Judging A Photograph:
Analyzing destination choice based on user-generated content on social media

Author: Yelijiang Arefujiang
Examiner: Martin Green
Supervisor: Mariana Strzelecka
Academic term: Spring 2017
Subject: Tourism and Sustainability
Level: Master Degree 1 year
Course code: 4TR520
Abstract

In this thesis, authors’ main goal is to test two hypotheses to compare if the tourists are more likely to make their destination choice based on user generated photographs on social media, as well as, tourists’ sustainable destination choice based on photographs with sustainable green content. The quantitative research method was used to conduct the survey with experimental design. It was aimed to compare the tourist’ trust in different photo types, the consumers’ trust was expected to be measured by three dimensions: first impression, intention, and persuasiveness, recommended by previous studies. However, the findings revealed that the tourists are not more likely to trust user generated content on social media to make their destination choice.

Keyword

Tourism, Tourists, Visual Consumption, Trust, Photo, Social Media, UGC, Destination Choice, Sustainable consumer behavior
Acknowledgements:

I would like to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge various people who have been journeyed with me as I have worked on this thesis. First, I would like to thank our professor Martin Green who has always been strict with us along the way and challenged us to bring out the best. Secondly, special thanks to my supervisor Mariana Strzelecka, I am very grateful for all the academic support and guidance. Lastly, my dear friends Sacha and Ali, thanks for being here whenever I needed support. I will miss the days I spent in beautiful Kalmar with you guys, love!

Arefujiang Yelijiang
June 2017
## Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................. 6

2. Literature Review ........................................................................ 8
   2.1 Problem formulation and inclusion/exclusion criteria ............... 8
   2.2 Data collection and evaluation .................................................. 8
   2.3 Reading and note taking .............................................................. 9
   2.4 Literature Review .................................................................... 9
      2.4.1 Social media consumption .................................................. 9
      2.4.2 Credibility of user generated content on social media ........ 11
      2.4.3 Trust in UGC ................................................................. 12
      2.4.4 Measuring trust ............................................................... 14

3. Conceptual Framework .................................................................. 16
   3.1 Theory of planned behavior ...................................................... 16

4. Propose of the hypothesis ............................................................. 19

5. The theory and philosophy of science .......................................... 21

6. Method Design ............................................................................. 23
   6.1 Research methods ................................................................... 23
   6.2 Research method selection ....................................................... 24
   6.3 Research strategy ................................................................... 25
      6.3.1 Experimental research .................................................... 25
      6.3.2 The experimental design .................................................. 26
   6.4 Data collection ....................................................................... 27
   6.5 Data analysis ......................................................................... 28
   6.7 Ethical considerations ............................................................. 28

7. Instrument development ............................................................... 29
   7.1 Travel destination photo selection .......................................... 29
   7.2 Survey Design Part One: Survey ............................................. 31
      7.2.1 First dimension: Tourists’ impression on the destination .... 31
      7.2.2 First dimension: Reliability test ....................................... 32
      7.2.3 Second dimension: Tourists’ intention to visit the destination 33
7.2.4 Second dimension: Reliability test

7.2.5 Third dimension: Persuasiveness

7.2.6 Third dimension: Reliability test

7.3 Survey design part two: Demographic information

7.4 Procedure

7.5 Sample Selection

7.6 Pilot test of the survey

8. Findings

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Descriptive Findings

8.2.1 Demographics

8.2.2 Hypotheses Check

8.3 Review of the Study Results

8.3.1 Purpose of the Current Study

8.4 Tested Hypotheses

8.5 Discussion

8.6 Conclusion

8.7 Limitations and Future Studies

References

Appendices
Judging a photograph: Analyzing destination choice based on user-generated content on social media

1. Introduction

After the appearance of social media in 2002 (Lib-on, 2016), the usage of social media in the field of hospitality and tourism industry has witnessed remarkable interest in the past decade (Kim, H., Xiang, Z., & Fesenmaier, D., 2015). Much of this interest has been under the spotlight from the appearance of Web 2.0. In this new era of using the internet, the role that individual consumers have in sharing, reviewing and responding to online content shapes user-generated content (Cox, Carmen, et al., 2009). The Internet has already resulted in countless user-generated content on world wide web (Ayeh, Julian, Norman and Rob, 2016). In the process, the Internet has gained massive popularity by enabling travelers to share and gain information online in many ways. This tourists’ behavior allows any traveler to share photos to the web for other users to see, share and react to (Cox, Carmen, et al., 2009).

The social media sites, as one of the main product of Web 2.0, attract more and more users and companies. With the growth in the number of social media sites where users (travelers) can easily share their contents (e.g. photos), the way that consumers search online for travel information has been changed, and the importance of photo taking while traveling continues to grow (Lo et al., 2011). Photo taking is a way of shaping and documenting the holiday experiences (Larsen, 2008). Tourists take pictures of the places they visit to show that they were at the place physically (Hillman, 2007). Photo taking and sharing on social media platform is one of the main UGC generating behavior, not many studies have been investigated the phenomenon and its effect on consumers’ choice. Such as, social media photos with geohashtag can stimulate tourists to travel demand according to the study (Önder, Irem, Wolfgang and Alexander, 2016).

In most cases, travelers often take photos during their vacation and share these photos with their families and friends by uploading them to social media platforms,
such as Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, Pinterest. (Önder, Irem, Wolfgang and Alexander, 2016). Indeed, Social media is also changing the way how the consumers access to the information about different products and services, at the same time, social media is also transforming the way how the companies reach to those potential customers ((Latorre-Martínez, María Pilar, and Tatiana, 2014). In tourism, promoting the tourist destination is more focused on how travel agencies advertise the destination through social media. (Latorre-Martínez, María Pilar, and Tatiana, 2014). By every opportunity, travelers’ behavior and travel planning are changing. Travelers are becoming more independent, searching for their information on the destination and making their decision on where to visit. (Ayeh, Julian, Norman and Rob, 2016). Moreover, when making their travel plan and traveler tend to choose their destination based on photographs, and they are more likely to trust the travel options that other tourists made than the actual travel options provided by companies and destinations. (Lo et al., 2011).

Lurie & Mason (2007) suggested that user-generated travel destination images can persuade a potential traveler to visit the particular destination, this is likely so because photographs are more memorable and can be easily recognized than words. Zimmerman, (2012) added that photographs could positively affect traveler’s destination choice because they trust that this type of user generated content is the real destination image. Because of the opportunities to share contents such as photographs on social media, the number of tourists’ experience sharing behavior through photography is still increasing nonstop. Given the trend above it is surprising that research on this phenomenon is absent. A few publications on the topic have argued that picture posted on social media sites by travelers are perceived as a trustworthy source of information to choose, plan and organize holidays. (e.g. Latorre-Martínez, María Pilar, Tatiana Iñíguez-Berrozpe, and Marta Plumed-Lasarte, 2014). Furthermore, more research and studies are needed to guide markets in a digital world regarding the sustainable destination. For instance, understanding the behavioral and emotional response of travelers to social media could bring much deeper insight into the traveler
decision-making process. (Divol et al., 2012). The purpose of this study is to investigate the behavioral attitude of Chinese consumer such as online trust towards user generated photographs and professional photographs regarding destination sustainability. The study employed experimental design of two sets of four photographs representing user generates photographs and professional photographs. Chinese consumers between the age of 20 to 40 were selected for the research because consumers between the age of 20 - 40 are the main purchasing power in China’s tourism industry (COTR,2015). Also, another article suggested that consumption by young generation Chinese consumers is growing at a high annual rate. The percentage of total consumption by the young generation is expected to increase from 45% to 53% by the end of 2020. (WEF,2016).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Problem formulation and the inclusion/exclusion criteria

A clearly defined and presented research problem is one of the most important factors for developing a research plan, to carry out the research, choosing the research strategy with factors such as availability of data, methods of analysis is also important (Walliman,2005). Randolph(2009) also claimed that in the first step the reviewer chooses what questions the literature review will answer and determines detailed criteria to dictate the inclusion, and exclusion, of an article included in the review. Considering the two main subject terms Tourism and Social Media. I chose to explore from the previous literature to see can tourists’ destination choice be affected by photos shared online by users on social media sites.

According to Randolph (2009), the second step in problem formation is to determine the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. For finding more articles influence the direct goal, focus and coverage, determine which articles will be included and which articles are excluded from the review is very important. According to the research problem, inclusion/exclusion criteria is listed as below:

1. Articles were written in English and published in major academic journals included.
2. Selecting of the source for collecting the articles should be evaluated.
4. The article should be published after the year 2000, focus on the new emerging, modern social media means.

