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The Mediating Role of Perceived Information Quality and Destination Image in the Influence of Generated Content on Tourists' Intention to Visit

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine the influence of generated content on tourists' intention to visit Derawan Islands by employing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theoretical framework. In this model, generated content, both user-generated (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC), acts as a stimulus that affects tourists' perceptions of information quality (perceived information quality) and destination image, which in turn influence their intention to visit. The research is motivated by the significant decline in Indonesia's tourism sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which also impacted the Derawan Islands through reduced international tourist visits. In the post-pandemic context, tourist behavior and preferences have shifted considerably, with increasing demand for credible and engaging digital information. This study employs a quantitative approach to assess the relationships between these variables. The findings indicate that generated content has a significant positive effect on both perceived information quality and destination image, which serve as mediators influencing tourists' intention to visit. These results highlight the importance of content-driven digital marketing strategies in restoring the attractiveness of tourism destinations. This research offers theoretical contributions to the development of digital tourism literature and practical insights for destination managers seeking to enhance their promotional effectiveness in the digital era.

Keywords : generated content, perceived information quality, destination image, intention to visit, Derawan Islands, S-O-R Theory

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of Indonesia's most strategic sectors, with significant contributions to the national economy. According to data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism contributed approximately 5.5% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019, with over 16 million international tourist arrivals. This growth was supported by various government initiatives such as *Wonderful Indonesia* and the *Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI)*, aimed at promoting regional tourism potential and boosting both domestic and international visits.

One of the rapidly developing tourism destinations is the Derawan Islands in Berau Regency, East Kalimantan. This archipelago is renowned for its rich marine biodiversity and unique ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangrove forests, and rare species such as green turtles and non-stinging jellyfish in Kakaban Island. Attractions such as snorkeling, diving, island hopping, and the presence of floating resorts in Maratua and Derawan Islands have drawn significant interest from both domestic and international travelers. Notably, Derawan Island was ranked among the top 50 best tourism villages in the 2024 ADWI, highlighting its rising prominence.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a dramatic downturn in tourism activity, including in Derawan. Travel restrictions and destination closures led to a sharp decline in tourist numbers. According to data from the Berau Department of Culture and Tourism, visits to the Derawan Islands dropped from 301,015 in 2019 to only 127,396 in 2020. While the number of visitors rebounded to over

420,000 in 2023, international arrivals have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. This underscores the substantial challenges in restoring regional tourism, especially in rebuilding traveler confidence and enhancing destination appeal amid global competition.

In the post-pandemic era, tourist behavior has shifted significantly toward the use of digital information when planning trips. Travelers are increasingly selective, seeking relevant, complete, and trustworthy information. Digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become primary sources for discovering destinations, offering both personal travel experiences and official promotional content. In this context, *generated content*—which includes both user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC)—plays a critical role in shaping tourist perceptions and visit intentions. As observed by Felix and Sugiat (2024), service quality and user satisfaction in digital banking platforms significantly impact customer loyalty, highlighting the importance of mediated pathways through perceived quality—an approach that parallels our model in tourism content marketing.

UGC refers to content created independently by travelers based on personal experiences, including reviews, photos, and videos shared on social media or travel review platforms. This content is often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy due to its real-life basis. In contrast, FGC is produced by official entities such as tourism boards, travel agencies, or resort operators, often in the form of promotional campaigns, visual advertisements, or accessibility information. Together, UGC and FGC influence how tourists perceive information quality (perceived information quality), destination image, and their *intention to visit* (Xu et al., 2021; Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2022; Yamagishi, 2023).

While prior studies have explored the direct impact of generated content on intention to visit (Eman, 2023; Stojanovic et al., 2022), limited attention has been given to the underlying psychological mechanisms—especially in the context of Indonesian tourism destinations. Key factors such as perceived information quality and destination image are believed to mediate the relationship between content and tourist decision-making (Wijaya, 2024; Liu, 2024). Therefore, a more comprehensive conceptual approach is required to better understand these dynamics.

The *Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory* provides a relevant theoretical framework for this study. According to the S-O-R model, external stimuli (generated content) influence internal states (tourists' perceptions and emotions), which subsequently drive behavioral responses (intention to visit). In this model, perceived information quality and destination image serve as mediators linking generated content to travel intentions (Harrill et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2021). This approach offers deeper insight into how digital information is processed by potential tourists in shaping travel decisions.

Therefore, the present study aims to address four key research questions: 1) How does generated content influence perceived information quality? 2) How does generated content influence destination image? 3) How does generated content influence tourists' intention to visit? 4) Do perceived information quality and destination image mediate the relationship between generated content and intention to visit?

