The impact of user-generated digital content (UGC) on travel decisions: A comparative study of Algerian demographic groups regarding travel to Turkey

L'impact du contenu numérique généré par les utilisateurs (UGC) sur les décisions de voyage : une étude comparative des groupes démographiques algériens concernant les voyages en Turquie

Aouad Abdesselam Belahoual [1], Mehor Hadj M'hamed [2], Maria Nascimento Cunha[3]

[1]Univercity Center Nour El Bachir El Bayadh, Laboratory Sustainable Development in Highland and Desert Areas (Algeria), a.aouad@cu-elbayadh.dz
[2] University Center Nour El Bachir El Bayadh (Algeria), hm.mehor@cu-elbayadh.dz
[3]Instituto Superior Miguel Torga (Portugal), mariazncunha@ismt.pt

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Abstract:
This study examines the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on Algerians' travel decisions to Turkey. Analyzing 124 survey responses, it confirms a significant positive influence of digital content. The results show that gender and age affect influence levels, unlike education or income. Findings emphasize that digital reputation and peer reviews are crucial for modern tourism marketing.
Keywords: *user-generated content (UGC), travel decision, comparative study*
Résumé :
Cette étude examine l'impact du contenu généré par les utilisateurs (UGC) sur les décisions de voyage des Algériens vers la Turquie. L'analyse de 124 réponses au sondage confirme une influence positive significative du contenu numérique. Les résultats démontrent que le genre et l'âge affectent les niveaux d'influence, contrairement au niveau d'éducation ou au revenu. Les conclusions soulignent que la réputation numérique et les avis de pairs sont cruciaux pour le marketing touristique moderne.
Mots-clés : *contenu généré par les utilisateurs (UGC), décision de voyage, étude comparative*
Jel Classification Codes: M31, L83

* ***Corresponding author***

1. Introduction:

In an era of rapid digital transformation in the global tourism industry, User-Generated Content (UGC) has emerged as a critical determinant of consumer behavior, potentially higher than traditional marketing communications in perceived reliability and sources of credibility. This phenomena is especially significant in the specialized sector of tourism, where increased perceived risks need a strong psychological basis before behavioral intentions are developed. In this context, Turkey stands out as a pivotal tourist destination for this study, given the massive influx of related digital content across social media platforms, ranging from leisure to medical travel experiences. However, consumer responses to this content are not uniform, but rather vary based on demographic characteristics and personal risk perceptions. As Algerian tourists seek to explore international destinations, there is a pressing need to understand how user-generated content (UGC) contributes to shaping their final decision, and the extent to which personal factors such as age, gender, and economic status influence this relationship. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the psychological and statistical mechanisms that govern the behavior of Algerian tourists in the digital space, attempting to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the effectiveness of this content in transforming mere "interest" into an actual and tangible travel decision. Therefore, this study will attempt to answer the following research problem: "*To what extent does user-generated digital content (UGC) influence the Algerian public's travel decisions towards Turkey, and does this response vary according to the demographic characteristics of the respondents?"*

2. Literature Review :

The influence of user-generated content (UGC) on consumer decisions in the tourism industry is steadily increasing (Sánchez-Franco & Rey-Tienda, 2024);(Sultan et al., 2020); (Jain et al., 2021). This content is defined as material published by individuals, rather than official entities such as companies, across various online platforms including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, and travel websites (Ghaly, 2023). This type of content takes many forms, from reviews and photos to videos and

vlogs, which have become an essential resource for travelers. It also plays a significant role in the inspiration, planning, and information-gathering phases of travel, as confirmed by a study by (Cox et al., 2009). On the other hand, (Santos, 2022) defines user-generated content (UGC) as communication strategies on social media platforms among users, focusing on content created by the user themselves rather than the marketing of goods (Santos, 2022).