2.2 Data collection and evaluation

In this paper, for collecting the most valuable, subject related and qualified literature, the first major preparation was picking the right database for the article search. According to Randolph (2009), The goal of the data collection stage is to collect a fully covered and high-quality set of relevant articles. The data collection process often begins with a search of academic databases and the Internet.

As Walliman (2005) recommended, one of the commonest ways is to use concepts in the form of keywords to conduct a search for articles. It is good to be familiar with the use of AND, OR and NOT between your keywords to narrow down your search. The use of these is termed ‘Boolean logic.’ AND is used to join concepts to make the search more specific. And I conducted my online search according to the guide.

2.3 Reading and note taking

As Newman (1989) recommended, for the second stage of reading, if you decide that the article is relevant to your research subject, then you must formulate the hypothesis that you anticipate will be answered in the thesis. The formulation of the hypothesis enables you to locate the required information and will save you time and effort as you cannot afford to go on reading aimlessly through the article. Also, at this stage, you must adopt an active and critical attitude.

2.4 Literature Review

2.4.1 Social Media Consumption

In the past, people were used to searching for information on their destination
choice by offline media, such as travel magazine and brochures or by visiting the travel agencies. Offline travel agencies have historically been the main travel option providers between travel suppliers and consumers (Buhalis & Laws, 2001). With the appearance of the new web technology and development of mobile phones, the frequency and efficiency of using internet or phone application technology are leading to a new generation for the world economy. As a result, social media was brought into tourists practice, a new way of consumption also has been delivered into consumers’ sight (Latorre, María, Tatiana and Marta, 2014).

Tourism depends on visual consumption, and especially it highly depends on photos that create tourist destination image (MacKay & Couldwell, 2004). Therefore, the majority of tourism businesses use photographs to promote the core attributes of the destination (Garrod, 2009). In their research on social media, Qian and Scott (2007) agreed that the use of social media to promote tourism is one of the most interesting research fields among the international scientific community. (Qian and Scott, 2007). This new technological innovation not only allows travelers to share their travel photos through social media, but it also provides feedback opportunities. This photo sharing and reviewing the interaction between tourists themselves can motivate others to visit the specific tourist destination. The popularity of social media continues to bloom, and it gradually affects economic and social aspects of the tourism industry. Social media, by its easy way of sharing photos and other related contents in one click, has fundamentally changed the way travelers search and read and share knowledge, while at the same time generating new information about tourism destinations. The appearance of the social media is the main reason why destinations and companies nowadays use tourists’ visual consumption behavior for business promotion (Latorre, María, Tatiana and Marta, 2014). However, research on a next step, travelers’ responses to social media content is needed. To make it even more clear, specifically, understanding the behavioral and emotional response of a traveler to social media will provide insights, which could be used to strengthen marketing practice of tourism destination marketing companies. (Divol et al., 2012).
2.4.2 Credibility of User-Generated Content on Social Media

Visually sharing the travel experience through photographs is an important part of contemporary digital culture worldwide (Jonathan E. Schroeder, 2002). Moreover, sharing behavior of travel photo on social media sites has become an important aspect of social interactions (Lo et al., 2010). Bynum, Vincent, and Tracy (2013) pointed out in their research that photo takers, especially the tourists who like to share their travel photos on social media tend to be more sustainable travelers than travelers who do not to choose to share their photographs. To understand how UGC (online photo) influences the destination choice, it is important to study the behavior of the tourists who trust the information posted on social media. In fact, the influence of UGC on social media travelers’ decision-making behavior will depend on how clear and trustworthy the information is. However, online consumer generated content is often considered more reliable than the information provided by companies or suppliers of services and products (Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009). The reason why we trust the user-generated content more is that consumers are trusted to provide more honest and credible information (Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009). In contrast, Hyung-Park et al. (2007) argued that because it is not very easy to identify and access the profile of people who post contents on social media, tourists cannot easily argue the credibility of the content provided. Some scholars support the idea that development of technology has already made it possible to manipulate pictures using filters and photo editing apps and soft wares, and therefore the reality of the pictures displayed on social media sites are always highly doubtable (Schroeder, 2002; Dovas, 2015). Julian, Norman Au1, and Rob L (2013) further support the concerns about the credibility of nature on UG photographs. In the end, viewers are confronted with the task of evaluating the stranger, in an online setting, as one is not able to evaluate the quality of the information by evaluating provider’s facial expressions or dressings. Furthermore, the easily updated settings of the online identity make UGC even more vulnerable, leading to various forms of manipulation. For example, the tourism service providers can easily fake their
identity and post dishonest photos and comments to promote their image in public to win over their competitors. (Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan 2008). The found works in this case have shown that picture posted on social media sites by tourists considered as a reliable source to choose, plan and organize their trips and holidays. It shows that the pictures posted on social media sites impact travelers’ decision-making process. The use of these photo-based social media sites are always accompanied by the credibility problems as an information source for a market study, thus should be studied thoroughly. (Latorre-Martínez, María Pilar, Tatiana Iñíguez-Berrozpe, and Marta Plumed-Lasarte, 2014).

2.4.3 Consumer Trust in UGC

The effect of consumers’ trust in UGC, the information that comes from social media is a research interest area. But one of the main concerns getting more attention about using the UGC on social media when planning trip is how the consumers make sure that the contents (photos) are trustworthy. (Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009). There has been an amount of debate focusing on whether we should trust on UGC on social media (Lo et al., 2011, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009, Tham, 2013, Dholakia & Durham, 2010). Most of the researchers confirmed that UGC is worth trusting (Lo et al., 2011, Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009). In her ambitious study research, Lo (2011) found that travelers commonly trust more the photos that other travelers took and the travel options that other travelers selected rather than the actual travel options provided by companies and destinations. (Lo et al., 2011). But still, several studies were skeptical. Tham (2013) for instance, insisted that weather if UGC trustworthiness depends on the display of the content, channel variety, message capabilities and content provider motivation for display. Those companies that engage with customers on a daily basis using social media will find that such strong involvement can be used to strengthen the trust in a particular brand, and evidence is beginning to emerge that more and more companies are investing in social media to promote their brand (Dholakia & Durham, 2010).
In their most recent research which related to consumer’s attitudes towards online shopping, authors examined consumers’ attitudes toward online shopping in Jordan. (Al-Debei, M., Akroush, M., & Ashouri, M. 2015). The paper adopts Theory of Planned Behavior to look at consumers’ trust towards electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and examine their effects on consumer attitudes toward online shopping. In another research, the impact of electronic word of mouth on a tourism destination choice, authors look into the current environment where there has been a less trust in both organizations and advertising, word of mouth offers a new way to gain a significant advantage (Jalilvand, & Samiei, 2012). The paper investigated the impact of electronic WOM (eWOM) on a tourism destination choice, using a structural equation modeling procedure to the examination of the influences of eWOM on attitudes towards subjective norms and travel intention. Further, an evaluation was conducted to determine the effect of past travel experience on using eWOM and TPB model (Jalilvand, & Samiei. 2012).

In a study focused on consumers trust on eWOM, researchers tested a transfer trust model that investigates the influence of eWOM on consumer trust and travel intention. The findings from data analyses from the study suggested that there is a connection between eWOM and consumer trust, it was concluded that eWOM is positively related to travel intention and eWOM is positively related to consumer trust, and destination trust is positively related to travel intention to visit the destination. (Abubakar, & Ilkan. 2016). In this interesting research related to electronic word of mouth within a hotel context, the study used an experimental design to explore the role of factors that influence perceptions of consumer trust and consumer choice. As a result, consumers seem to be more influenced by the negative reviews and information provided by former consumers. In contrast, the more positive information helps in reducing the hotel booking intentions and consumer trust in eWOM. (Sparks, B& Browning, 2011).

Since it is one of the marketing strategies for the tourism industry to use tourists’ trust in user-generated content on social media to reach potential consumers and promote tourism industry, it is essential to conduct further research on how user
generated content affect tourist destination choice based on consumer trust, and it’s sustainability practice.

### 2.4.4 Measuring Trust

The accessibility of the social media to share opinions, thoughts and information and experience offers individuals and enterprises with great opportunities to communicate with each other. This communication relies on the level of trust individuals have with each other as well as with the service provider. In psychology, Trust is described through three aspects: cognitive, emotive and behavioral (Beatty et al. 2011). Trust is perceived as a psychological state of the individual, where an individual takes the risk to believe others’ positive intentions and behavior (Rousseau et al. 1998).