The purpose of this research article is to empirically examine the influence of generated content on tourists' intention to visit the Derawan Islands, using the Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory. The study seeks to contribute theoretically to the growing literature on digital tourism marketing and provide practical insights for destination managers in designing more effective promotional strategies to attract tourists in the post-pandemic era.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal design to analyze the influence of generated content on intention to visit, through two mediating variables: perceived information quality and destination image. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine the relationships between variables in a measurable and objective manner using standardized survey instruments (Creswell, 2014).

Data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms, distributed to respondents who met the inclusion criteria, namely potential tourists who had previously seen digital content related to the Derawan Islands, either through social media or other digital platforms. The survey was conducted using a cross-sectional design, where data were collected at a single point in time. The questionnaire was developed based on theoretical constructs and previous research, and measured using

a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each variable consisted of several indicators tailored to the characteristics of digital content and tourist behavior (Hair et al., 2022).

The population in this study includes both domestic and international tourists who are non-residents of Berau but have an intention or interest in visiting the Derawan tourism destination. Since the population size is unknown, a purposive sampling technique was applied. According to Hair et al. (2022), the minimum sample size for PLS-SEM analysis is ten times the number of indicators in the construct with the highest number of indicators. With a total of 14 indicators in the variable with the highest indicator count, the minimum sample was determined to be between 140 and 150 respondents.

The instrument was tested for validity and reliability through convergent validity (with AVE ≥ 0.5), discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion (< 0.9), and composite reliability (> 0.7). All data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with SmartPLS version 4.0 software. This technique was chosen because it is well-suited for handling complex models with mediating variables and is appropriate for non-normal data (Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2009). The analysis included evaluations of both the outer model and inner model, as well as significance testing of the relationships between variables using bootstrapping with 5,000 samples. This method is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying the influence of digital content on tourist behavior in the context of post-pandemic tourism.

RESULT

Respondent Characteristics and Description of Responses

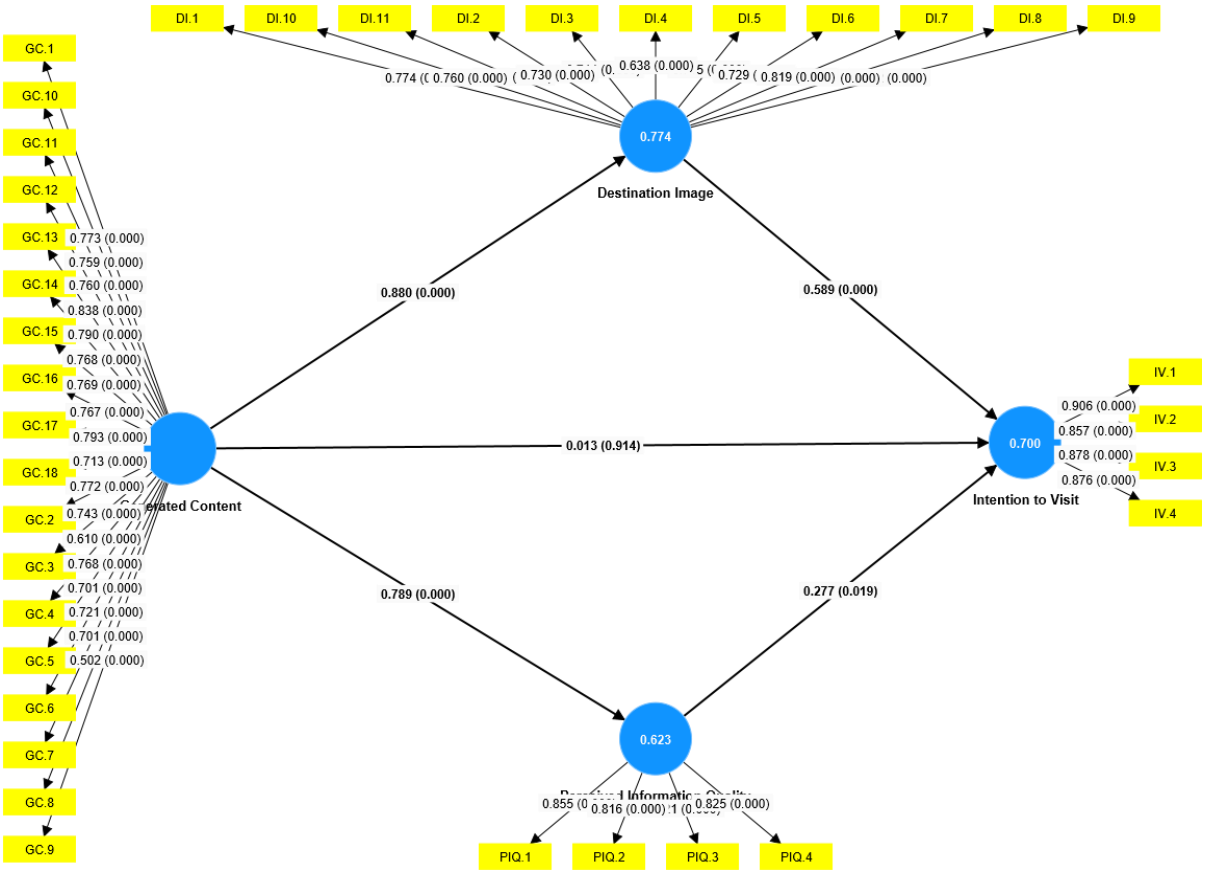
This study involved 145 respondents consisting of domestic tourists (86.21%) and international tourists (13.79%). The majority of respondents were within the productive age range of 21–30 years (51.2%) and were primarily employed in the private sector. Most domestic respondents were from urban areas such as DKI Jakarta and West Java, while international respondents mainly came from the United States and Taiwan. In terms of economic background, the majority reported middle to upper income levels—both in rupiah and in foreign currencies—indicating a relatively well-established socio-economic status.