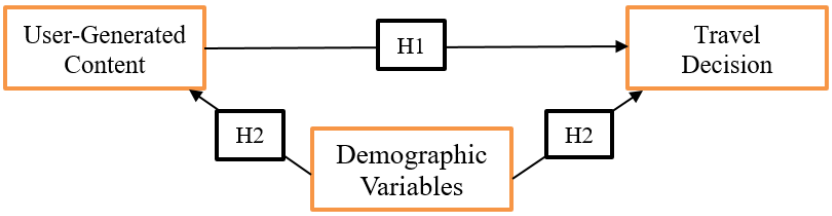
Recent studies have indicated that UGC plays a pivotal role, being more influential on travelers than formal advertising, given that it originates from peer consumers perceived as trustworthy and authentic. This content also contributes to shaping the image of a tourist destination through each traveler's personal experiences. Empirical evidence from (Alcázar et al., 2014) study confirms that this content exerts a direct positive influence on the cognitive and emotional dimensions of a destination's image, thus stimulating travel intentions. These effects, in turn, influence travel intentions and contribute to reducing perceived travel risks, as the content reflects direct experiences rather than commercial messages. According to (Aboalganam et al., 2025), 62% of consumers trust user-generated content when searching for information about new destinations (Alcázar et al., 2014); (Aboalganam et al., 2025); (Xu et al., 2023). Also, studies by Jog & Alcasoas (2023) and Susanto et al. (2024) also indicate that user-generated content, such as blogs and videos, has a powerful impact on travel decisions, up to 93% more than traditional campaigns, by reshaping destination perception and travel decision (Jog & Alcasoas, 2023; (Eko Susanto et al., 2024). Furthermore, the impact of this pre-travel content extends beyond simply providing essential information; A 2023 study in Bangladesh on a sample of 388 participants found that content circulated via social media platforms had a substantial and positive impact on international flight bookings (Sanjoy Kumar Acharjee & Tanvir Ahmed, 2023). Based on a review of previous literature and the studies it contained that established the relationship between user-generated digital content and consumer decisions in the tourism sector, we can formulate the hypotheses to guide the pr(Jog & Alcasoas, 2023)actical aspect of the study:

H1: User Generated Content ***(UGC)*** positively impacts Travel Decision (***TD)***

H2: There are statistically significant differences in the study variables ***(UGC and TD)*** attributable to demographic variables (gender, age, educational level, monthly income).

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 was based on a detailed examination of both empirical and theoretical assumptions through a literature review.

Figure 1 : Research Model



Source : Elaborated by the authors

3. Research methodology :

The present study tries to examine the impact of User-Generated Content (UGC) on the future travel decision of the Algerian public using Türkiye as a case study, to achieve this objective, a well-designed methodology is developed. Furthermore, the study investigates the potential differences in these effects across various demographic segments, including Gender, Age, Educational Level, and Monthly Income, to determine how these moderating variables shape the relationship between digital content and travel behavior.

3.1 Questionnaire design :

To develop a reliable questionnaire, various studies have been reviewed. These studies helped to develop the measures of User Generated Content and Future Travel Decision. The UGC was measured using 10 items were taken from the studies of (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012), (Alsheikh et al., 2021), (Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024), (Aboalganam et al., 2025). Future Travel Decision was measured by picking three dimensions from the research undertaken by (Patwary, A. K & Rashid, B, 2016), (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Some modifications were also made to fit all the items in the

context of the current study. All the 13 items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale where 5 referred to “strongly agree” whereas 1 meant “strongly disagree”.

3.2 Tools and techniques :

The data analysis was conducted using a multi-method analytical approach. Initial statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, reliability assessment via Cronbach's alpha, and bivariate correlations, were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The reliability coefficients for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. In addition, an Independent Samples T-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to examine significant differences in study variables based on demographic characteristics. To test the research hypotheses regarding the causal relationship between the variables, a Simple Linear Regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which User-Generated Content (UGC) predicts future travel decisions (TD).

Table1 : The table shows the distribution of the sample members according to general data.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	41.9%
	Female	72	58.1%
Age	15-20 years	5	4.0%
	21-25 years	42	33.9%
	26-30 years	26	21.0%
	31-40 years	28	22.6%
	Above 40 years	23	18.5%
Educational Level	High School or below	9	7.3%
	Bachelor's Degree or Above	78	62.9%
	Graduate Studies	37	29.8%

Monthly Income	Less than 50,000 dinars	57	46.0%
	50,000 - 100,000 dinars	44	35.5%
	More than 100,000 dinars	23	18.5%
Total		**124**	**100.0%**

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

3.3 Reliability analysis

Internal consistency among measurement variables has been ensured by reliability analysis (Hair, J. F et al., 2010). All the 2 constructs showed high internal consistency and reliability as the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for each construct, in Table 2,were found to be larger than 0.7 which is the minimum acceptable value (Kline, R. B, 2016); (Hair, J. F et al., 2010); (Fornell, C & Larcker, D. F, 1981).

Table 2: reliability of each construct

Constructs	Number of Scale items	Cronbach's alpha
UGC	10	0,734
Travel Decision	3	0,703
Total	13	0,742

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

It is noted from the table above that the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.742, which allows us to conclude that the questionnaire data is valid for statistical analysis and testing the study's hypotheses.