There are several models to measure trust in previous literature; Trust information collection model suggested that trust can be controlled by attitude, behavior, and experience in social media networks. Most attitudes resulted from a direct experience or an observational learning of the environment; trust is an effective attitude form (Jones, 1996). A user’s positive or negative attitude towards product and service can be calculated using Liker-type scale (Likert, 1932). Experience can be evaluated through experience based trust framework, for example, Josang et al. (2001), discussed the trust model based on user’s feedback and experience. Furthermore, user behaviors are also an important part of trust in social media networks. It was proposed from a survey that trust model can be formed based on usage behavior of mobile Apps (Yan et al. 2008). On the other hand, In the interaction based model, the author uses the interaction between participants within media network to compare the formulation of trust. Liu et al. (2008) studied an approach to predict trust using the interaction behavior of the users; they suggested two patterns evaluate trust, users’ intention to share the comments and reviews, and the possible interaction which might happen between two users. Furthermore. Adali et al. [2010] tested the trust based on communication behavior between two users, especially focused on conversational trust which is
evaluated by how frequently two users communicate with each other within the social media network.

However, in this study, the theory of planned behavior model was proposed for the further study as it is one of the well-claimed models for understanding human behavior and action (Ajzen, 2001). Throughout the whole process, it was expected to use the combination of individual’s first impression, intention to visit the place and persuasiveness of the photo to measure the trust based on the photograph and compare the user’s destination choice.

The first impression through photo helps to builds trust over the destination on the photo; tourists are more willing to visit the destination they perceived to be more trustable. In their research, by exploring the role of personal photos in Airbnb, authors Ert, E., Fleischer, A., & Magen, N. (2016) explained that on Airbnb where hosts rent their living space, hosts’ attributes such as responsiveness, hospitality, and fairness could not be directly measured. But, the shared visual photo on the site can form an immediate impression of trustworthiness. The result of the research indicated that potential Airbnb customers were influenced by their first impressions of hosts' photos, and make purchase decisions based on those impressions. Furthermore, customers were more affected by their first impressions on hosts’ photos than the effect of reputation. Furthermore, a study conducted by Xiang and Fesenmaier (2006), suggested that online information searchers who have good first impressions toward a website are more willing to stay on the website and use it for trip planning.

Intention to visit the place and trust has been in close relationship across the tourism and hospitality research field. According to the former research, tourists are more willing to pay a visit to the place which they believe trustworthy and dependable, in other words, if one is more likely to visit the place, this place should be perceived as trustworthy (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010). Further, tourist’s emotional reliability towards a destination forms willingness of consumers to make the decision to purchase and visit the destination, and this intention forms trust over the place (Thomson, McInniss, & Park, 2005). In their recent research on tourists’ intention
to travel to the destination and trust the quality of medical tourism in Turkey. Abubakar & Ilkan (2016) used a quantitative method to study the relationship between intention and trust based on eWOM. The result indicated that eWOM has a significant impact on ones’ perception of destination trust and intention to travel.

The revolution on Internet resulted in UGC on social media, now in destination marketing strategies, social media is one of the most persuasive media to affect tourists’ destination choice (Anderson 2006; Hwang et al. 2006). Beak et el. (2015) explained in their research that if the consumer considered the content persuasive which means the consumer believe the content trustworthy, and it will lead to consumer’s change in attitude and purchase intention which based on trust. Hence, in research which is aimed to test the trust, it is important to consider the persuasiveness of the content into the process.

3. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework in research describes the main object to be studied graphically, and in narrative form, these objects commonly are the key factors, constructs and variables, and the relationship among them. The framework can be elaborate as well as rudimentary, descriptive or casual, theory driven or commonsensical. (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this research, more depth is given to pay more attention to Social media trust and consumers’ behavior(choice), hence, Theory of Reasoned Action Framework and Theory of Planned Behavior are applied for further research.

3.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

Social psychologists developed series models of behavior to improve the predictive power of attitudes. (Olson & Zanna, 1993). The most widely used and researched model is the Theory of Planned Behavior. Theory of Planned Behavior describes how behavior is formed based on psychological concepts as beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions and behavior. TPB can explain the relationship between consumers’ beliefs, intentions,
attitudes, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, according to TPB, behavioral intention is determined by three types of independent factors, one’s attitude toward a behavior, subjective norms, and behavioral control factors, all these three factors influence an individual’s intention to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Since the 1970s, the Theory of planned behavior has been used in several studies on social behavior. It has been used to predict people's’ attitude toward behavior. For example, the theory was used to evaluate the consumer attitude towards online shopping by analyzing the consumer's attitude towards electronic word of mouth. In the study presented through TPB that their perceived psychological trust mainly effects consumers' attitude toward online shopping in Jordan, perceived personal belief and perceived web quality. Hence, the study assumed that perceived trust is a direct effect of perceived web quality (Al-Debei, M., Akroush, M., & Ashouri, M. 2015) Or the study helped to understand The impact of eWOM on a tourism destination choice and consumers attitudes towards visiting Isfahan. In the study, the relationship between the electronic word of mouth with attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control was hypothesized using TPB model to test tourists’ intention to travel (Mohammad Reza Jalilvand, & Neda Samiei. 2012). The TPB theory was also
successfully adapted in understanding online shopping intention and analyzed factors influencing behavioral decisions by identifying different targets of trust, perceived risk, and attitude (Hsu, M.H., Chuang, L.W. and Hsu, C.S. 2014). And study about how in medical tourism eWOM influence destination trust and travel intention, TPB was used to discover that eWOM is positively related to destination trust, and destination trust is positively related to travel intention to visit the destination. (Abubakar, & Ilkan. 2016).

Attitude towards photograph is perceived as a tourist’s overall evaluation towards the concept. For achieving the purpose of testing the attitudes of tourists towards the user generated photograph, and compare if the tourists trust more on user generated photograph than professional photographs, and make their final destination choice based on user generated photograph. Hence, attitude towards behaviors is the one that is relevant to the context of the research. Attitude towards a behavior measures the degree of a person’s evaluation of the behavior, to evaluate if the behavior is favorable or unfavorable. (Taylor and Todd, 1995). Photo taking by tourists is a symbolic behavior (Haldrup and Larsen 2003). Nowadays tourists share their travel photos through social media, at the same time, social media provides feedback on person’s user generated content. This photo sharing and reviewing the interaction between tourists themselves motivate other tourists to visit the specific tourist destination. (Latorre, Maria, Tatiana and Marta, 2014). According to the theory of planned behavior, behavioral beliefs of one’s awareness about the consequences of performing the action, influence attitude towards the actual behavior, these beliefs differ from one to another based on their personal experiences and personality(Ajzen, 1991). This study mainly focusses on tourists’ attitude towards user generated content which is mainly influenced by psychological characteristic. Hence, the study assumes that perceived trust influences the tourists’ attitude towards the user generated content.

There are few studies that examine Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior model in the field of tourism and hospitality industry (Kassem et al., 2010; Sparks, 2007; Sparks and Pan, 2009). Moreover, little is known about the role that user generated content has the consumers’ travel behavior and their decision-making processes (Cox et al., 2009).
This study postulates that individuals are more likely to make their destination choice based on UGC on social media, which mainly influenced by personal and psychological characteristics. Hence, the study assumes that normative beliefs which are impression (i.e. personal) and persuasiveness (i.e. psychological) formulate intention based on consumer trust which leads to destination choice. Hence, the Theory of Planned Behavior has been selected as the conceptual framework for studying the consumers’ attitude towards UCG and consumers’ destination choice. According to the previous research, for the further purpose of the study, the following model was adopted.

Figure 2. Proposed model

4. Propose of the Hypothesis

By assessing the existing theory and former researches conducted on social media user generated content (UCG) and its effect on the tourism industry, this research is aimed to contribute an understanding UGC on social media site and its effect on consumers’ destination choice. The research focuses on discussing and analyzing the role of UCG on social media sites in the tourism industry, and user generated photographs’ effect on consumers’ destination choice.

Human beings are visual creatures who consume more with their eyes (Willis, 1991). In previous research indicated that tourists commonly trust more in the photos
that other tourists took than the professional photos provided by companies and destinations (Lo et al., 2011). However, there are also different opinions saying development of technology has already made it possible to manipulate pictures using filters and photo editing apps and soft wares, and therefore the trustworthiness of the pictures displayed on social media sites are always highly doubtable (Schroeder, 2002; Dovas, 2015). During the process of research on social media and its influence on tourists’ destination choice, the hypotheses listed below proposed to be tested:

**H1: In terms of destination choice: One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to the online professional photo.**

By every opportunity, travelers’ behavior and travel planning are changing; travelers are becoming more independent, searching for their information on the destination and making their decision on where to visit. (Ayeh, Julian, Norman and Rob, 2016). It’s been claimed that travel destination image can be a persuasive way to encourage travelers to visit a destination, more likely because photographs are more memorable and can be easily recognized than words. (Lurie & Mason, 2007).

Online consumers contents are often considered more reliable than the information provided by companies or suppliers of services and products. Accordingly, because consumers are trusted to provide more honest and trustworthy information (Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009).