Respondents were asked to evaluate four main variables in this study: generated content, perceived information quality, destination image, and intention to visit. The analysis results showed that all variables received high average scores on the five-point Likert scale, indicating a generally positive response. For the generated content variable, respondents expressed high trust in digital content, especially content created by fellow travelers (*user-generated content*). One of the indicators even recorded an average score of 4.64, reflecting a strong positive perception of the authenticity of digital travel experiences.

Perceived information quality also received favorable ratings, with respondents feeling that the information they accessed was relevant, comprehensive, and easy to understand. This highlights the critical role of information quality in influencing travel decisions. Meanwhile, destination image was rated very positively by respondents, particularly in terms of natural beauty, unique ecosystems, and the emotional impressions evoked by the destination. Lastly, for the intention to visit variable, most respondents expressed a strong desire to visit the Derawan Islands in the near future and indicated their willingness to recommend the destination to others. Overall, the data suggest that digital content plays a significant role in shaping tourist perceptions and encouraging the intention to visit a destination.

Results of Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model was conducted to assess the accuracy and consistency of the instruments in measuring the latent constructs used in this study. This process includes testing for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal reliability, as recommended by Hair et al. (2022).



source: processed data

Figure 1
PLS Algorithm Results in SmartPLS Software Version 4.1.0

Convergent validity was evaluated by examining the outer loading values and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Based on the data analysis results using SmartPLS 4, all indicators showed outer loading values above 0.70 and AVE values greater than 0.50. According to Table 1, all construct variables have AVE values exceeding 0.50, indicating that the measurement items for each variable collectively explain the underlying construct well. Therefore, the variables in this study have achieved good convergent validity.

Table 1
Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values for Each Variable

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Generated Content	0.547
Destination Image	0.558
Perceived Information Quality	0.687
Intention to Visit	0.773

source: processed data

Discriminant validity in this study was evaluated using the cross-loading method, which showed that all indicators had the highest loading values on the construct they were intended to measure compared to other constructs. The results in Table 2 demonstrate that the loading values on the diagonal are higher than the cross-loadings, indicating that each indicator clearly distinguishes its respective construct from others. This suggests that there is no overlap between constructs, and discriminant validity is fulfilled. Therefore, all measurement items are considered valid, and the measurement model is deemed appropriate for proceeding to the structural model (inner model) analysis. These results support the feasibility of continuing to the structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing stage, as recommended in the PLS-SEM approach (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2
Outer Loading and Cross-Loading Values for Each Measurement Item

