From desktop to destination: User-generated content platforms, co-created online experiences, destination image and satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Although value co-creation concept has captured much interest, especially in the tourism and hospitality fields, limited empirical studies have been conducted to explore the complexity of experience value co-creation process in the online tourism review platform context. The current study will fill the research gap by proposing user-generated platforms as a contributor to the online co-creation process (platform engagement: pre-travel) and how this co-creation experience enhances a travel destination's image and, subsequently, impacts on the travel experience (destination engagement: at-travel). It employs a holistic model which incorporates platform-use experience, platform co-creation experience, travel destination image, and overall destination satisfaction. A total of 342 surveys were collected from travellers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Structural equation modelling analysis showed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, aesthetics and homophily were important determinants for platform co-creation experience. Positive and significant relationships also existed between platform co-creation experience and cognitive and affective images. These images were also found to influence respondents' travel satisfaction. These findings contribute to a better theoretical understanding of the role that UGC platform use experiences play in the overall platform co-creation experience, and how this impacts on destination image formation and subsequently, satisfaction. Managerial implications, limitations and suggestions for future studies are also discussed.

1. Introduction

Studies have shown that travellers are increasingly relying on reviews from other travellers who have previously visited the destination (Assaker, 2020). Filieri (2015) reported that 80% of online users planned their holidays online, visited more than 20 websites, and spent more than 2 h on average searching for travel information via social media. Contemporary travellers study other travellers' reviews or comments on the travel forums, travel blogs or social media platform (Zhang, Gordon, Buhalis, & Ding, 2018) and perceive these peer-to-peer reviews as more reliable compared to the marketing material on the DMO's website or related sources (Gal-Tzur, Bar-Lev, & Shiftan, 2020). These reviews from other travellers uploaded on travel forums, personal blogs, travel-related websites, social media or video-sharing sites for the views of other online users are called as user-generated content (UGC), (Ayer, 2015). Today, popular UGC websites such as Trip Advisor, Expedia, Yelp.com, AirBnB.com, and Thorn Tree by Lonely Planet have become the 'go-to' for travellers planning upcoming holidays.

There is already a dearth of research on UCG, studies primarily focus on predictors that influence online users acceptance of UGC (e.g. Assaker, Hallak, & El-Haddad, 2020; Ayer, 2015; Ayer, Au, & Law, 2013a; Mendes-Filho, Mills, Tan, & Milne, 2018); UGC's impacts on travel organisations and destination marketing (e.g. Baka, 2016; Marine-Roig, 2017; Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019; Zhang, Zhang, & Yang, 2016; Önder, Gunter, & Gindl, 2020); and user intentions to engage into online travel communities (e.g. Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018; Bilro, Loureiro, & Guerreiro, 2019; Filieri, 2015). However, little research has been conducted to examine the crucial role that UGC websites play in facilitating the successful sharing of UGC to its intended audience. This has prompted a few researchers to propose that this new service-dominant (SD) logic paradigm must be explored from different theoretical underpinnings (Payne, Storbacka, & Flow, 2008; Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, in the review of the previous UGC studies, Ukpabi and Karjaluoto (2018) revealed that UGC has transformed online users from passive recipients to active participants in the online service co-creation. The current study will aim to address this gap in the

literature at examining the role of UGC websites in the tourist co-creation process.

Payne, Storbacka, and Frow (2008, p. 86) propose that UGC may be considered co-creation because it is "dynamic, interactive, non-linear and often unconscious processes" between the users and other parties. Reviews which are generated by other travel-users may considered as contributing to the online value co-creation experience, serving as a micro-foundation for value co-creation (Storbacka, Brodie, Böhmann, Maglio, & Nenonen, 2016). UGC websites serve as an important intermediary between the posters and the users of UGC (Cabiddu, Lui, & Piccoli, 2013; Neuhofer & Buhalis, 2012; Prebensen & Xie, 2017) as well as the destination (Buhalis & Foerste, 2015; Ferrer-Rosell, Coenders, & Marine-Roig, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). Through interactions with other users on these UGC websites as well as the website interface itself, studies have argued that users experience value co-creation (e.g. Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017; Islam & Rahman, 2017; Zhang, Hu, Guo, & Liu, 2017). Zhang et al. (2018) further asserted that more research is needed on better understanding the role of platform-use experience on the online value-co-creation experience. In their study, the authors demonstrated that an online platform's characteristics such as website usability and trust have significant effects in tourists' emotional experiences and behavioural intentions. Thus, the current study aims to add to the literature by examining how platform-use experience on UGC sites impact on co-creation experience while using the website.

Studies have shown that online experiences have potential to impact on tourist destination image (TDI) through the sharing of experiences while at the destination. Xia, Zhang, and Zhang (2018) suggested that online experiences affect users' travel image in a mobile online experience context. Furthermore, Yang (2016) claimed that tourists' interactions and co-creation experiences enhance the image of the destination. Destination image may serve as basis on which travellers base their evaluations of the destination (Narangajavana, Callarisa, Tena, Artola, & Garcia, 2019; Wang, Hao, Law, & Wang, 2019). At the destination, tourist evaluations of the destination are based on pre-conceived imagery of what they would experience at a destination (Kladou & Mavragani, 2015; Prayag, 2009; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Thus, TDI serves as a crucial evaluative criterion on which tourists compare their travel experiences and form satisfaction judgments at the 'at-travel' stage (Chi & Qu, 2008). Overall, findings of these studies suggest that an integrated model which encompasses platform-use experiences, platform co-creation experiences, travel destination image, and satisfaction may be feasible.

The present study attempts to narrow the theoretical and practical gaps by arguing that UGC platform-use experiences are part of the platform value co-creation experience which enhances traveller-user's travel destination image perceptions (pre-travel) and as well as their on-site travel experiences (at-travel). Specifically, it examines the effects of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, aesthetics, trust, interactivity and homophily on the formation of online platform value co-creation experiences. It further investigates the effect platform co-creation experience has on travel destination image (cognitive and affective); and subsequently, the effects of travel destination image on overall satisfaction.

2. Literature review, theoretical framework and hypotheses

2.1. User-generated content (UGC) platforms

As mentioned in the background, most researchers focus more on the determinants of adopting UGC in their travel planning. As tourism is considered being experiential in nature, potential travellers would be heavily relying on the existing information. The emergence of Web 2.0, information and communications technology (ICT) have provided an easily access yet cheaper alternative for the users to get different travel opinions, personal commentaries and updates from the UGC by the previous users and/or travellers (Narangajavana et al., 2019).