**H2: In terms of sustainable destination choice: One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to the online professional photo.**

Photo-takers, especially the tourists who like to share their travel photos on social media are more sustainable travelers than the ones they do not (Bynum, Vincent, and Tracy, 2013). The content with the different environment can be easily compared than before because of the globalization of the tourist gaze. Tourism also enabled a wider range of environment to be gazed upon because of the development of the technology
means. Appropriate environments now can be much easily compared and evaluated through people’s photographs (Urry, 1992).

The answer of research hypothesis is to contribute to the knowledge of UGC on social media sites and its effect on consumers’ sustainable travel choice; it helps to raise attention among young consumers to make more sustainable choices while choosing their travel destination. Understanding the character of UGC on social media may contribute to develop more sustainable travel behavior and create more awareness in one’s travel choice. Also, the topic correspondingly interacts with a potential growing area of online social media apps in mobile devices which makes information more easily accessible, thereby making sure to conduct the suitable method for the research is very vital.

5. The theory and philosophy of social science

Within social research methods, many different philosophies such as positivism, post-positivism, and constructivism are used and discussed. Positivism has been the main dominant perspective in the social science. The positivist ontology believes that the world is external (Carson et al., 1988). The researcher has an understanding that the universe or the world is the result of permanent and unchanging laws and rules. And positivism is linked to empirical science that makes sure the knowledge is accurate and certain that there is a complexity that could be solved by reductionism. (Olesen, 2004). But positivism appears to be a weak or lacking foundation for research and investigation in any case in the concluding field. (Nissen, 1985). Pettigrew (1985) further points out that critics and analysis come across the epistemological troubles resulted from the positivist ontology.

Post-positivism emerged because of the scientific methods could not be applied to all scientific theory and much of what was accepted as fact was theory and had not been observed at all or the act of observation had changed the subject. Post-positivism relies on critical realism, believes that reality is assured to exist, but can only be imperfectly accessible because of intellectual mechanisms of human and intractable nature of
Constructivism, on the other hand, believes in the view that the researcher and observer form reality and truth. Crotty (2003) describes that constructivism reflects intentionality in consciousness, this consciousness somehow is pointed towards an object which is shaped by consciousness and interaction between object and subject. Therefore, constructivism means the rejection between subjectivism and objectivism. However, if we look at the track of earlier constructivism, it indicates that reality and truth is a construction which bundled together. It gives all the credits to the role of construct and communication in the process of forming the truth and reality (Bailey, 2006). We can trace its academic and scholarly history back to the earlier part of idealism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007), Researcher and scholars who are after the constructionist ontology refer themselves as interpretivism rather than being identified as constructivist.

The positivists believe that in order to be strict with what we observe and analyze, we must put our values and thoughts aside and be objective. In order to gain the common answer for the same research conducted by different set of people, the researcher must identify avoid personal preferences aside and keep it as separate as possible from the research. However, the post-positivists might consider if it is possible to achieve objectivity but still, tries to keep up with the research ideal. In contrast, other approaches such as critical theory and constructivism believe in subjective research approach. They argue that we cannot isolate ourselves from our values and ideas, and these maps our research to understand the society surrounded us we need to understand ourselves first. There is a link between researcher and objects being researched so that the outcomes and findings are the results of their interaction (Long, Jonathan. 2007).

Guba and Lincoln (1996) identify and explain positivism, post-positivism, and constructivism as the key paradigms that related to research. Their notion has contributed an enormously helpful contribution to analyzing and differentiating paradigms of research. They. It has been argued in the article that the positivist and constructivist paradigm, as they explain it, is uncertain about the relation between
created realities and the unique state of the universe and that a world perception based on involving and participative realism is more thoughtful and satisfying.

Kincaid (2012) further argues classic distinctions between positivism and constructivism is that, except for the part of reality in the construction of meaning and gender relations in particular where the study is based on the assumption that reality exists and can be carefully studied. The main goal of scholars who intend to use this approach to conduct a critical dialogue between feminist and non-feminist research using hypothesis testing, scientific methods as well as another epistemological approach that may not use hypothesis testing, such as constructivism approach. Harding (1984) argues the differences between positivism and constructivism that Knowledge can be constructed through observing the reality that exists outside any power relation, while constructivism considers all knowledge as being socially constructed in existing power relations and cannot be objectively constructible. Constructivists arguably take these concepts even further and believe that there is no any reality than what we constructed in our mind and that all this are based on our social experiences and knowledge. (Long, Jonathan. 2007)

Testing the main relation between user generated content and its effect on consumers’ destination choice is the main purpose of the study. As previously discussed, the relation between social media and tourists’ behavior needs to be insufficiently researched. Accordingly, an experimental approach under hypothesis with collecting quantitative data will be appropriate for assessment of the relation between UCG and tourists’ destination choice to get an overview of society as a whole and to uncover social trends. Furthermore, since this thesis tends to examine the ‘relationships’ and ‘correlations’ between two variables using comparative method, and help to test theories and to provide material for the development of laws, the positivism approach is recommended for conducting the research.

6. Method design

6.1 Research Methods
In the research to test the impact of electronic word of mouth on a tourism destination choice. For achieving the research goal, using the theory of planned behavior to investigate the impact of eWOM on a tourism destination choice, Mohammad Reza Jalilvand and Neda Samiei (2016) suggested using qualitative method for the study. In another study by Abubakar and Ilkan (2015), they suggested to examine the impact of eWOM on destination trust and individual’s intention to travel to the medical tourism destination by using the quantitative method. Because it allows researchers to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon at hand and generate useful insights needed for future studies. Beverley and Victoria (2010) in their research, examined the factors that influence perceptions of trust and consumer choice on hotel booking, the study seeks to extend current knowledge by experimental design and investigating main and interactive effects. Hence, deductive approach to the experimental design was applied to the study.

6.2 Research method selection

Trochim (2006) defines an inductive method as moving from the specific to the general. While deductive method starts with the general and ends with the specific, for expressing arguments based on observation and experience, the inductive methods recommended. While arguments based on rules, laws and other accepted principles are better explained through deductive method. These two methods are differentiated from each other by their relation between theory and data, Deductive research test the existing theory and principles through hypothesis by analyzing empirical data (Bryman and Bell, 2007). On the other hand, Inductive research is based on incomplete data to make a conclusion thereby support the theory (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Gray, 2009).

The goal of this research is to examine if the UGC posted on social media sites capable of affecting consumers’ decision choice. This study is based on reviewing previous researches and theoretical and conceptual framework derived from existing theories. In the research hypothesis section, two hypotheses were set up. Hence deductive research approach is appropriate to apply for the research.
Qualitative research can be described as a study which I held in a natural setting. It is commonly researcher’s work to gather the information of the participants and analysis through common themes, Using the method of focusing on the meaning of the participants, and describing a process by both persuasive and expressive language setting. (Creswell, 2005). Quantitative research is somehow an approach that aims at generalizing the findings to the population. It needs researchers to collect a large number of data sample based on hypothesis, then use statistical manner to measure the data. A large number of sample size make sure the possibility and credibility to make a generalization regarding the corresponded theory. (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

In this research, quantitative approach is chosen due to the fact of quantification of the data needed to be collected and analyzed and the purpose to make a generalization. In this research, it is aimed to reach a large number of young Chinese consumer by the experimental method. In the research, the relationship between different factors, and consumers’ destination choice according to given circumstance is the main goal to identify in this research by testing the hypothesis drawn from adopted theoretical model. Thus quantitative approach is more suitable for this research.

6.3 Research strategy:

6.3.1. Experimental Research

In this research paper, methods and procedures were used to analyze the structure of user-generated content on social media sites and its effect on consumers’ destination choice. The construct of social media user-generated photo and professional photography served as independent variables if the picture contains sustainable green space or not were considered as the dependent variables.

In this study, the experimental design was conducted to analyze the relationships between different variables. Experimental research happens in psychology laboratory settings. (VanderLaan 2001). The controlled group experimental method of research allows the researcher is attempting to control the environment of the subject of the research, through the set of controlled experiment to measure the effects of controlled
change. (Veal, Anthony James.2011). VanderStoep, and Deirdre D. Johnston (2009) further suggested in their book that experimental designs afford researchers with a chance to make a hypothesis about causal inference, the purpose of this is to make statements to find out which variable is the cause and which variable is the effect. The experimental design has seen as one of the effective ways of discovering the relationship between variables (Smith & Albaum, 2004). In experimental design, the researcher has the greatest control over a research environment, under the given circumstances the researcher conduct the manipulation of variables to fulfill the objective of the research (Sahu & Pradip Kumar, 2013). Hence, the experimental design in social science generates a result which may have been lasted for a long time and produces a new research direction and solutions to the problems which may be discovered during the research process (Christensen,2007). For caring through this experimental design, an online survey was used as an instrument to measure the participants’ attitude towards contents. In the field of social science, a survey has been used as a data collection means for a long period. Surveys have been seen as one of the efficient ways to measure the individual’s opinions, behavior, and outlooks, or characteristics (Taylor-Powell, 2008)

In this research, for testing the hypothesis presented in this research, the experimental method will be conducted in the experimental design, data collection and analyzing the process in whole research period.