	Destination Image	Generated Content	Intention to Visit	Perceived Information Quality
DI.1	**0.774**	0.700	0.549	0.575
DI.10	**0.760**	0.623	0.547	0.520
DI.11	**0.819**	0.717	0.729	0.643
DI.2	**0.730**	0.659	0.649	0.596
DI.3	**0.744**	0.716	0.606	0.629
DI.4	**0.638**	0.638	0.527	0.588
DI.5	**0.715**	0.681	0.561	0.592
DI.6	**0.729**	0.608	0.607	0.509
DI.7	**0.819**	0.661	0.686	0.646
DI.8	**0.750**	0.638	0.610	0.547
DI.9	**0.722**	0.572	0.624	0.573
GC.1	0.681	**0.773**	0.509	0.573
GC.10	0.662	**0.759**	0.652	0.599
GC.11	0.656	**0.760**	0.637	0.587
GC.12	0.731	**0.838**	0.658	0.666
GC.13	0.736	**0.790**	0.605	0.588
GC.14	0.696	**0.768**	0.649	0.604
GC.15	0.659	**0.769**	0.593	0.574
GC.16	0.730	**0.767**	0.669	0.645
GC.17	0.719	**0.793**	0.639	0.630
GC.18	0.613	**0.713**	0.563	0.623
GC.2	0.704	**0.772**	0.535	0.654
GC.3	0.613	**0.743**	0.498	0.592
GC.4	0.503	**0.610**	0.376	0.427
GC.5	0.657	**0.768**	0.469	0.552
GC.6	0.575	**0.701**	0.449	0.578
GC.7	0.658	**0.721**	0.535	0.533
GC.8	0.594	**0.701**	0.454	0.578
GC.9	0.438	**0.502**	0.373	0.449
IV.1	0.800	0.720	**0.906**	0.665
IV.2	0.661	0.601	**0.857**	0.621
IV.3	0.707	0.658	**0.878**	0.663
IV.4	0.701	0.655	**0.876**	0.686
PIQ.1	0.681	0.669	0.712	**0.855**
PIQ.2	0.635	0.655	0.587	**0.816**
PIQ.3	0.631	0.638	0.625	**0.821**
PIQ.4	0.648	0.656	0.551	**0.825**

source: processed data

Construct reliability was evaluated by examining the values of Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha for each latent variable. As shown in Table 3, all constructs have CR values above 0.70 and Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.60, indicating that all constructs meet the criteria for good internal reliability (Hair et al., 2022). This demonstrates that the indicators within each variable are consistent in measuring their respective constructs. Therefore, all constructs in the model are considered reliable and suitable for use in the subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 3
Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha Values for Each Variable

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Generated Content	0.950	0.956
Destination Image	0.920	0.933
Perceived Information Quality	0.848	0.898
Intention to Visit	0.902	0.932

source: processed data

The structural model evaluation was conducted to assess the causal relationships between latent variables in the model and to test the research hypotheses previously formulated. The initial assessment was carried out by examining the Adjusted R^2 coefficient, which indicates the predictive power of the endogenous variables by the exogenous variables.

According to Table 4, the Perceived Information Quality variable has an adjusted R^2 value of 0.620, meaning that 62.0% of the variability in perceived information quality can be explained by Generated Content. The Destination Image variable has an adjusted R^2 value of 0.773, indicating that Generated Content accounts for 77.3% of the variance in the formation of destination image. Meanwhile, the Intention to Visit variable shows an adjusted R^2 value of 0.694, which implies that Generated Content, Perceived Information Quality, and Destination Image together explain 69.4% of tourists' intention to visit the Derawan Islands.

Table 4
Adjusted R^2 Values for Each Endogenous Variable

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Perceived Information Quality	0.623	0.620
Destination Image	0.774	0.773
Intention to Visit	0.700	0.694

source: processed data

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping approach in SmartPLS 4.0 with 5,000 resamples. Table 5 presents the results of the path coefficient analysis between latent variables. Out of the five direct paths tested, four were found to be statistically significant at the 5% significance level. H1 and H2 show that Generated Content has a positive and significant effect on both Destination Image ($\beta = 0.880$, $p = 0.000$) and Perceived Information Quality ($\beta = 0.789$, $p = 0.000$). These results highlight the crucial role of digital content—whether created by users or official institutions—in shaping tourists' perceptions and the image of a destination.

However, H3 reveals an insignificant result ($\beta = 0.013$, $p = 0.914$), indicating that Generated Content does not have a direct effect on Intention to Visit. On the other hand, Perceived Information Quality and Destination Image each show a significant influence on Intention to Visit (H4: $\beta = 0.277$, $p = 0.019$; H5: $\beta = 0.589$, $p = 0.000$). These findings suggest a stronger indirect effect of Generated Content on Intention to Visit through the two mediating variables.