Ukpabi and Karjaluoto (2018) conducted a systematic review from a total of 54 related studies on UGC from 2005 to 2016 which revealed that UGC adoption is determined by most of the attributes which in their study categorised as source, user and content characteristics. The source-based antecedents that influence UGC adoption are source credibility, expertise, trustworthy and homophily. The source origin and the creator's background also play a role in the user's adoption of UGC in travel planning. Second, the user-based characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, and education level influence the UGC adoption. Most UGC studies reveal in their demographic findings that young and middle-aged users dominate UGC platform as they tend to be involved in travel decision-making (not relying on travel operators), curiosity and inquisitiveness (Assaker, 2020; Filieri, 2015; Oliveira, Araujo, & Tam, 2020; Yang, Lee, Lee, & Koo, 2019). Most of the users in these age groups perceive exploring UGC platforms as fun and enjoyable experience. They are highly involved in exploring different information that could be useful and beneficial for their travel planning. Lastly, users tend to adopt UGC due to the nature of the content itself. The contents which are novel, aesthetics, accurate, genuine, relevant and reliable would drive users' intention to adopt UGC significantly. As such, reviews that are supplemented with videos and photos increase users' online platform-use experience, co-create their own travel itinerary effectively and stimulate a better image ofthe host destination, which will be discussed further in this section.

2.2. Platform co-creation experience

In the service dominant (S-D) logic, consumers are playing more active roles than ever before (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) and those roles influence their benefits, activities, and abilities (bib_Payne_et_al_2008Payne et al., 2008). S-D logic is based on nine foundational premises (FPs) which represent a set of principles used to understand the development between value and exchange (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). The current study focuses on the FP6 which purports that "the customer is always a co-creator of value" (Lusch & Vargo, 2006, p. 284). A consumer can no longer be seen as passive receiver of product or service; instead, they can be regarded as proactive participant in the co-creation of value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In the context of travel, given its experiential nature (Zhang et al., 2018), co-creation is generally referred to as 'experience value co-creation' (Prebensen, Kim, & Uysal, 2016; Shin, Perdue, & Pandelaere, 2020; Zhu, Scott, Coghlan, & Jin, 2019).

The online platform co-creation experience may be defined as the experience of value co-creation through the interaction with a destination-related information and communications technology (ICT), and is often conceptualised as the experience of co-creation via an online platformas a result of user-to-user interactions (Elsharnouby & Mahrous, 2015). In the context of tourism, users share information about their experiences at specific destinations on UGC platforms which result in a collaborative development of value for both the sharers as well as the readers of UGC (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto, & Buultjens, 2009). However, the experience of using the websites can also be argued to contribute to the overall online platform co-creation experience. Zhang et al. (2018) explored value co-creation experience on the official online platforms of Nanjing as a travel destination in China. The authors asserted that digital platforms (such as websites and social media) have not only integrated in facilitating user-to-user co-creation, but also facilitate a user-to-interface co-creation experience. They argue that five design quality dimensions (perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, aesthetics, trust and interactivity) make up online platform-use-experience, which, in turn, contributes to the value co-creation encounters between tourists and online platforms. In line with this conceptualisation, the current study proposes that the experience of using UGC platform contributes to a broader platform co-creation experience.

2.3. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use

Perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU) are two prominent factors that influence the adoption of a technological application from the technology acceptance model (TAM), (Davis, 1989). Usefulness is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" and ease of use refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (Davis, 1989, p. 320). Various empirical studies had been conducted to test the effects of these two constructs towards innovation adoption, however, the findings have been inconsistent. Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013a), acknowledged as pioneers in UGC empirical research, discovered that PU and PE had a significant effect on UGC adoption for travel planning. Ayeh (2015) further claimed that online tourists' assessment of PU has the strongest impact on UGC adoption intention. However, Zhang et al. (2018) revealed that usefulness was found to have a non-significant impact on online destination emotional experience due to UGC being more on 'cognitive' nature. Further, another study by Balouchi et al. (2017) indicated that ease of use was insignificant towards adopting UGC on travel decision. This was argued to be due to the fact that respondents were already familiar with the internet usability and complexity was not an obstacle. Nevertheless, PU and PEU have been conventionally tested as part of the functions of the value co-creation experience and will, thus be adopted in this study. This forms the basis of the following hypotheses:

H1. PE has a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience.

H2. PEU has a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience.

2.4. Aesthetics

The term aesthetics has evolved with various meanings from different schools of thought, in the market retailing, it is commonly defined as "an artistically beautiful or pleasing appearance" (Tractinsky, 2004, p. 11). Aesthetic properties are realised by the visual elements, such as colour, photographs, shapes, and font (Cyr, Head, & Ivanov, 2006). Lorenzo, Constantinides, and Gomez-Borja (2009) reported that more favourable perceptions of website aesthetics have potential to create more positive experiences on retail websites. Zhang et al. (2018) extend that visual appeal is crucial to users indetermining a website's quality and serves as an important design criteria for experiential interfaces and revisits to the website (Lopatovska, 2015). As such, it is postulated that aesthetic experience is a vital function in platform co-creation experience. This study proposes that:

H3. Aesthetic has a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience.

2.5. Trust

The concept of trust has been researched in various social science fields including psychology, marketing, organizational behaviour, information systems and tourism (Ayeh, Au,& Law, 2013a). Trust is perceived as the degree of confidence in the source's "intent to communicate the assertions" they consider "most valid [true]" (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953, p. 21). Dickinger (2011, p. 379) explained that trust can be considered as "confidence in the interaction with the service provider, trust in the system, in protection of customers' privacy and secure payment" in the online travel platforms. In other words, a trusted UGC website is one that is perceived by the user as providing honest, sincere, and truthful content. Deceptive or one-sided promotional reviews can be equated to reviews that are perceived as untrustworthy, sponsored or fake (Filieri, 2016). This is underpinned by the source credibility theory which explains the significance of trust in the absence of legal protections such as a contract between the parties (Kim, Nam, & Kim, 2019). Previous studies have asserted that UGC appears to be highly trustworthy, showing high levels of perceived integrity by potential travellers and affecting their travel behaviour towards the destination (Dickinger, 2011; Filieri, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2020; Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2018). Thus, it can be expected that the ability to trust UGC will influence the platform co-creation experience by users. Hence, it is suggested that:

H4. Trust has a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience.

2.6. Interactivity

Interactivity encompasses connections between people, between people through mediated channels, between people and computers, and between computers through software, hardware, and networks (Stromer-Galley, 2004). The first two types apply to social interaction that occurs between people in a physical context. In an online context, interactivity applies more to connections that occurs between people and the computer networks and is conceptualised as how online platforms respond to the travellers' needs and wants (Zhang et al., 2018). In the case of UGCs, interactivity is experienced through the human-machine interactive interface, in which the DMOs, reviewers and other potential travellers interact. This perspective is consistent with the human-computer interaction perspective where Stromer-Galley (2004, p. 393) perceived interactivity as a "product of medium characteristic or interface design". The function of interactivity has been established as playing a significant role in influencing users' perceived consumption value of a website and online purchase intention (Liao, Chung, & Chang, 2019; Yoo, Lee, & Park, 2010). An interactive experience via a UGC platform would enhance the co-creation experience of the users and thus, it is proposed that:

H5. Interactivity has a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience.