6.3.2 The Experimental Design

An experimental design was conducted for this study. The treatments were defined as follows:

2 (Type of the photograph) × 2 (Sustainable setting of the photograph).

Treatment 1: participants who saw Social media user generated photograph with the sustainable green setting.

Treatment 2: Social media user generated photograph without sustainable green setting.

Treatment 3: Online Professional photograph with the sustainable green setting.
Treatment 4: Online Professional photograph without sustainable green setting.

This design survey was implemented via SOJUMP. It offers the following features: Randomizer and Special qualification settings to conduct experimental research design. SOJUMP allowed the researcher to distribute the questionnaire into four sets with different photographs. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four treatments automatically: Treatment 1, Treatment 2, Treatment 3, and Treatment 4. As one of the pre-test results revealed, each participant did not recognize whether he saw Social media user generated photograph or not. Later the logo was added to indicate the source of the photography intentionally.

All of the participants were asked to read the instruction sheet carefully, which was the first page of the survey and complete the questionnaire. Two words, Anonymity and Voluntarily, were highlighted to indicate the researcher did not ask participant’s any identity information to ensure anonymity and participants were asked to take part in the survey with their free will.

6.4 Data Collection:

The sample for this study will consist 406 participants with purchasing ability in the age group 20-40 drawn from the population from China, an experimental survey conducted through Chinese website Tencent. As the main consuming power in China, consumption by young generation Chinese consumers is growing at a 14% annual rate—twice the pace of consumers older than 40. The share of total consumption by the young generation is projected to increase from 45% to 53% by 2020 (WEF,2016). The reason for focusing on this population group is concluded as below: First, the reason for choosing this uniform group is for ruling our possible interference from classical variables like age or social class. Previous research discovered that age and social classes are the factors influence consumers attitude and behavioral intentions towards sustainable consumption. (Roberts, 1996). Second, With the great purchasing ability, young consumers in China constitute of consumers in the future, they are likely to take their purchasing habits and behavior into their older age. Furthermore, these young
consumers will make great differences in the future. Hence, the research provides policymakers with enough possibilities to form more sustainable tourism destination choices habits within the population. Third, the selection of young consumers at the age of 20-40 because they supposedly have some awareness on the main concept of sustainability. And tend to make more sustainable choices under some circumstances.

6.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Science 24.0(SPSS). Reliability of the survey and its result should be ensured; the same result was expected if the data was accessed by other researchers for the academic purpose (Malhotra et al. 2010). To increase the credibility of the result, thereby, the Multiple questions designed for different dimensions for increasing the reliability of the survey (Drolet & Morrison,2001).

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted for analyzing the data, one way ANOVA is a statistical method which is widely used to test differences between two or more means. Additionally, since the ANOVA did not reveal which means are different from the other, it offers less detailed information than the Tukey test. Hence Tukey HSD test was also used in the research to confirm the result.

6.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are the standard norms for distinguishing right or wrong. Ethics help us to identify the difference between behaviors which is acceptable or unacceptable on the main part of the research. Blumberg (2005) defined ethics as referring to the standards of behavior about the basic rights of those who guided as a research subject of a project. The integrity and reliability of the research findings heavily rely on ethical principles. The public wants to make sure that the researchers followed the right research root and guidelines for issues such as human rights, conflicts of interests, safety and health. The way of taking care of those ethical questions impact the quality of research project. On his part, Saunders (2007) described ethics as the set
of questions about how to carry out and conduct research topic and craft research and approach available access, collect data, analyze and process data and write down research findings at last. Neuman (2007) further describes that ethics is the concerns that establish the proper way to carry out the research. It helps to define what is the moral thing to do during the research procedure.

In the experimental method will be used in this research, the issues considered ethical problems it may cause discussed below:

1. Voluntary participation refers to a human free will in decision making whether to participate in undergoing research activity as a research subject. It is voluntary for the participations consideration. In the experimental research method, it is highly important to pay special attention to the participants’ social circumstances in determining what must be done to put in place to not violate the exercise of free will. (Lavrakas, Paul J.2008). In the experimental survey will be conducted in the research, it is important to make sure that the participants voluntarily take part in the survey.

2. Anonymity refers to data collected from participants who are completely unknown to anyone associated with the research. That means, making sure only participants knows that he/she involved in the survey, and his/her name and other personal identities are all completely anonymous to the research holders. It is more useful in data collection process in the experimental method will be conducted in the research in which the respondents are not identifiable, and all personal characteristics are erased from the available data. It is also suitable for researchers to make more accurate research decisions and further investigations without knowing the participant's personal detail.

7 Instrument Development

7.1 Travel Destination Photo Selection

Two different type of photos selected for this experimental design. One was “professional” photographs which were gathered from one of the biggest Chinese travel agency site Tuniu, and the other was “user-generated” photographs collected through
Instagram. For finding out if customers interested in choosing the destinations on photographs with the green space which indicates the place as a sustainable tourism destination, two different photographs with “sustainable” green space setting and without “sustainable” green space setting were selected for further research findings.

Tuniu, as one of the professional online trip package ordering website in China, features professional destination photographs, reviews, and destination suggestions. From the beginning, Tuniu chose a different development path, focusing on tourism and vacation products, the main product with the tour line and free exercise trip package. In the whole model is the role of online retailers, through the integration of travel agencies, "favorite" tourist routes, customers only need a little mouse, you can easily book online travel products. (Muhai.D,2014). Professional photos are considered to be more attractive and effective in showcasing the actual travel destination than normal user generated photographs (Garrod, 2009). For conducting this experimental research, two professional photos have been gathered from Tuniis, from which one with the sustainable green setting and one without the sustainable green setting on the photograph.

Instagram, on the other hand, is seen to be one of the biggest user-generated photo sharing social media platform in the world. Nowadays promoting tourism destination through social media sites has been considered as the undeniable current trend in the tourism industry. Tourists(users) as a photo takers share their contents on their own social media platform, mainly Instagram, within seconds. (H. Hanan & N. Putit,2014). For the purpose of reflecting the settings discussed above, two users generated photographs were selected from Instagram, from which one with the sustainable green setting and one without the sustainable green setting on the photograph.

Participants were divided into four different treatment groups and supposed to see four different photographs randomly showed by the system automatically and answer the questions followed.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With Green Sustainable Setting</th>
<th>Without Green Sustainable Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media User generated photograph</td>
<td>Treatment 1</td>
<td>Treatment 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Professional photograph</td>
<td>Treatment 3</td>
<td>Treatment 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2 Survey Design Part one: Survey

In this survey, 22 sets of questions were used for conducting the research with five Likert scale ratings for the answer. (Uebersax, 2006). According to the previous research on Tourism Destination Image Cognition and Tourism Intention Based on Wechat Marketing (Yin Huizhang, 2016), the components were identified into two sets of variables; it was directly adopted in this survey design. And persuasiveness test was also included in the survey.

7.2.1 First dimension: Individuals’ impression on the destination

Participants were exposed to one of the four destination photographs randomly by the survey system, and item 1-6 is designed to evaluate the participants’ first impression on the travel destination shown in the photograph. For measuring the participants’ psychological attitudes scientifically, five Likert scale ratings were used for the answer. (Uebersax, 2006). For measuring individuals’ impression on the destination, Item 1 to 6 are adapted from Yin Huizhang (2016) Research on Tourism Destination Image Cognition and Tourism Intention Based on Wechat Marketing and include items stated as below:

Item number 1 stated, “I am interested in this destination shown on the screen.” This item was designed to see the participants’ preference towards user generated photographs and professional photographs. Item number 2 stated “The picture shown
on the screen is very realistic, not filtered.” This query analyzed if participants were more tend to rate the user generated photographs to be more realistic. The following item, item number 3 asked, “The picture shown on the screen is more professional and reliable?” This item indicated to measure if the participants were more willing to rate the professional photographs to be more reliable than user generated photographs. Item number 2 and number 3 were designed to measure the credibility of the destination shown in each photograph. Item number 4 “The picture shown on the screen has beautiful natural scenery.” This item is used to support the thesis, that people are more willing to rate the destination with sustainable green setting with higher scale. Item number 5 stated, “The picture shown on the screen is more modernized urban city.” Tend to analyze participants’ preference of the destination on the scale of modernization. Last item in this part of the survey, item number 6, “The picture shown on the screen has rich touristic atmosphere.” This item is intended to check the manipulation of the participants, to see which types of photographs were rated to be more touristic. For all six items listed in this part of the survey, five Likert scale ratings from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” on the other end with “Neither Agree nor Disagree” in the middle were used to measure the participants’ psychological attitudes scientifically (Uebersax, 2006).

