions of potential tourists. This will help them in developing a positive image of various destinations and increase its value. Moreover, marketers can also create a constructive image which can attract the international tourists.

Therefore, this study contributes by suggesting the ways to develop a positive DI which will increase the national economy of Pakistan as tourism industry is one of the revenue generating industries of the country (Manzo, 2019). Mainly present study contributes by providing evidence of influence of IQ and TM in DI formation process. This will help the tourism industry in understanding the significance of quality of information available on social media (Kim et al., 2017). On the other hand, tourism sector will find this information useful that tourist's motivation significantly affects the destination image.

Moreover, this research is not only helpful in tourism sector, but it can be helpful for other industries. As for any product or service, its image is important. For this reason, policy makers should know what factors are influencing these images. As information available for any product, service or destination is the key factor in building its positive image. Similarly, user's motivation should be considering as it plays a role in developing the image. Most importantly, in today's world the existence of social media is the helpful

tool in developing an image of the product or destination, so it should be creatively use in the image building process.

8. Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate the factors influencing destination image through social media in pre-purchase period of tourism in Pakistan. The research framework was based on the destination image formation theory. The findings of present research showed that there is insignificant relationship between user generated content and destination image in the context of Pakistan. Whereas the research confirms that information quality and tourist's motivation have significant and direct relationship with the destination image in the context of Pakistan. This study contributes to the existing literature by verifying the variables relationships with the destination image through social media. Moreover, this research will help the tourism sector and marketers in making the destination image more positive and attractive.

9. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study. Firstly, this study is conducted in the context of Pakistan, the researcher is not able to generalize the findings to other areas of the world. This may be due to the cultural and societal differences of the territory. Secondly, this study used purposive sampling, the results of the research can't be generalizing. Other than that, the researcher didn't consider the previous experience of the tourists. DI may also depend on the previous experience of the tourists. If the tourist's previous experience is satisfactory, he may have a positive DI and vice versa. Hence this may influence the tourism image of the destination.

Furthermore, this study collected the data through online questionnaire. It may be the convenient and effective way of data collection but there are several drawbacks of this strategy. As the researcher is not able to identify the respondents. The respondent's identity is confidential which may rise many queries about the background of the participants. Moreover, the data was collected from Facebook tourism groups. This is also a limitation of the present study that other social media platforms should also be considered. Additionally, there was high representation of youth as compared to senior citizens. This may be because of the accessibility issues of social networking sites to the old participants.

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