2.7. Homophily

The importance of homophily has often been neglected in the examination of the UGC co-created online experiential value. Homophily refers a preference to associate with other actor(s) who are perceived to have similarity in terms of lifestyle, hobby, opinion, occupation, culture, attitude and so forth (bib_Assaker_et_al_2020Assaker et al., 2020), and translates to "love of the same" (Hanks, Line, & Yang, 2017, p. 124). The theory of social comparison suggests that communications from a similar reference are perceived as being more influential than messages coming from dissimilar ones (Brandenberg, Ozimek, Bierhoff, & Janker, 2019). In hospitality, Walls, Okumus, Wang, and Kwun (2011) proposed that luxury hotel guests expect other guests to dress identically so that they are perceived as being from a similar social class. In an online context, homophily becomes salient when group of users that have shared interest or mindset towards an object or entity in the online platform (Herrero, San Martín, & Hernández, 2015). Assaker et al. (2020) claimed that the increasing number of online communities (online groups) reflect the importance of homophily among the users. In the UGC context, sharing of content by individuals of similar demographic and/or psychographic characteristics among the users and the reviewers will create a sense of solidarity in the experience and increase the likelihood of the users accepting the information or tips posted, thereby contributing positively to the online platform co-creation experience. Thus, it is proposed that:

H6. Homophily has a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience.

2.8. Travel destination image

Travel destination image (TDI) has widely been conceptualised and empirically tested by many scholars in the previous and current research. Different definitions have followed Hunt's (1971) initial identification of image as a motivational factor in tourism studies. Generally, the widely accepted definition would still be Baloglu and McCleary's definition of TDI as the sum of an individual's beliefs, ideas, and impressions of a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, p. 870). TDI is formed through a tourist's subjective interpretation of the destination based on various cues and/or stimuli (Chi & Qu, 2008). Generally, TDI has been modelled based on three dimensions which are widely recognised in the literature. The first dimension is 'cognitive' TDI which refers to beliefs or knowledge about a destination based on a cognitive evaluation, whereas the second dimension is known as 'affective' TDI which refers to the feelings and/or attachment towards a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). These physical and psychological images are derived from information of various sources including online platforms prior to visit the destination (Santana & Gosling, 2018). Many studies have applied and validated this two-dimensional conception of TDI in the previous decades (e.g. Ayob & Kichin, 2019; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Hallmann, Zehrer, & Müller, 2015; Lam, Ramlee, & Choo, 2019; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Mak, 2017; Molinillo, Liébana-Cabanillas, Anaya-Sánchez, & Buhalis, 2018; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Studies have also examined 'overall' TDI which measured as the "result of both perceptual/cognitive and affective evaluations of that place" or a sum of the two aforementioned dimensions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, p. 870).

The TDI of a destination can arise from different sources. Gartner (1994) categorised TDI into three types of image sources: (1) induced sources (from the DMOs and their marketing and promotional campaigns); (2) autonomous sources (from stakeholders who do not need to promote the destination and not controlled by the DMOs such as documentaries, films and news articles) and (3) organic sources (from those experiences of friends, unrelated individuals and family members), (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007; Lojo, Li, & Xu, 2020; Marine-Roig & Ferrer-Rosell, 2018). Marine-Roig (2019) claimed that UGC, which are independent opinions of users and creators that spread through the social media (which is also electronic word-of-mouth), should be considered as organic agent of TDI source. The author further asserted that a finding from a survey conducted on more than 2000 Americans revealed that 58.2% (more than half) applied UGC for their travel planning compared to using traditional promotional materials from the DMOs.

In online tourism destination image research, the internet has been found to significantly impact on the construction of TDI through pictures, graphics or text that reflect to the destination on tourism-related websites (Kladou & Mavragani, 2015; bib_Xia_et_al_2018Xia et al., 2018). Zhou (2014) conducted a qualitative study analysing popular Chinese online video sharing platforms Baidu and Youku for posts on Wuyuan, Jiangxi. The study revealed that the online imagery and text contribute to the construction of Chinese rural destination images and imaginaries. The strength of this imaginary could be rational and/or emotional interpretations (Pike & Page, 2014) which not only influence tourist's pre-visit decisions, but also has direct and indirect associations on tourist's on-site experience and post-travel behaviour (Kim, 2018; Lam, Lee, Goh, & Samsi, 2017). In interactions with UGC websites whether favourable or unfavourable form part of the basis of destination's cognition and subsequently conjure up an image of the destination emotionally. For example, a photo uploaded on a UGC platform depicting the Grand Canyon provides travellers with information about what they can expect to see at the destination (cognitive) as well as evoke emotions of excitement or awe (affective). Thus, the platform co-creation experience has potential to impact on the travellers' images of the destination and it is proposed that:

H7.   Platform co-creation experience has a significant positive effect on

travellers' cognitive travel destination image.

H8.   Platform co-creation experience has a significant positive effect on travellers' affective travel destination image.

Furthermore, in most of the TDI studies, researchers agree that affective image is a subjective, emotional response to cognitive knowledge (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2013; Lam, Choo, Oh, & Khor, 2020; Xia et al., 2018). Studies have examined that cognitive TDI positively influences affective TDI even during the pre-travel stage (Molinillo et al., 2018; Stylidis, Shani, & Belhassen, 2017; Tan & Wu, 2016). Rodríguez-Molina, Frías-Jamilena, and Castañeda-García (2015) pointed out that perceived TDI was more encouraging when the website provided emotional messages. Thus, in the UGC context, a user that enjoys the content will cognitively form a better image and increase their emotional attachment towards the destination. As such, this study postulates that:

H9.   Travellers' cognitive travel destination image has a significant positive effect on their affective travel destination image.

It is important to note that overall TDI was excluded from the current study as the aim of the study is to examine how TDI image (cognitive and affective) is formed from the platform co-creation experience, which in turn, affects travel satisfaction (endogenous variable).

2.9. Overall satisfaction at the destination

In the early decades, Howard and Sheth (1969, p.18) defined customer satisfaction as "the buyer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has undergone". In review of the marketing literature, most scholars align with the conceptualisation offered by Oliver (1999) in which "the consumer senses that consumption fulfills some need, desire, goal, and so forth and that this fulfillment is pleasurable" (p. 34). This conceptualisation champions the disconfirmation approach to satisfaction which argues that satisfaction judgements are based on the comparison between pre-conceived expectations of the return from completing a behaviour and the actual return received (Lee, Phau, Hughes, Li, & Quintal, 2016; Mao & Zhang, 2014).