7.2.2 First dimension: Reliability test

For assessing the internal consistency of the survey which was made up of 5 Likert-type scales and items, Cronbach’s Alpha was conducted to check the reliability.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics of first dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A reliability analysis was conducted on the perceived task values scale including six items. Cronbach’s alpha showed the survey to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.79$. In this case, even though $\alpha$ is lower than 0.8, we decided to keep the measures. In previous research about strengthening institutional-based trust for sustainable consumption, it was suggested that if the research is in the exploratory stage, lower measures could be considered usable (Zhang, Liu, Sayogo, Picazo-Vela, & Luna-Reyes, 2016).

### 7.2.3 Second dimension: Tourists’ intention to visit the destination

In this part of the survey, participants were asked to answer item 7 to 10. Five Likert scales were also used for this part from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” on the other end with “Neither Agree nor Disagree” to measure the participants’ attitude under investigation. (McLeod, 2008). To measure this construct, Item 7 to 10 are adapted from Yin Huizhang (2016) Research on Tourism Destination Image Cognition, and Tourism Intention Based on Wechat Marketing and include items stated as below:

Item number 7 stated, “In the future two years I will visit the destination shown in the picture.” Intended to directly measure whether the participant was motivated to choose the place for his/her travel destination in the future two years after viewing the photograph. Item number 8 stated, “If I got a chance, I would consider traveling to this destination.” analyzed if the participant would visit the destination under given a chance without limitation. Item number 9 stated, “I am willing to visit the destination shown in the picture.” further supports the item number 7 to discover the participants’ will to visit the destination. Item number 10 stated, “I am willing to make my trip plans based on the photo.” This item was adapted to compare the participants’ actual travel plan to visit the destination based on their trust for the photographs, to measure if the participants were more willing to choose the destination showcased on user generated photographs.

### 7.2.4 Second dimension: Reliability Test

Also in the second dimension, Cronbach’s Alpha was conducted to check the
reliability for assessing the internal consistency of the survey which was made up of 5 Likert-type scales and items.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>.907</td>
<td>.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s alpha showed the survey to reach high reliability, $\alpha = 0.907$. In this case, a reliability analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising four items; it was considered reached high reliability for the further research purpose.

7.2.5 Third Dimension: Persuasiveness

In this part measures of persuasion, as well as a credibility manipulation check was conducted. To measured participants’ perception of the trustworthiness and expertise of the source, 12 items were used for checking the persuasiveness of the source driven from pervious study (Dillard, J. P., Kinney, T. A., & Cruz, M. G. 1996, Dillard, J. P., & Shen, L. 2005). They were administered to investigate whether demand characteristics accounted for the subject's perception of the source's trustworthiness (Orne 1969).

Table 7

Question number 11 to 22: Please rate the destination shown on the picture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.Unpersuasive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.Not Influential</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.Unconvincing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.Ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.Not Compelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.Untrustworthy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.Unreliable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.Unintelligent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.5 Third Dimension: Reliability Test

Cronbach’s Alpha was conducted to check the reliability of the persuasiveness part of the survey which was made up of 5 Likert-type scales and items.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.968</td>
<td>.968</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reliability test conducted through Cronbach’s alpha showed the highest score, $\alpha = 0.968$. The inventory was found to be highly reliable.

7.3 Survey Design Part Two: Demographic Information

The final part of the survey was designed to gather the demographic information of the participants with 14 items. For the purpose of the manipulation during the experimental design, the demographic information part was designed to show up at the end of the survey intentionally. First four items included basic demographic information, such as gender, age, education background, the personal occupation of the participant. Item number 5 and 6 were designed to check participants’ social media preference and usage frequency. Item number 7 to 12 tended to examine the participants propose of using social media sites in daily social life. Five Likert scales were also used for this part from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” and end with “Neither Agree nor Disagree” to measure the participants’ attitude under investigation. (McLeod, 2008). Item number 13 was intended to check whether participants consider social media as
an important tool in daily life. The last item in this part, Item number 14 was designed to discover how frequently the participants use social media to gain information about products and services using the scale from always to never.

7.4 Procedure

The adjusted survey was shared on Wechat and Weibo social media platform, these platforms are the two biggest social media sites in China, where people tend to share their contents daily. The participants took part in the survey voluntarily. The survey was activated once the participants clicked the shared link from the SOJUMP site. And the participating the survey was voluntarily, and all the answers dealt with anonymously. It was participants free will to decide if she/he was willing to participate or not. And no one took part in the survey individually. Hence no participant was identified during the whole process.

Participants were exposed to one of the following four photographs and asked 36 set of questions.

1. Social media user generated photograph with the sustainable green setting.

![Social media user generated photograph with the sustainable green setting.](image)

2. Social media user generated photograph without sustainable green setting.

![Social media user generated photograph without sustainable green setting.](image)
3. Online Professional photograph with the sustainable green setting.

4. Online Professional photograph without sustainable green setting.
7.5 Sample Selection

The online survey was distributed from April 30 to May 1, 2017. Participants were asked to click the link shared on social media sites to participate in the survey, a total of 1182 people clicked the link, 406 participants have finished the survey with their mobile phone. Completion rate was 33.64%. With an introduction of the survey, both male and female participants were asked to take part in the survey. The survey participation was voluntary, and the data collection lasted for 48 hours. No any unusable questionnaires were detected, all 406 responses were used for data analysis.

7.6 Pilot test of the survey

The survey questions used in first and second dimension was adopted from original Chines study. The third dimension: Persuasiveness section was translated into Chinese by the author and peer reviewed by graduate student who is majoring Chinese traditional literature. Chinese version online survey website SOJUMP used as the main tool to set up the survey. And Wechat friends circle was used as the main portal for gathering the participants to fill up the survey.

A pilot test was conducted to test the questionnaire. The purpose of the pilot survey is to test the questionnaire wording, sequence, and layout. And researcher should estimate and carefully design the response time and testing procedure (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000), the Pilot test was also done in this research before conducting the survey on a large amount of people. A pilot test was distributed online from April 16 to April 18. A total of 81 participants filled it up to assess the quality of the survey. One way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the data.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impression</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>40.381</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was indicated from the One-way ANOVA analysis that there was not a significant difference between how individuals reacted to online professional photographs and social media user generated photographs regarding individuals the first impression on the photograph, intention to visit the place, and persuasiveness of the photograph.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>40.447</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40.450</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>1.112</td>
<td>.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>71.137</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.889</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72.125</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>77.276</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77.419</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One way ANOVA analysis that there was conducted to analyze if participants reacted differently to the photograph with the sustainable green setting and the photograph without the sustainable green setting. The test result suggested that there is no significant difference between how individuals reacted to two different types of photographs regarding individuals the first impression on the photograph, intention to visit the place, and persuasiveness of the photograph.

According to the result, considering the pilot test was conducted on a small group of people, this might be the reason for resulting no significance among groups, in the
next step, conducting the experimental design on a large amount of people were suggest. And the logo for separating the professional photo from user-generated photo was added to the content to indicate the different content source.

8. Findings

8.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the results gathered from the data collection process. An experimental design was conducted via SOJUMP to collect survey responses. Participants answered 36 questions following the experimental treatment; the design was tended to examine, if one is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photograph when making destination choice. The survey also gathered demographic information including gender, age, educational background, as well as the preference, frequency and proposed of using the social media sites. All the participants took part in the survey anonymously and voluntarily. SPSS was used to analyze the data using one-way ANOVA for the research conclusion.

