

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE
USER-GENERATED CONTENT
(UGC) INFORMATION QUALITIES
ON PERCEIVED DESTINATION
IMAGE, PERCEIVED TRAVEL RISK
AND TOURIST'S BEHAVIOURAL
INTENTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Although online User-generated Content (UGC) platforms have been used widely, people are exposed to abundant information generated by common online users via social media and travel review websites. Misleading and defamatory published information could jeopardise tourism destination image and lead to negative tourist behavioural intentions. Since the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic hit the travel industry badly, tourists projected high concern on the safety and security aspects during visitation. This study adopts the extended Mehrabian and Russel's Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, with the following objectives: (i) to examine the effect of perceived information qualities of online UGC as the stimulus factor on destination image, (ii) to evaluate the influence of destination image components towards behavioural intentions, considered as the final response, (iii) to assess the role of perceived destination images as the mediator, and (iv) to determine the perceived travel risk of COVID-19 as moderating variable between destination image components and behavioural intentions. A total of 255 eligible data were analysed to yield descriptive statistics, and Partial-least Square - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses of the study and evaluate the model. The result indicated that intrinsic travel information quality most significantly influenced the perceived cognitive image. Meanwhile, contextual travel information quality was the most significant predictor of the perceived affective image. This study has also confirmed that cognitive image positively influenced affective image. Both destination image components, cognitive and affective, significantly affected behavioural intentions. Based on the SmartPLS 3.1.1 bootstrapping analysis, cognitive image indirectly affected the relationship between intrinsic information quality and behavioural intentions. On the other hand, affective image had a significant indirect effect on the relationship between contextual information quality and behavioural intentions. Interestingly, affective image mediated oppositely on the relationship between social information quality and behavioural intentions. Simple Moderation analysis revealed that the perceived travel risk of COVID-19 did not influence the relationship between both destination image components towards tourists' behavioural intentions. The result from the present study verified that the extended SOR model could be integrated into the research of online travel UGC, destination image, and behavioural intentions of tourists, particularly in Malaysia. The inclusion of travel risk also enhances the use of SOR in a pandemic situation. Given the positive outlook from the respondents, understanding online travel UGC could assist organisations to improve business performance by leveraging consumer content, enhancing destination or company's image influences, and setting a benchmark for competitors in market share.

Keywords: User-generated Content, Destination Image, Behavioural Intentions, Perceived Travel Risk; Stimulus-Organism-Response

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Chapter Overview	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Problem Statements	4
1.3.1 Information Quality of Online User-generated Content (UGC)	4
1.3.2 Perceived Destination Images	5
1.3.3 Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model	6
1.3.4 Perceived Travel Risk	7
1.4 Purpose of the Study	7
1.5 Research Objectives	8
1.6 Research Questions	9
1.7 Proposed Research Framework of the Study	10
1.8 Hypotheses of the Study	10
1.9 Significance & Novelty of the Study	12
1.9.1 Academic Perspective	12
1.9.2 Practical Perspective	14
1.10 Definition of Operational Terms	16
1.10.1 Online UGC	16
1.10.2 Online Information Quality	16

1.10.3	Perceived Destination Image	16
1.10.4	Cognitive Image	17
1.10.5	Affective Image	17
1.10.6	Behavioural Intentions	17
1.10.7	Perceived Travel Risk	17
2.0	CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1	Chapter Overview	19
2.2	Malaysia's Tourism Industry Overview	19
2.3	Evolution of Information Sources as Communication Tools	23
2.4	Online UGC	25
2.4.1	Online UGC Usage in Malaysia	28
2.5	Perceived Risk in Tourism	30
2.5.1	Concept and Types of Perceived Risk	30
2.5.2	Perceived Risk Assessment	32
2.5.3	Perceived Risk in Malaysia	33
2.5.4	The COVID-19 Pandemic	35
2.6	Supporting and Related Theories	37
2.6.1	Information Qualities on online UGC Platforms	37
2.6.1.1	Intrinsic Information Quality (IQ)	41
2.6.1.2	Contextual Information Quality (IQ)	42
2.6.1.3	Representational Information Quality (IQ)	42
2.6.1.4	Accessibility Information Quality (IQ)	43
2.6.1.5	Social Information Quality (IQ)	44
2.6	Source Credibility as Part of Information Quality Dimensions	46
2.7	Perceived Country and Destination Image	48
2.7.1	Formation of Perceived Destination Image	49
2.7.2	Cognitive Image	53
2.7.3	Affective Image	54
2.8	Behavioural Intentions	55
2.8.1	Revisit Intention	57
2.8.2	Word of Mouth Intention	57
2.9	Underpinning Theory of the Study	58