Previous studies had examined UGC mainly focusing on the pre-travel stage. However, Nezakati et al. (2015) conceptualised that UGC not only impacts on the pre-travel process, but also during travel and post-travel process. In the pre-travel phase, potential travellers may develop an initial expectation of a destination (destination image) through the exploration of information from various sources including UGC. Then, upon experiencing the destination, travellers conduct an evaluation of the destination based on their pre-experience perceptions which results in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Kim & Chen, 2016; Marine-Roig, 2019). This is further supported by Narangajavana et al. (2019) who proposed that the UGC's impact on satisfaction spans across the 'pre-travel' to 'at-travel' and 'post-travel' phases. Similarly, Wang et al. (2019) determined that online destination images from travellers' blogs not only assisted users to make better travel decisions by matching their preferences, but imprinted imagery in tourists' minds during the search phase which were subsequently used in the formation of their satisfaction judgements at the destination. Thus, it is proposed that:

H10.   Cognitive travel destination image has a significant positive effect on overall satisfaction with the destination.

H11.   Affective travel destination image has a significant positive effect on overall satisfaction with the destination.

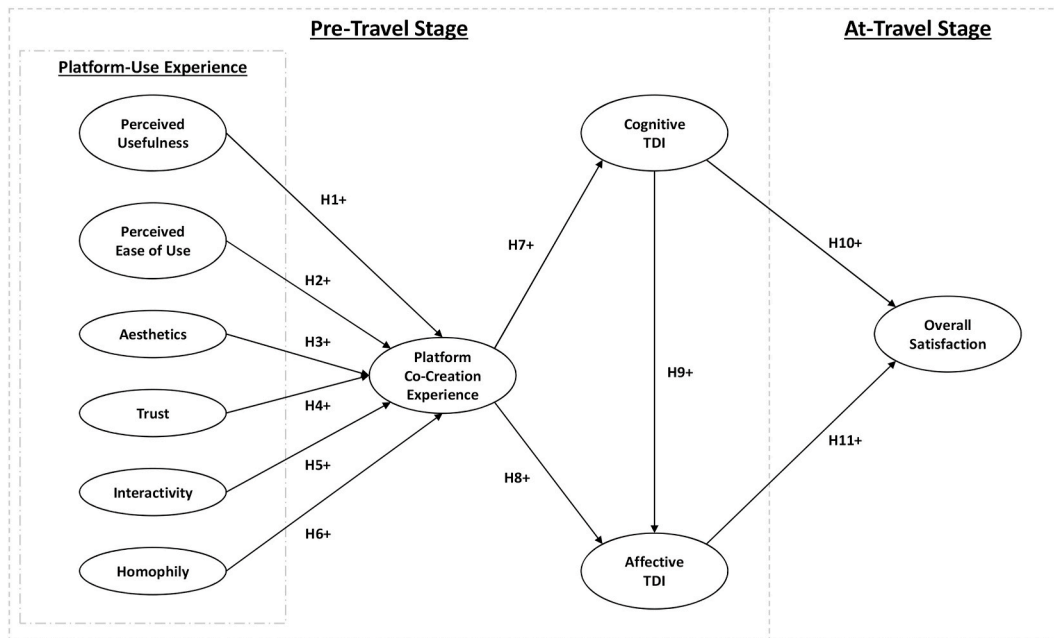Fig. 1 illustrates the proposed research model.

Fig. 1. The research framework.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Study site

This study was conducted in Kuala Lumpur which was selected on the basis of TripAdvisor's most reviewed destination in Malaysia (TripAdvisor, 2019). Kuala Lumpur is famous for its various natural and man-made attractions as well as high rise buildings with modern architecture (Kozlowski, Mehan, & Nawratek, 2020). Previous studies have revealed that Kuala Lumpur is ranked as one of the best travel destinations in the world particularly in shopping tourism (Azmi, Buliah, Ramaiah, Ariffin, & Ngelambong, 2019). Bouchon (2014) noted that more than 10 million international tourists were received in 2011 compared with one million in 1995. And, based on the MasterCard's 2018 Global Destination Cities Index, tourist arrivals in this metropolitan city was 12.58 million in 2017, and increased to 13.48 million in 2018 (New Straits Times, 2018). In 2019, Kuala Lumpur was ranked as fifth most visited urban destination in the world (13.79 million tourists), after Bangkok, Paris, London, and Singapore (Business Insider, 2019). Currently, this study site is also actively promoted by Tourism Malaysia (Malaysia's tourism promotional agency) on its official website as well as social media. Kuala Lumpur also features consistently as a prominent destination on various UGC platforms when searching for destinations in Malaysia.

3.2. Data collection and sampling

Respondents were sampled longitudinally over two points in time in order to capture the pre-travel and on-site travel stages. This study conceptualised the pre-travel stage as the time spanning from when traveller was at their home country to the time when a tourist was at the host country but has not had any sightseeing experiences. Potential respondents were randomly intercepted at participating hotels by trained data collectors and administered the first part of the survey. They were then asked for their contact details so that they could be surveyed again towards the end of their stay to complete the 'overall satisfaction' part of the survey. Since there was a need to allow the respondents to fully complete their experiences at the destination, data collection was conducted over a longer period, between May and October 2019. It is important to note that the data collection was conducted prior to the

outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Malaysia's lockdown was started on 18th March 2020) and therefore responses would be free from any bias that may result from the pandemic.

Potential respondents were selected based on their fulfillment of the following criteria: they: (1) must be international travellers; (2) must be travellers that made the travel decisions and were not attached to atravel group (3) must have used online travel review websites (e.g. TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Agoda, Expedia etc); or blogs in their travel planning; (4) must be in their first or second day of their Malaysia trip and not experienced any sightseeing at the target destination.

In terms of sample size, Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011) proposed that an effective sample size for Partial Least-Square (PLS) analysis should be equal to the larger of the following: (1) "ten times the largest number of indicators used to measure one construct; or (2) ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular latent construct in the structural model". Thus, a minimum of 200 sample responses would be considered to be more adequate for the structural analyses. A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed initially at the study site in order to achieve the sampling requirements of the analysis.

3.3. Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed based on established measures for (1) online destination platform-use-experience framework (i.e. perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, aesthetics, trust, interactivity and homophily); (2) platform co-creation experience; (3) cognitive and affective TDIs; and (4) overall satisfaction. These items were selected from the information systems, consumer behaviour and tourism literature for their reliabilities and relevance to the current study. Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted to confirm that the measures for those constructs were adequate and comprehensive for the Malaysia travel destination context. A random sample of 20 international travellers was interviewed and only items identified by more than six respondents (or 20%) were included in the questionnaire for further analysis (Lam, Tong, & Ariffin, 2017). The scales were also revised for content validity by three prominent scholars who are experts in the destination marketing field.