Table 3: Constructs and scale items

Constructs	Scale items	Description of scale items	Sources
UGC	UGC1	Information or reviews about traveling to Türkiye online are trustworthy.	(Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012) (Alsheikh et al., 2021)
	UGC2	Internet users will be honest in their recommendations to me regarding Türkiye as a destination.	(Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012) (Alsheikh et al., 2021)
	UGC3	Content uploaded (photos, videos, posts, and comments) by other travelers about Türkiye is reliable.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024)
	UGC4	The information posted by other tourists about the tourist destination is reasonable and logical.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024) (Aboalganam et al., 2025)
	UGC5	Content uploaded by other travelers about Türkiye as a destination is my topic.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024) (Aboalganam et al., 2025)
	UGC6	My travel destination was partly determined based on content posted by other travelers.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024) (Aboalganam et al., 2025)
	UGC7	I trust positive online travel reviews more than negative destination reviews.	(Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012)
	UGC8	My perception of Türkiye as a tourist destination has changed because of social media posts by other travelers.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024)

	UGC9	I have become more aware of the tourist destination thanks to the content provided by other travelers.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024) (Aboalganam et al., 2025)
	UGC10	The details that other tourists have submitted about the tourist destination are extensive.	(Wijaya, C. O et al., 2024) (Aboalganam et al., 2025)
Travel Decision	TD1	I expect to visit Türkiye in the future.	(Patwary, A. K & Rashid, B, 2016) (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012)
	TD2	I prefer visiting Türkiye over any other destination.	(Patwary, A. K & Rashid, B, 2016) (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012)
	TD3	If I need to have an international trip, I think I will visit Türkiye in the future.	(Patwary, A. K & Rashid, B, 2016) (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012)

Source: Elaborated by the authors

4. Results: Hypothesis Testing:

This section aims to examine the impact of user-generated digital content (UGC) on the travel attitude (TD) of the Algerian public towards Türkiye.

4.1 Correlation Analysis:

To verify the existence of a preliminary relationship between the study variables, Pearson's Correlation coefficient was calculated.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

Variable	*UGC*	*TD*
UGC	1	0.238
Sig. (bilatérale)		0.008

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

The correlation matrix showed a statistically significant positive relationship between the independent variable (UGC) and the dependent variable (TD), with the correlation coefficient value being 0.238 at a significance level of 0.05.

4.2 Simple Linear Regression:

In order to determine the predictive power of digital content and to test the main research hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was performed.

4.3 Model Summary:

Table 5: R-Squared (R^2)

Model	*R*	R^2
1	0,238	0.057

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

4.4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Regression Model:

Table 6: ANOVA Table

Model	*Sum of Squares*	*df (degrees of freedom)*	*Mean Square*
Regression	4.288	1	4.288
Residual	71.292	122	0.584
Total	75.580	123	

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

4.5 Coefficients:

Table 7: Coefficients

Model	*Unstandardized Coefficients (B)*	*Standard Error*
(Constant)	1.981	0.475
UGC	0.363	0.134

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

The F-test results showed that the model was statistically valid for predicting the dependent variable, with a calculated F-value of 7.338 and a significance level of 0.008 (less than 0.05). The coefficient of determination was 0.057, meaning that user-generated digital content explains 5.7% of the variance in the future

travel decision. Also the coefficient values confirmed a positive and significant effect, with a regression coefficient (Beta) of 0.238, a t-value of 2.709, and a significance level of 0.008. This means that a one-unit increase in interest in UGC leads to a 0.363-unit increase in the travel decision.

- **Decision:**

Based on the previous results, the main hypothesis ***(H1)*** is accepted, which states that: "User-generated digital content has a statistically significant positive effect on future travel decisions."

4.6 Comparative Analysis based on Demographics:

4.6.1 Differences according to the gender variable:

(T-test) was used to determine the differences between males and females:

Table 8: Independent Samples T-Test Results by Gender

Variable	***p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)***	***Statistical Result***
Influence of UGC	0.035	**Statistically Significant Difference**
Travel Decision (TD)	0.362	No Significant Difference

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

The results showed statistically significant differences in the degree of influence of digital assessments, favoring males (with a higher mean score). This suggests that men in the sample are more likely than women to rely on user-generated digital content before traveling, while the two genders do not differ in making the final travel decision.

- **Decision:**

Based on the previous results, the main hypothesis ***(H2a)*** is accepted, which states that: “there are statistically significant differences in the study variables attributable to the gender variable”.

4.6.2 Differences according to the age variable (Age):

One-way ANOVA was used to test for differences between age groups.

Table 9 : One-Way ANOVA Results by Age Group

Variable	***F-value***	***Sig. (p-value)***	***Statistical Result***
Influence of UGC	2.461	0.049	**Significant**
Travel Decision (TD)	2.931	0.024	**Significant**

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

The results revealed that age is a crucial variable in digital tourism behavior. While the 31-40 age group was most influenced by UGC (perhaps due to their desire to minimize risk and choose safe destinations based on others' experiences), the younger 21-25 age group was the most enthusiastic about making the actual travel decision. This discrepancy suggests that the influence of digital information does not always translate equally into a final decision across all age groups, but rather varies according to priorities and age stage.

- **Decision:**

Based on the previous results, the main hypothesis ***(H2b)*** is accepted, which states that: "there are statistically significant differences in the study variables attributable to the age variable".