8.2 Descriptive findings

8.2.1 Demographics

The survey was reached 1182 participants, a total of 406 participants completed the survey. The response rate was 33.64%. All the responses were analyzed since all of the participants completed whole 36 questions.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics Part One</th>
<th>Total (n=406)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Under 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>2.22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctorate degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>169</th>
<th>41.63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>47.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Usage Frequency</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
<th>157</th>
<th>38.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>28.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately likely</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>28.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly likely</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all likely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 indicates that 69% of the participants were male of the all 406 respondents. The minimum age of respondents was 20, and the maximum was 40 years of age. According to China’s outbound tourism report, 2015(COTR, 2015), 20-40 years old consumers’ online booking rate was accounted for more than 50% of the crowd, becoming the main force of outbound tourism in China. Thereby, it was controlled by the SOJUMP system that the participants under the age of 20, over the age of 40 were not qualified for the survey. The largest range of respondents was from 20 to 30 (80.54%). More than two-third (69.7%) of the participants were holding the bachelor's degree. Students and the employed participants were the majority of the respondents (89.41%). It was also obvious that frequency of using social media sites in daily life
was extremely high, 157 participants answered extremely likely (38.67), 117 participants answered very likely (28.82) to the question. It was assumed that usage rate of social media sites in daily life is extremely high. Its effect should not be ignored.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Total (n=406)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to share videos/pictures/music</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>43.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>38.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to share my experience</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>28.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>40.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>23.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think social media sites are important</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>45.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>35.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you use social media tools to get information about products and services?</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>15.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>44.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>30.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12 indicates that the frequency of using the social media sites among participants was extremely high. 82.52% of all participants were strongly agreed and agreed with the behavior of sharing music and photos on social media sites. 186 participants (45.81%) chose agree, and 146 participants (35.96%) chose strongly agree to acknowledge the importance of social media sites. From the table, we can also conclude that the frequency of receiving information about products and services through social media sites are relatively high, 44.09% of the participant answered “frequently”, 15.52% of the participants answered “always” to this question. It is concluded that the importance of social media sites should not be ignored. Its effect on participants’ destination choice should be under further investigation.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>User Generated Or Professional Photograph</th>
<th>With or Without Sustainable Green Content</th>
<th>Total (n=160) Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 1</td>
<td>professional</td>
<td>With sustainable green content</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 2</td>
<td>professional</td>
<td>Without sustainable green content</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>24.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 3</td>
<td>User generated</td>
<td>With sustainable green content</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment 4</td>
<td>User generated</td>
<td>Without sustainable green content</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>24.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The equally distribution function was used to divide the samples equally. The results showed they were evenly divided into the treatments.

8.2.2 Hypotheses Check

H1: In terms of destination choice: One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photo.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between tourists’ destination choice based on types of photographs. The independent variables were the online professional photo and social media user generated photo. The dependent variables were impression, intention, persuasiveness.
Impression scale used item 1 to 6 to test the one’s first impression on the picture to build trust. Intention scale used item 7 to 10 to evaluate one’s intention to visit the destination. Persuasiveness scale used item 11 to 22 to evaluate the trustworthiness of the photograph.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA of destination choice</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.708</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.708</td>
<td>3.246</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>212.564</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214.272</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.596</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.596</td>
<td>7.468</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>356.829</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>363.425</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.792</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.792</td>
<td>2.716</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>415.233</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>1.028</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>418.025</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result, the overall ANOVA was not significant. There were no significant difference between one’s first impression over the photograph (F(1,404)=3.246,p=0.072>0.05), no significant difference between the persuasiveness of the photograph(F(1,404)=2.716,p=0.100>0.05).

However, there was a significant difference between two groups on one’s intention to visit the place in the future (F(1,404)=7.468,p=0.007<0.05). Follow-up Tukey post hoc test was conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means.

Table15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics of destination choice</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhotoType</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44
It can be seen that the social media user generated photograph was associated with the numerically smallest mean level of intention to visit the place (M=3.19,) and the online professional photo group was associated with the numerically highest mean level of destination choice (M=3.44). Thus, we can assume from comparing the means that in terms of destination choice, one is more intended to visit the destination showed on online professional photo compare to social media user generated photo.

**H2: In terms of sustainable destination choice: One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photo.**

A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine, in terms of sustainable destination choice whether one is more likely to trust social media user generated photo with the sustainable green content compare to online professional photo without the sustainable green content. The independent variable represented the two different instructional groups: One who saw the social media user generated photo with the sustainable green setting, and the other was who saw online professional photo without the sustainable green setting. The dependent variables were impression, intention, persuasiveness. Impression scale used item 1 to 6 to test the one’s first impression on the picture to build trust. Intention scale used item 7 to 10 to evaluate one’s intention to visit the destination. Persuasiveness scale used item 11 to 22 to evaluate the trustworthiness of the photograph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impression Between Groups</strong></td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td>.509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

ANOVA of sustainable destination choice
### Within Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean 1</th>
<th>Mean 2</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intension</td>
<td>214.040</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214.272</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Between Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean 1</th>
<th>Mean 2</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intension</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>362.723</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>363.425</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Within Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean 1</th>
<th>Mean 2</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasiveness</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>417.973</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>418.025</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from the ANOVA analysis revealed no significant difference in the mean between the groups who saw social media user-generated photo with the sustainable green setting and online professional photo without sustainable green setting on tourists’ destination choice. There was no significant difference between one’s first impression over the photograph (F(1,404)=0.437, p=0.509>0.05), there was no significant difference between two groups on one’s intention to visit the place in the future (F(1,404)=0.782, p=0.377>0.05). There was also no significant difference between the persuasiveness of the photograph (F(1,404)=0.50, p=0.822>0.05). No need for Follow-up Tukey post hoc test in this case.

### 8.3 Review of the Study Results

#### 8.3.1 Purpose of the Current Study

Previous studies have found that people are more willing to trust more in the photos that other tourists took and the travel options that other tourists made than the actual options provided by companies and agencies (Lo et al., 2011). Online consumer contents are often considered more reliable than the information provided by companies because more consumers are trusted to provide more honest and trustworthy information by tourists themselves (Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy, 2009). Also, according to another interesting research, Photo takers, especially the tourists who like to share their travel photos on social media are more sustainable travelers than the ones they do not (Bynum, Vincent, and Tracy, 2013). But still, some researchers are concerned about the credibility of the user-generated content on social media sites since
it is not very easy to identify the people who posted the contents on social media sites. (Hyung-Park et al., 2007). Thus, the purpose of the present study was presented to test if one is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photo. At the same time, analyze if One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photo when choosing a sustainable destination to travel.

Previous literature was reviewed to determine the connection between types of photo and destination choice. This research helped to develop a questionnaire following the previous research methods. A total of 81 Chinese participants participated in a pre-test with an experimental setting questionnaire. The online survey website, SOJUMP, made this controlled experimental questionnaire available, and the questionnaire was shared via personal Wechat friends circle, the persuasiveness check was also included in the survey. Finally, survey responses (n = 406) were analyzed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the study’s hypotheses.

8.4 Tested Hypotheses:

Two hypotheses were presented in this research. Two of them were rejected by the data. Hypothesis 1 tested the link between personalization and travel motivation. In terms of destination choice: One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photograph. The hypothesis was rejected, opposite result was concluded against previous studies (Lo et el, 2011, Carmen, Stephen, and Jeremy,2009).

Hypothesis 2: In terms of sustainable destination choice: One is more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photo. However, the results revealed that the hypothesis was not supported. Here were no significant difference between one’s first impression over the photograph (F(1,404)=0.437,p=0.509>0.05). There was no significant difference between two groups on one’s intention to visit the place in the future (F(1,404)=0.782,p=0.377>0.05). There was also no significant difference between the
persuasiveness of the photograph\(F(1,404)=0.50,p=0.822>0.05\). The result revealed that one does not include the sustainability of the destination in the photograph when making travel plans. Thus, hypothesis 2 was rejected.

8.5 Discussion

This study is aimed to add knowledge to the theoretical understanding of tourists’ destination choice based on photographs. Two photo types, social media user generated photo and online professional photo have been under study. The trustworthiness of user-generated photo has been under argument for a while in research field, Lo (2011) in her ambitious study pointed out that more and more people are more willing to make their destination choice based on user generated photographs than professional photos presented by travel companies, since users provide more honest and real information over tourist destination. Still there are some scholars against the idea that user-generated contents are more reliable, they support the idea that there are still trustworthy issues exist among user-generated content because of the identity of the provider could not be identified and evaluated easily, and the information they are providing might be false (Julian, Norman Au1, and Rob L, 2013).

Moreover, this study contributes to the exploration of tourists’ destination choice based on user generated social media photograph, and tourists’ sustainable destination choice based on the sustainable green content. The study result, contrary to the literature review, indicated that tourists are not more willing trust more on user generated photographs to make their destination choice. Instead, individuals in this study are found to have more intention to visit the destination based on professional photographs provided by travel companies. The research further indicates that people do not concern the sustainability aspect of tourist destination showed on photographs while choosing their travel destination.

In conclusion, research on how travel agencies and companies use professional photography on social media sites to promote tourist destination and its effect on tourists travel choice should be under study. And the further research on the elements
affecting the credibility of user-generated content should be conducted. Also, why tourists from China are less concerned about the sustainable content of the photo and tourist destination should rise the intention of the research field.