The final questionnaire comprised scales for: (1) perceived usefulness with four items (Zhang et al., 2018) (α = 0.95); (2) perceived ease of

use with four items (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013b) (α = 0.96); (3) aesthetics with three items (Zhang et al., 2018) (α = 0.92); (4) trust with four items (Zhang et al., 2018) (α = 0.90); (5) interactivity with four items (Etemad-Sajadi, 2016) (α = 0.93); (6) homophily with four items (bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al., 2013b)(α = 0.95); (7) cognitive TDI with ten items (Lam & Ariffin, 2019) (α = 0.83); (8) affective TDI with four items (Lam & Ariffin, 2019) (α = 0.83); and (9) overall satisfaction with five items (Narangajavana et al., 2019) (α = 0.90). As there is currently no established measure for platform co-creation experience, scale items were generated through an in-depth interview as well as adapted from related scales. Following a refining process, four items were used in the final questionnaire. All scale items used in the questionnaire can be seen in Table 1. All scales were measured on seven-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with the exception of affective TDI which was measured on a seven-point Semantic-type scale. Demographic questions were also measured using ordinal and categorical scales.

4. Results

From the 1000 questionnaires distributed, a total of 389 responses were collected. Forty-seven responses were removed due to missing data or disengaged response patterns. After data cleaning, a total of 342 questionnaires were utilised for further statistical analyses. Descriptive analysis assessed for each respondent's demographic profile and travel characteristics can be seen in Table 2.

Partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SMART PLS version 3.2.7 was applied in this study due to its model complexity and exploratory nature (Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2014). Further, due to the unknown specific population of the tourists (based on the judgments stated earlier in the methodology), PLS-SEM is preferred to avoid bias estimation which could resulting in Type I and Type II errors (Sarstedt, Hair, Ringle, Thiele, & Gudergan, 2016). PLS-SEM analysis was conducted following the two-step approach proposed by Chin (1998); firstly, validating the outer model by testing the reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity for the various constructs, and; secondly, examining the inner (structural) model to assess the hypothesised relationships among the constructs.

4.1. Outer model analysis

The Cronbach's alpha (α) and Dillon-Goldstein's rho (ρ) were used to determine the reliability of the 10 latent constructs in the model. As shown in Table 3, both analyses yielded results above 0.60 indicating acceptable reliability (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000). To test for convergent validity, standardised loadings for each construct were examined to see if they exceeded the 0.70 threshold (see Table 3). While a number of items had loadings were below 0.70, Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics (2009) suggested that loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be retained so long the composite reliability for the construct is above 0.60; and thus these items were retained. However, a number of few items where the loadings were less than 0.40 were removed from further data analysis.The bootstrap test showed high significance levels for all loadings (bootstrap-based empirical 95% confidence interval does not include zero) with the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeding 0.50 (see Table 3). This indicates that a significant part (50% or more) of the indicators' variance can be captured by the construct, supporting convergent validity (Chin, 1998).

Discriminant validity was also supported given the AVE of a construct and its indicators exceed the shared variance with every other construct of the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4 shows that the AVE for each construct was greater than the squared correlation coefficient of that construct with every other construct of the model. Further, in line with Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015), heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) confidence intervals were calculated using bootstrapping procedure. A confidence interval containing the value 1 indicates a lack of

Table 1
Measurement items of the study.

No.	Items	Sources
PU1	The UGC platform enables me to plan my travel usefully.	Zhang et al. (2018)
PU2	The UGC platform enables me to plan my travel effectively.	Zhang et al. (2018)
PU3	The UGC platform enables me to plan my travel easily.	Zhang et al. (2018)
PU4	The UGC platform enables me to get what I need for my travel.	In-depth interviews
PEU1	The UGC platform is easy for me to learn how to use.	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
PEU2	The UGC platform is easy for me to find the information needed.	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
PEU3	The UGC platform is easy for me to become skilful at using.	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
PEU4	The UGC platform is easy for me to use the content to plan my trip.	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
AES1	The UGC platform's design looks pleasant.	Zhang et al. (2018)
AES2	The UGC platform's design looks aesthetic.	Zhang et al. (2018)
AES3	The UGC platform's layout is fascinating.	Zhang et al. (2018)
TRU1	The UGC platform's information is reliable.	Zhang et al. (2018)
TRU2	The UGC platform's information can be trusted by me.	Zhang et al. (2018)
TRU3	The UGC platform can secure my personal information.	Zhang et al. (2018)
TRU4	The UGC platform looks trustworthy.	Zhang et al. (2018)
INT1	The UGC platform enables me to interact with it *(e.g. the blogger, the forum master, the organiser etc)*.	Etemad-Sajadi (2016)
INT2	The UGC platform has interactive feature that is important for getting more travel tips.	Etemad-Sajadi (2016)
INT3	The UGC platform's interaction is important for my travel planning.	Etemad-Sajadi (2016)
INT4	The UGC platform's interaction is essential for co-creation experience.	Panel expert judges
HOM1	The UGC platform reflects my own interest(s).	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
HOM2	The UGC platform has similar interests to mine.	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
HOM3	The UGC platform has interests I can identify with.	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
HOM4	The UGC platform has interests not very different form my own interest(s).	bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al. (2013b)
PCE1	The UGC platform has a good value of online destination co-creation experience.	Panel expert judges
PCE2	The UGC platform is valuable to customise my travel planning.	Sugathan and Ranjan (2019)
PCE3	The UGC platform offers me 'real' tourist value that I can't get from other official tourism website(s).	In-depth interviews
PCE4	The UGC platform helps me to save my time in designing my travel planning.	Sugathan and Ranjan (2019)
COG1	The UGC platform co-creation experience enhance my perception that: X offers many engaging travelling activities.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG2	X has beautiful natural scenery (beach, mountain, lake etc.).	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG3	X offers all types of hotel categories from budget to luxury.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG4	X local people are friendly.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG5	X has good food.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG6	X has renowned heritage attractions *(e.g. the pre-independence buildings)*.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG7	X offers different cultural experiences.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG8	X offers quality tourism services.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG9	X has various kind of entertainment.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
COG10	X has excellent shopping opportunities.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
AFF1	Unpleasant-Pleasant.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
AFF2	Distressing-Relaxing.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)

Table 1 (*continued*)

No.	Items	Sources
AFF3	Gloomy-Attracting.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
AFF4	Sleepy-Arousing.	Lam and Ariffin (2019)
SAT1	In general, I am satisfied with my trip in Kuala Lumpur.	Narangajavana et al. (2019)
SAT2	I am satisfied that the UGC platform really helped me to enhance my travel experience in Kuala Lumpur.	Panel expert judges
SAT3	I am pleased that I have decided to visit Kuala Lumpur.	Narangajavana et al. (2019)
SAT4	I am delighted with the travel experience in Kuala Lumpur.	Narangajavana et al. (2019)
SAT5	I have no regret in visiting Kuala Lumpur.	In-depth interviews

Note: PU- perceived usefulness; PEU- perceived ease of use; AES- aesthetics; TRU-trust; INT-interactivity; HOM-homophily; PCE-platform co-creation experience; COG-cognitive travel destination image; AFF- affective travel destination image; SAT-overall satisfaction; X refers to Kuala Lumpur-the selected study destination in Malaysia.

Table 2
Profile of the respondents.