Table 5
Direct Effect Testing in the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Direct Effect	β	S.D.	P-Values
H1	Generated Content -> Destination Image	0.880	0.031	0.000
H2	Generated Content -> Perceived Information Quality	0.789	0.050	0.000
H3	Generated Content -> Intention to Visit	0.013	0.125	0.914
H4	Perceived Information Quality -> Intention to Visit	0.277	0.118	0.019
H5	Destination Image -> Intention to Visit	0.589	0.132	0.000

source: processed data

Indirect effect or mediation testing was also conducted using the bootstrapping method, as presented in Table 6. The path Generated Content → Destination Image → Intention to Visit shows a coefficient of $\beta = 0.519$ with $p = 0.000$, while the path Generated Content → Perceived Information Quality → Intention to Visit yields $\beta = 0.219$ with $p = 0.015$. These results confirm that both mediation paths are statistically significant and contribute to bridging the influence of Generated Content on Intention to Visit.

Table 6
Indirect Effect Testing Results

Indirect Effect	β	S.D.	P-Values
Generated Content -> Destination Image -> Intention to Visit	0.519	0.122	0.000
Generated Content -> Perceived Information Quality -> Intention to Visit	0.219	0.090	0.015

source: processed data

In addition to hypothesis and mediation testing, the model was also evaluated in terms of predictive relevance by examining the cross-validated predictive ability test (CVPAT) values. As shown in Table 8, the CVPAT results indicate negative and significant loss difference values for all endogenous variables: Perceived Information Quality (-0.141), Destination Image (-0.116), and Intention to Visit (-0.155), all of which are significant at $p < 0.05$. These results suggest that the model has good predictive relevance and is capable of accurately predicting the endogenous variables.

Table 7
Effect Size Evaluation Results of Relationships Between Variables

Effect	F-square
Generated Content -> Perceived Information Quality	1.651
Generated Content -> Destination Image	3.428
Generated Content -> Intention to Visit	0.000
Perceived Information Quality -> Intention to Visit	0.088
Destination Image -> Intention to Visit	0.237

source: processed data

Finally, the model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value. In this study, the SRMR value was below the 0.08 threshold, indicating that the model exhibits a good structural fit and is statistically acceptable (Hair et al., 2022). These findings reinforce the proposed conceptual model, in which Generated Content shapes tourists' perceptions of Perceived Information Quality and Destination Image, which in turn play a critical role in influencing tourists' Intention to Visit the Derawan Islands. The results align with the theoretical framework of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model and support previous studies, such as those by Xu et al. (2021), Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2022), and Yamagishi (2023), which highlight the importance of perception and destination image as mediators in the effect of digital content on tourist behavior.

This also corresponds to post-pandemic findings, where tourists have become more selective and rely heavily on credible information and compelling visualizations to make travel decisions. Generated Content, whether in the form of User-Generated Content (UGC) or Firm-Generated Content (FGC), has proven effective in building tourist trust through credible information, emotional appeal, and relevant storytelling (Wijaya, 2024; Eman, 2023). These two content types work synergistically to create a perception of high information quality and a strong destination image, both cognitively and affectively.

Furthermore, high perceived information quality (PIQ) not only enhances tourists' trust in a destination but also forms the belief that their travel experience will meet expectations. Likewise, a positive destination image plays a strategic role in shaping loyalty and repeat visit intentions (Harrill et al., 2023; Asyraff, 2024). These findings align with Yunanto et al. (2025), who argue that social media marketing activities shape both cognitive and emotional bonds with consumers, culminating in trust and loyalty—processes akin to how generated content influences destination image and intention to visit. Consistent with our findings, Azis et al. (2023) found that digitalized service stimuli affect traveler perceptions indirectly through mediators such as satisfaction and image. This supports the argument that generated content influences intention to visit primarily via its effects on perceived quality and destination image, rather than through direct exposure alone. This strengthens the argument that in the era of digital marketing, content functions not merely as a promotional tool, but as a cognitive and emotional catalyst in the tourist decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of generated content on the intention to visit the Derawan Islands, with perceived information quality and destination image acting as mediators within the framework of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory. The findings indicate that generated content does not have a direct effect on visit intention; however, it significantly influences perceptions of information quality and destination image, which in turn drive intention to visit. This highlights that the formation of perception and image is a crucial intermediate stage before behavioral decisions are made by tourists.

The implications of these findings suggest that digital promotion strategies should emphasize presenting content that is credible, relevant, and capable of building a positive destination image. Both user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC) play a strategic role in shaping tourists' perceptions on both cognitive and affective levels. Nonetheless, this study has certain limitations, particularly in the use of non-probability sampling methods and its focus on a single tourism destination. These factors restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts. Therefore, future research is recommended to adopt a longitudinal design to capture changes in perception over time and to expand the research scope to various types of destinations. The inclusion of moderating variables such as trust, eWOM credibility, or travel motivation could also enhance understanding of the dynamics between digital content and tourist behavior.

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