8.6 Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to test two hypotheses proposed. The result indicated that in terms of destination choice, one is not more likely to trust social media user generated photo compare to online professional photo. the results of this research differ from previous research. As previous studies have shown, when making their travel plan and choosing their destination, tourists commonly trust more in the photos that other tourists took while traveling and the travel options that other tourists made than the actual travel options provided by companies and destinations (Lo et al., 2011). However, in this study, a different conclusion can be drawn based on the findings. The result of the study concludes that tourists have more intention to visit the destination showed on professional photographs provided by companies. Thus, the use of photo-based social media sites is still accompanied by the trustworthiness problems (Latorre-Martínez, María Pilar, Tatiana Iñíguez-Berrozpe, and Marta Plumed-Lasarte, 2014).

According to Urry (1992), because of the development of new technologies, people are capable of evaluating and comparing the environments through photography, but the survey result shows that tourist was not concerned about the sustainable green content is shown on the photograph, tourists destination choice did not effect by the sustainable green setting. Thus, the hypothesis 2 was also rejected. Furthermore, this study shows no any significant difference among different gender and age groups when it comes to comparing the destination choice.

Since China is becoming one of the biggest and important markets in the word, it is important to understand the consumption behaviors of Chinese consumers (Cui and Liu, 2000). Along with the rapid economic growth, more and more international corporates are now targeting Chinese consumers (Zhou et al., 2010). However, as a complex and large country, China has a different culture and value in different regions
(Ralston et al., 1996). Due to that, over 70% of the participant of the survey is from the north of China, these results cannot be generated to China as a whole. Hence looking into the consumer's behavioral differences in a different region is very important and helpful for the tourism industry to make more sustainable decisions, as well as for future studies which are aimed to study the consumer’s decision-making process through social media in the Chinese market.

It is obvious from this study that there is no significant difference between individuals’ destination choice based on user-generated photo and professional photo. Individuals are not more willing to trust user generated contents on social media sites. The result of the study was different from previous studies, this might be the result of the cultural and economic difference between regions across China. The east part of China has been a getaway to the west through export and import; the economy is rather developed. But the inland west part of China, on the other hand, has relied on agriculture and natural resource based industry, commercial activities have not been showed significance there (e.g., Veeck et al., 2007). Also, it is important to mention that there are huge differences in east and west part of China, the residents from the coastal west part are more open and individualistic than those who are from the inland east part, they are perceived to be more conservative (Zheng, 2006). It should raise the attention of the future study that consumers from the different region may lead to different consumer decision styles.

It was also indicated from the study result that individuals were not concerned about the sustainable environmental context of the destination they were choosing. The low sustainable consumption behavior and lack of environmental education in developing the area in China might be the cause. The analysis from former research indicated that the sustainable consumption behavior of the developing area in China is low. Education is also an important factor influence consumers environmental behavior, environmental value and environmental sensitivity, because it may not only affect individuals’ environmental knowledge, but also affect how individual act environmental friendly (Wang, Liu, & Qi. 2014).
These surprising results from the research show the importance of giving a deeper study the different consumer decision-making behaviors across the China. Overall, this knowledge could be useful to further academic research. Social media as one of the main ways to promote tourism all over the world, its trustworthiness and effect on tourists’ destination choice should be under further study, and tourists’ unsustainable destination choice after revealed to more sustainable alternatives should not be ignored in the future research on tourism and sustainability.

8.7 Limitation and Future Studies

This research made several interesting contributions. However, some limitations also exist. First, in this research, only the participants at the age of 20 to 40 were considered eligible for the survey, and the SOJUMP system automatically deleted ineligible participants. For the further purpose of comparing the data, other age groups should not be ignored in the future research. Second, the participants are mainly from the north part of China; this makes it difficult to generalize the result to the other parts of China due to cultural and educational differences. In the future research, to generalize the result, the study could use larger sample size from a different part of China, and comparison between China market and European market is recommended for analyzing the difference between regions and countries. Third, since it was very hard to define the participants’ photography knowledge and photo editing skills, two selected photos for representing the social media user generated photo were not considered the most suitable, other methods for selecting the proper photos and using more photos for the survey was suggested for the future research.
References:


Ayeh, Julian K., Norman Au, and Rob Law. (2013) "“Do We Believe In TripAdvisor?” Examining Credibility Perceptions And Online Travelers’ Attitude Toward Using User-Generated Content." Journal Of Travel Research 52.4: 437-452.


Bryman, A. and Bell, A. (2007), Business Research Methods, 2nd ed, New York:
Oxford university press.


Huarng, Kun-Huang, Tiffany Hui-Kuang Yu, and Wenhsiang Lai. (2015) "Innovation and diffusion of high-tech products, services, and systems." Journal of


No, E. and Kim, J.K. (2015), Comparing the attributes of online tourism


experience of two metal working companies. Journal of Cleaner Production.


Appendix one: Survey

Dear participants,

The following survey is a part of my master studies at the Linnaues University. In order to complete this study, I would like to invite you to fill in the questionnaire below voluntarily. There are no right or wrong answers, you just need to give your sincere responses. This questionnaire will take you approximately 10 minutes to fill in and all of your answers will be treated anonymously.

Part One: Please answer the following questions based on the picture shown on the screen.

1. I am interested in this destination shown on the screen.
   □ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

2. The picture shown on the screen is very realistic, not filtered.
   □ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree
3. The picture shown on the screen is more professional and reliable.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

4. The picture shown on the screen has beautiful natural scenery.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

5. The picture shown on the screen is more modernized urban city.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

6. The picture shown on the screen has rich touristic atmosphere.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

7. In the future two years I will visit the destination shown on the picture.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

8. If I got a chance, I will consider traveling to this destination.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

9. I am willing to visit the destination shown on the picture.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

10. I am willing to make my trip plans based on the photo.

□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

11. Please rate the destination shown on the picture.

Unpersuasive 1 2 3 4 5 Persuasive

12. Please rate the destination shown on the picture.

Not Influential 1 2 3 4 5 Influential

13. Please rate the destination shown on the picture.

Unconvincing 1 2 3 4 5 Convincing

14. Please rate the destination shown on the picture.

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Effective

15. Please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Not Compelling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Compelling
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
16. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Untrustworthy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Trustworthy
17. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Unreliable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Reliable
18. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Unintelligent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Intelligent
19. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Unethical | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Ethical
20. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Dishonest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Honest
21. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Inexpert | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Expert
22. please rate the destination shown on the picture.
Incompetent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Competent

Part Two: Demographics
1. What is your gender?
   □ male
   □ female

2. What is your age
   □ Under 20
   □ 21~30
   □ 31~40
   □ 41+

3. What is your level of education?
   □ High school
□ College degree  
□ Bachelor's degree  
□ Master's degree  
□ Doctorate degree

4. What is your professional occupation?  
□ Student  
□ Employee  
□ Self-employed  
□ Other

5. Which social media site do you use more often?  
( )

6. In a typical week, how likely are you to use social networking websites?  
□ Extremely likely  
□ Very likely  
□ Moderately likely  
□ Slightly likely  
□ Not at all likely

Please rate how well do you agree with the following statements about the use of social media sites? (you can choose more than one choice)

7. I use social media to find information  
□ Strongly disagree  □ Disagree  □ Neither agree nor disagree  □ Agree  □ Strongly agree

8. I use social media to keep in touch with family and friends  
□ Strongly disagree  □ Disagree  □ Neither agree nor disagree  □ Agree  □ Strongly agree

9. I use social media to share videos/ pictures/ music  
□ Strongly disagree  □ Disagree  □ Neither agree nor disagree  □ Agree  □ Strongly agree
10. I use social media to make new friends
□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

11. I use social media to share my experience
□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

12. I use social media to make professional and business contacts
□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

13. I think social media sites are important.
□ Strongly disagree □ Disagree □ Neither agree nor disagree □ Agree □ Strongly agree

14. How often do you use social media tools to obtain information about products and services?
□ Always
□ Frequently
□ Sometimes
□ Rarely
□ Never
Appendix Two: Research Plan/Time Budget

### Research Proposal/ Masters Research Project Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2.27 - 3.5</th>
<th>3.6 - 3.12</th>
<th>3.13 - 3.19</th>
<th>3.20 - 3.26</th>
<th>3.27 - 4.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Select topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Complete lit review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop research hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Develop research methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Complete draft proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Revise proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Complete proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Experimental design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>4.3 - 4.9</th>
<th>4.10 - 4.16</th>
<th>4.17 - 4.23</th>
<th>4.24 - 4.30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Collect data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analyze data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Draft Submission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Revise Draft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>5.1 - 5.7</td>
<td>5.8 - 5.14</td>
<td>5.15 - 5.22</td>
<td>5.22 - 5.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complete Draft Submission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seminar With Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Final Manuscript Deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Final Seminar VIVA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Revised Final Manuscript D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3