4.6.3 Differences according to the educational level:

(ANOVA) was used to compare the differences between (less than secondary, university, postgraduate).

Table 10: One-Way ANOVA Results by Educational Level

Variable	***F-value***	***Sig. (p-value)***	***Statistical Result***
Influence of UGC	2.046	0.134	**Non Significant**
Travel Decision (TD)	1.399	0.251	**Non Significant**

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

The results indicate no statistically significant differences attributable to educational level. This means that digital tourism content affects everyone equally, and that digital research and evaluation skills are now accessible to all academic levels.

- **Decision:**

Based on the previous results, the main hypothesis ***(H2c)*** is rejected, which states that: "there are statistically significant differences in the study variables attributable to the Educational Level variable".

4.6.4 Differences according to the monthly income:

The differences between different income brackets were tested using ANOVA.

Table 11: One-Way ANOVA Results by monthly income

Variable	***F-value***	***Sig. (p-value)***	***Statistical Result***
Influence of UGC	0.411	0.664	**Non Significant**
Travel Decision (TD)	0.766	0.467	**Non Significant**

Source : Elaborated by the authors based on the outputs of the IBM SPSS 25 program

The results revealed that the respondents' monthly income did not significantly influence their engagement with digital reviews or their travel decisions. This can be explained by the fact that digital tourism behavior has become a general consumer pattern less related to an individual's financial capacity and more to the prevailing digital culture. Digital content (UGC) is accessible to everyone and used as a tool for comparison and evaluation, regardless of the tourist's economic class.

- **Decision:**

Based on the previous results, the main hypothesis ***(H2d)*** is rejected, which states that: "there are statistically significant differences in the study variables attributable to the Monthly Income variable".

Table 12 : Summary of study hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	***Statistical tool***	***Probability value (Sig)***	***Decision***
H1	Simple linear regression	0.008	*Accepted*
H2a	T-test	0.035 (for UGC)	*Partial acceptance (differences in UGC only)*
H2b	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	0.049 / 0.024	*Accepted*

H2c	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	0.134 / 0.251	*Rejected*
H2d	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	0.664 / 0.467	*Rejected*

Source : Elaborated by the authors

5. Discussion :

The study demonstrated a statistically significant positive impact of user-generated content on travel decisions. Although the coefficient of determination R^2 was 0.057 because the decision to travel to an international destination like Türkiye is a complex one, influenced by dozens of psychological, economic, and political variables also this in-depth analysis indicates that Algerian tourists are no longer reliant on the stereotypical image promoted by official travel agencies, but have become "digital tourists" seeking social proof. Also the results revealed that males are more influenced by digital assessments than females. This can be largely explained by the nature of their "information-seeking behavior"; males in the Algerian context tend to focus on the logistical and technical aspects of travel (such as hotel quality, transportation, and costs), details readily available in user-generated content. Females, on the other hand, may concentrate on the aesthetic or emotional aspects offered by formal images or general impressions.

From an age perspective, accepting the age hypothesis is crucial; the 31-40 age group is the most influenced by UGC. This reflects a degree of "digital maturity" in this group, as they combine the financial capacity (to undertake the trip) with a desire for risk mitigation through reviewing others' experiences. The 21-25 age group, on the other hand, was the most enthusiastic in making the decision, indicating that digital content serves more as an emotional trigger for inspiration than as a tool for rational risk assessment. One of the study's most significant findings is the absence of differences attributable to educational level or income. This analysis leads us to conclude that the digital divide in Algeria has diminished with regard to tourism, as digital content (UGC) has become a "public good" accessible to everyone. The use of platforms like TikTok and Instagram is no longer linked to a specific educational level, indicating that digital consumer behavior has become a pervasive societal and cultural pattern that transcends economic classes.

6. Recommendations:

- Travel agencies must shift from traditional advertising formats to strategies that encourage tourists to share their experiences (photos, videos, reviews) via social media platforms.
- Digital marketing campaigns focus on the (21-40) age group, with content diversified to suit males' interests in logistical aspects and females' interests in aesthetic and service aspects.
- Cooperation with Algerian tourism content creators who provide realistic and credible content, as they are the preferred source of information according to the study results.

7. Conclusion:

This study concluded that user-generated digital content (UGC) is a crucial variable in shaping the travel decisions of the Algerian public regarding travel to Turkey. Statistical analysis demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between reliance on this content and the actual travel decision. The results also revealed variations in influence levels based on demographic characteristics; males and the 31-40 age group emerged as the most reliant on peer reviews and social media posts. Conversely, the study showed that economic and academic variables (income and education level) did not produce significant differences, indicating the inclusiveness of digital tourism culture in Algerian society and its transcendence of class barriers. These findings confirm that the modern Algerian tourist has moved from passively receiving official advertisements to actively evaluating travel based on real experiences shared by other travelers.

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