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
1. Male	222	64.90
2. Female	120	35.10
Age		
1. 18 years and below	16	4.67
2. 19–25 years	78	22.80
3. 26–32 years	118	34.50
4. 33–39 years	100	29.23
5. 40 years and above	30	8.80
Marital Status		
1. Single	103	30.11
2. In a relationship	126	36.84
3. Married	102	29.82
4. Others	11	3.23
Geographic Region		
1. Africa	35	10.23
2. Asia	112	32.75
3. Europe	68	19.88
4. Middle East	37	10.82
5. America	34	9.90
6. Oceania (Australia and New Zealand)	56	16.42
Education Level		
1. High school/secondary school	24	7.01
2. Diploma/certificate	82	23.98
3. Bachelor's Degree	126	36.84
4. Masters	72	21.05
5. Doctorate/PhD	12	3.50
6. Others	26	7.62
Internet Usage Frequency		
1. Less than five times a month	6	1.75
2. Few times a week	76	22.22
3. About once a day	102	29.82
4. Several times each day	158	46.21
Travel Frequency		
1. Less than 2 times a year	56	16.37
2. 3–5 times a year	178	52.04
3. More than six times a year	108	31.59
Common Used UGC Online platform (can tick more than once)		
1. Tripadvisor	278	81.29
2. AirBnB	256	74.85
3. Sina Weibo (Chinese popular microblogging site)	78	22.80
4. Others	125	36.55

Note: Sample size (N) = 342 respondents.

discriminant validity. From the Table 5, all confidence intervals of the constructs less than 1 or conservatively less than 0.90 (Duarte & Amaro, 2018), confirming that discriminant validity was achieved.

4.2. Inner model analysis (structural model)

The R^2 for UGC's platform co-creation experience, cognitive image, affective image and overall satisfaction were equal to 0.770, 0.412, 0.343, and 0.484 respectively, which is above the minimum threshold of 26% proposed by Cohen (1988) for the model to have acceptable predictive power. Chin, Peterson, and Brown (2008) classified the endogenous latent variables as substantial, moderate or weak based on the threshold R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33 or 0.19, respectively. Accordingly, the cognitive and affective images and overall satisfaction explanatory powers are moderate while the online destination platform co-creation experience has substantial predictive power. Next, the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 values for platform co-creation experience, cognitive image, affective image and overall satisfaction indicators were also computed using blindfolding procedures; all values were above zero (>0), meaning that the model has predictive relevance (Geisser, 1975; Stone, 1974). This shows that the model was a good predictor of the indicators of platform co-creation experience, travel destination images and overall satisfaction. The predictive relevance's Q^2 relative impact can be categorised within the ranges of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 reveal a small, medium or large predictive relevance (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). Table 6 reports the effect size and predictive power regarding the exogenous constructs. These results support the nomological and predictive validity of the integration of platform co-creation experience, cognitive and affective images, and overall satisfaction framework with an adequate amount of variability of the endogenous constructs being explained by those exogenous constructs.

The path coefficients among the various constructs were examined using bootstrapping with 5000 iterations of re-sampling (Davidson & Hinkley, 1997). Results show that PU, PEU, aesthetics, and homophily have a significant positive effect on platform co-creation experience, thereby supporting Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 6. However, trust (H4) and interactivity (H5) were found to be unsupported. Next, platform co-creation experience was found to be positively significant to enhance the cognitive and affective images of the destination, thus supporting H7 and H8. Cognitive image was also found to significantly and positively affect affective image, supporting H9. Lastly, these images were found to be significantly affecting their overall satisfaction on their travel experience, supporting H10 and H11. The results of the path analyses can be seen in Table 7.

5. Discussion

The current study examined the effects of platform-use experience dimensions, namely perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, aesthetics, trust, interactivity, and homophily on platform co-creation experience. It further investigates the effects of platform co-creation experience on travel destination image (cognitive and affective), and subsequently, on overall satisfaction.

The results found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were found to be significant positive predictors of platform co-creation experience. This confirms the findings of related studies which applied technology acceptance model (TAM) and examined that both components are important for computer- and mobile-based technology adoption (Assaker, Hallak, & El-Haddad, 2020; Ayer, Au, & Law, 2013b; Xia, Zhang, & Zhang, 2018). This suggests that the quality of the content on the websites as well as the simplicity in accessing them as well as the navigability of the site are crucial in ensuring that travellers may have a positive online value co-creation experience on the platform. In addition, perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.210$) was found to be more influential on platform co-creation experience compared to perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.132$), mirroring the findings of previous studies (e.g. bib_Ayeh_et_al_2013bAyeh et al., 2013b; bib_Xia_et_al_2018Xia et al., 2018).

Aesthetic was found to be a significant and positive predictor of platform co-creation experience. This is in line with the argument of scholars who have argued that aesthetics is one of the strongest

Table 3
Outer model analysis.

Latent variables	Manifest variables label	Standardised loadings	Standardised loadings (Bookstrap)	Lower bound (95%)	Upper bound (95%)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Dillon Goldstein's rho (ρ)	CR	AVE
PU	PU1	0.795	0.794	0.750	0.831	0.86	0.89	0.847	0.584
	PU2	0.829	0.829	0.798	0.851				
	PU3	0.809	0.808	0.770	0.84				
	PU4	0.604	0.603	0.523	0.672				
PEU	PEU1	0.880	0.881	0.858	0.899	0.821	0.859	0.882	0.655
	PEU2	0.842	0.842	0.799	0.874				
	PEU3	0.871	0.870	0.842	0.893				
	PEU4	0.614	0.614	0.543	0.675				
AES	AES1	0.851	0.852	0.813	0.88	0.649	0.684	0.812	0.595
	AES2	0.605	0.602	0.509	0.681				
	AES3	0.833	0.832	0.789	0.864				
TRU	TRU1	0.565	0.563	0.479	0.636	0.770	0.812	0.855	0.602
	TRU2	0.874	0.874	0.85	0.894				
	TRU3	0.839	0.839	0.806	0.863				
	TRU4	0.789	0.787	0.734	0.830				
INT	INT1	0.882	0.882	0.854	0.904	0.859	0.862	0.914	0.780
	INT2	0.850	0.850	0.820	0.874				
	INT3	0.916	0.916	0.899	0.931				
HOM	HOM1	0.854	0.854	0.830	0.873	0.768	0.802	0.851	0.592
	HOM2	0.629	0.628	0.559	0.687				
	HOM3	0.762	0.762	0.717	0.799				
	HOM4	0.813	0.812	0.776	0.842				
PCE	PCU1	0.808	0.809	0.771	0.839	0.785	0.795	0.826	0.613
	PCU2	0.725	0.725	0.672	0.768				
	PCU3	0.812	0.811	0.776	0.841				
COG	COG1	0.768	0.767	0.729	0.799	0.834	0.838	0.882	0.600
	COG2	0.816	0.815	0.78	0.844				
	COG5	0.820	0.820	0.786	0.848				
	COG6	0.726	0.725	0.672	0.775				
	COG9	0.740	0.740	0.695	0.777				
AFF	AFF1	0.773	0.775	0.710	0.841	0.762	0.865	0.816	0.526
	AFF2	0.711	0.706	0.614	0.772				
	AFF3	0.693	0.687	0.594	0.759				
	AFF4	0.721	0.716	0.630	0.782				
SAT	SAT1	0.879	0.879	0.857	0.897	0.878	0.881	0.912	0.675
	SAT2	0.752	0.752	0.699	0.794				
	SAT3	0.864	0.864	0.837	0.886				
	SAT4	0.859	0.859	0.832	0.881				
	SAT5	0.745	0.744	0.691	0.789				

Table 4
Discriminant validity (AVE>Squared-correlations).

Variable	AES	AFF	COG	HOM	PEU	PU	INT	SAT	TRU	PCE
AES	0.771									
AFF	0.52	**0.725**								
COG	0.524	0.56	**0.775**							
HOM	0.504	0.535	0.676	**0.769**						
PEU	0.551	0.56	0.51	0.406	**0.809**					
PU	0.263	0.275	0.484	0.552	0.303	**0.764**				
INT	0.631	0.437	0.546	0.604	0.418	0.334	**0.883**			
SAT	0.535	0.487	0.685	0.727	0.497	0.583	0.52	**0.822**		
TRU	0.709	0.508	0.627	0.612	0.487	0.425	0.805	0.598	**0.776**	
PCE	0.511	0.504	0.642	0.645	0.487	0.619	0.523	0.783	0.567	**0.783**

Note: The diagonal values in bold represent the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) between constructs and their measures. Off-diagonal values are the correlations between the constructs. All correlations are significant at the 0.05 (1-tailed).

determinants that attracts users to view the online site and create arousing virtual atmosphere (e.g. interesting photos, readable font-type, suitable background colours or even matched music/sounds) compare to other online factors (Artese, Ciocca, & Gagliardi, 2017; Lopatovska, 2015). Aesthetics may enhance the online experiences, promote greater adoption and their repeat behaviour of the UGC platform (Huang, Chang, Yu, & Chen, 2019; Pallud & Straub, 2014). Homophily was also found to significantly and positively predict online platform co-creation experience. This also confirms with the findings revealed by Assaker et al. (2020) that the level of similarity displayed by other users on the UGC website is an important impetus in promoting the acceptance of the UGC which in turn contributes to the platform co-creation experience in

an online context. In other words, the more users perceived congruence between their own interests and the interests of the other users on the platform, the more positive the co-creation experience.

Interestingly, a non-significant result for trust on platform co-creation experience was noted. This contradicts the findings of previous study that have suggested that trust in the UGC platforms' information would positively contribute to the online value co-creation experience (e.g. Zhang et al., 2018). Similarly, most UGC studies reveal that trust is the most significant antecedent for UGC adoption compare to other variables (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2018). A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that most of the respondents already have a good impression of established online UGC platforms (e.g. TripAdvisor,

Table 5
Discriminant Validity (HTMT confidence interval).

Variable	5.00%	95.00%
Perceived usefulness	0.549	0.617
Perceived ease of use	0.624	0.687
Aesthetic	0.559	0.629
Trust	0.569	0.635
Interactivity	0.751	0.807
Homophily	0.561	0.621
Platform co-creation experience	0.573	0.647
Cognitive TDI	0.57	0.629
Affective TDI	0.473	0.578
Overall satisfaction	0.646	0.702

Table 6
R^2 and Q^2 predictive values.

Variable	R^2	Q^2
Platform co-creation experience	0.770	0.441
Cognitive TDI	0.412	0.228
Affective TDI	0.343	0.137
Overall satisfaction	0.484	0.303

Table 7
Results of path analysis.

Hypothesis	Beta	T-value	Result
H1: PU → Platform co-creation experience	0.210	6.364***	Supported
H2: PEU → Platform co-creation experience	0.132	4.445***	Supported
H3: Aesthetic → Platform co-creation experience	0.09	2.444***	Supported
H4: Trust → Platform co-creation experience	0.03	0.574	Not Supported
H5: Interactivity → Platform co-creation experience	0.04	1.062	Not Supported
H6: Homophily→ Platform co-creation experience	0.673	21.787***	Supported
H7: Platform co-creation experience → Cognitive TDI	0.642	22.295***	Supported
H8: Platform co-creation experience → Affective TDI	0.243	4.799***	Supported
H9: Cognitive TDI → Affective TDI	0.400	8.651***	Supported
H10: Cognitive TDI → Overall satisfaction	0.604	17.769***	Supported
H11: Affective TDI → Overall satisfaction	0.146	3.949***	Supported

Note: *** is significant at $p < 0.05$, or t-value > 2.262.

AirBnB). User skepticism may be further minimised as UGC platform content is often screened by administrators and other users also offer corrections should the content be irrelevant or incorrect. Thus, they considered trust is not a major issue in the co-creation experience, particularly if it is a prominent platform with established group of reviewers and followers. Furthermore, users are aware of the possible risks and uncertainty for using travel review open-platforms where the UGC creator's identity could be anonymous, fake or manipulated (bib_Assaker_et_al_2020Assaker et al., 2020). In addition, interactivity was also found to be insignificant in the study which is interesting given the imperative of interactivity in the co-creation process (bib_Liao_et_al_2019Liao et al., 2019; bib_Yoo_et_al_2010Yoo et al., 2010). Zhang et al. (2018) offer a potential explanation for this by arguing that interactivity is more crucial in human-to-human interactions where bonding is emphasised compared to 'human-machine interaction'.

Platform co-creation experience was found significantly and positively impact on cognitive TDI cognitive image as well as affective TDI, supporting the findings of previous studies in the area (e.g. Kim, 2018; Xia et al., 2018). Thus, information on UGC platforms is able to elicit both cognitive as well as affective expectations about what they envisaged experiencing at the destination. This study's findings revealed that UGC platform co-creation experience enhances cognitive perception on

Kuala Lumpur's travelling activities, natural beauties, authentic street food, renowned heritage attractions and various kind of entertainment (especially in the lively vicinity of Bukit Bintang). These attributes confirm with an earlier study's results on Kuala Lumpur's city image where Jaafar, Ismail, and Khairi (2020) found out that international tourists visited Kuala Lumpur due to the attributes of place attractions, food, local people, shopping and architecture. Al-Shams and Badarulzaman (2014) opined that Kuala Lumpur is well-known for some of its modern architecture (e.g. Kuala Lumpur Tower and Petronas Twin Tower) and heritage landmarks which date back to nineteenth century (e.g. Sultan Abdul Samad Building, Sin Sze Si Ya Temple '仙四師爺廟' and St. Mary's Cathedral). However, those previous studies on Kuala Lumpur's image were conducted without examining the role and influence of UGC and online platform co-creation experience.

Further, the results revealed that platform co-creation experience has a stronger effect on cognitive attribute of the destination (β = 0. 642) compared to affective image. This suggests that users may perceive UGC to serve a more utilitarian function in the travel planning stages of their trip. As per the findings of previous studies, cognitive TDI was also found to positively predict affective TDI (e.g. Jaafar et al., 2020; Molinillo et al., 2018; Stylidis et al., 2017; Tan & Wu, 2016). This supports the notion that affective image is a result of cognitive image processing.

Finally, linking the pre-travel to the at-travel stage, cognitive and affective image derived from the UGC platform's co-creation experience was found to positively predict satisfaction with their travelling experience. Jaafar et al. (2020) report that tourists' satisfaction towards Kuala Lumpur and future behavioural intention would be heavily related to the cognitive and affective images formed during the pre-travel stage. Thus, it can be argued that their satisfaction judgements were based on their cognitive and affective perceptions formed earlier (before travel) and matched with their actual travelling experience. In fact, cognitive image's influence on satisfaction (β = 0. 604) was higher compared to affective image, indicating that good reviews would let the users to visualise the attributes of the destination effectively and great travel experience matched with the imagination formed earlier lead to overall satisfaction.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Theoretically, to the best of the authors' knowledge, the current study extends Zhang et al.'s (2018) conceptualisation of platform-use experience as a contributor to the online co-creation experience, to the context of UGC platforms. Specifically, it validates the significant roles that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, aesthetics, trust and interactivity on the platform co-creation experience. Further, it introduced the construct of homophily and demonstrated its role in the platform co-creation experience. Interestingly, the results revealed that homophily was the most important factor in the platform co-creation experience.

Furthermore, this study exhibits that human-machine interactions contribute to shaping and, in fact, enhancing user's image perceptions towards the destination. The results revealed that a good UGC's platform co-creation experience would create a positive cognitive image towards the destination which helps to close theoretical gap closer between online reviews, co-creation, and travel image research. This also proves that the online destination co-creation process is not limited to information systems research, but also impacts on destination image theory. The interaction between platform co-creation experience and destination image provides new conceptual insights on how user engagement in the online platforms impacts on their perceptions of destination attributes and emotions. This supports the concept that actor engagement is the micro-foundation of value co-creation (Storbacka et al., 2016).

Next, this empirical study highlights the linkages between UGC online platform engagement, travel image, and the evaluation of the travel experience. To date, no study has integrated the constructs of UGC's platform co-creation experience, travel destination image, and overall

satisfaction into a holistic model to explore the mechanisms of interaction amongst these constructs. In doing so, the current study offers a greater understanding of the links between the 'pre-travel' and 'at-travel' time horizons.

5.2. Managerial implications

Several managerial implications also emerge from this research. First, the platform co-creation experience model developed in this study underscores the need for tourism managers invest in amplified word-of-mouth campaigns on key UGC websites (both internal and third-party) instead merely focusing their resources on promotions via their official websites and traditional marketing programmes. As shown in the results of this study, the use of online UGC platforms has potential to impact on tourists' destination image. To do so, destination managers may incentivise the posting of UGC on specific websites to create greater promotion of their attractions as well as local businesses.

Further, the insights gleaned from the current study will help destination managers to identify specific design features of UGC platforms that are conducive in creating a stronger sense of co-creation with the platform. The findings are crucial in facilitating the choice of which platform-destinations that managers may collaborate with in their pursuit of greater online co-creation experience. These insights may also help inform destination managers in how to design their own in-house social media and travel review platforms/pages to effectively reaching the users and/or potential travellers.

Furthermore, as homophily was found to be strongest predictor of the UGC's platform co-creation experience, it further highlights the effects of in-group bias in the consumption of UGC. For destination managers, this suggests that homogenous groups of users tend to gravitate to specific UGC platforms, offering an opportunity to better understand the grievances of these segments' through their UGC. For instance, Tripadvisor has introduced 'The TripAdvisor Connect' ads on Facebook and Instagram which adds an additional layer of targeting different segment of users, active on those social media platforms. These ads are using Facebook's targeting features and TripAdvisor's users who are clustered into different profiles or identities accordingly (e.g. outdoor enthusiasts or 'beachgoers'). Destination managers may trace these ads to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their destination offerings as highlighted in the UGCs. Furthermore, this also allows destination managers to respond to criticisms on these websites to reduce the detrimental effects of negative reviews as well as to build more positive engagement with their target markets. Tripadvisor reported that, if a manager provides personalised responses to the reviews, over three-quarters (77%) of its users in its online survey were more likely to have the revisit behaviour (TripAdvisor, 2020).

The findings further highlight the impact that the platform co-creation experience has on destination image and overall satisfaction. Specifically, the experience of co-creation on the platform was found to enhance destination image, which in turn, served as the basis on which satisfaction judgements were made. Thus, it is crucial that destination marketers not only monitor the nature of the UGC being posted on specific platforms to build a strong, positive reputation in the minds of potential visitors, but also ensure that the destination delivers on the imagery that it portrays. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to the maintenance of hospitality services and tourism product qualities at the destination (Ariffin, Maghzi, Lam, & Alam, 2018).

6. Limitations and future research

The current study is not without its limitations. First, while the current study aims at developing an initial theory in the examination of the linkage between UGC platform co-creation experience, destination image, and satisfaction, there is a need for further studies to validate its findings. It is noted that the current study examines the phenomenon broadly and does not compare between specific types of UGC platforms

(e.g. TripAdvisor, Booking.com, etc). It is possible that individual websites possess unique qualities which may not be generalisable to other platforms to be included in the research. Furthermore, it would be prudent to examine other forms of UGC platforms such as blogs, microblog, media-sharing sites (e.g.YouTube) or even the effects of mobile versions of UGC platforms to validate the findings of the current study. In addition, 'in-house' review platforms controlled or owned by the DMOs could also be included for the comparison analysis.

Second, it would also be interesting to observe whether the present findings could benefit by conducting different cross-cultural user samples (e.g. domestic-international tourists, Asian-Western tourists, male-female tourists). Also, it is interesting to examine the robustness of this integrated model in different study destinations in different countries (e.g. China, Australia).

Finally, the current study only investigates the impact of design attributes on the platform co-creation experience. Future study could further incorporate the effects of the actual content of the UGC on the co-creation experience. For instance, future studies could investigate the effects of other cognitive attributes for the destination, such as hospitality service quality, destination authenticity, airport services, and also to consider traveller's cultural background.

Credit author statement

Jason M.S. Lam: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Software, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Methodology, creation of model, PLS-SEM analyses, data collection, preparation of the published work. **Hishamuddin Ismail:** Conceptualisation, Validation, Supervision. **Sean Lee:** Conceptualisation, Methodology, Resources, Writing - review & editing.

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