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Millennials' travels: the influence of Instagram on the decision-making process

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Any errors present in this thesis are entirely my own responsibility.

Resumo

Este estudo aborda um tópico bastante relevante do marketing em 2020: o Instagram e a sua influência no processo de tomada de decisão nas viagens dos millennials portugueses. Os conceitos mais importantes são noções como a geração Y, teoria geracional, redes sociais, Instagram, consumidores de viagens, evolução da internet e comunicação visual. A dissertação foca-se em particular no estudo dos consumidores que pertencem à Geração Y, nascidos entre 1982 e 2002.

A dissertação teve como principal objetivo compreender qual o efeito do Instagram na procura e escolha de uma viagem pela geração millennial e, por isso, foi essencial incluir no estudo uma descrição da geração millennial e do seu comportamento enquanto consumidores, uma descrição da evolução da Internet ao longo dos anos, assim como uma descrição das redes sociais mais utilizadas até ao momento.

Foi considerada uma metodologia quantitativa através de um questionário online, em que o Instagram foi o principal meio de partilha do mesmo, dada a importância desta rede social no presente estudo. Foram consideradas 416 respostas válidas no decorrer da análise, de indivíduos que pertencessem à geração Y.

As principais conclusões obtidas através desta dissertação provaram que os indivíduos da amostra confiam e utilizam o Instagram no processo de tomada de decisão de uma viagem, sendo uma das plataformas mais escolhidas pelos consumidores. A maioria dos consumidores utiliza esta rede social para obter informações sobre o destino, verificar opiniões de consumidores anteriores e também como meio de inspiração através de fotos e vídeos partilhadas na rede social.

Palavras-chave: Geração Y; Redes Sociais; Instagram; Indústria do Turismo; Marketing

JEL Classification System: M31 (Marketing) e **Z31** (Tourism: Industry Studies)

Abstract

This research approaches a relevant topic of marketing in 2020: the influence of Instagram on the decision-making process of Portuguese in millennials' travels. Millennial generation, social media, Instagram, internet evolution and visual communication can be considered as very important notions in this dissertation. The presented dissertation focuses in particular on Generation Y member's point of view, all individuals born between 1982 and 2002.

The dissertation had as a main goal to understand the role of Instagram in the decision-making process of millennials' travels. Therefore, a description of millennial generation was made and also of the consumer behavior of this generation, a description of the internet evolution over the years and of the most used social media.

A quantitative approach was considered through an online questionnaire that was diffused in Instagram, taking in consideration Instagram importance in the present study. 416 valid responses were collected and considered during the data analysis, from individuals who belong to the Generation Y, with ages between 18 and 38 years old.

The most important conclusions from the research proved that the sampled individuals trust and use Instagram in the decision-making process in their travels, being one of the most used platforms by the consumers. The majority of the sample use this social media in order to obtain information regarding the travel destination, to look for opinions from previous consumers and also to look for inspiration through photos and videos shared on this social media.

Key-Words: Generation Y; Social Media; Instagram; Tourism Industry; Marketing

JEL Classification System: M31 (Marketing) and **Z31** (Tourism: Industry Studies)

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1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will start with a brief introduction to the theme for the investigation, followed by the definition of the research objectives and its contextualization. Additionally, a thesis overview structure of the dissertation will also be presented.

1.1 Introduction to the topic

This dissertation starts with the literature review chapter, taking in consideration the generational theory and, providing special attention to the generation in study, Generation Y. The usage of Internet and social media is always increasing, especially when it comes to Millennials and the younger generations, all over the world.

Formerly, the World Wide Web was characterized by the first stage of the internet, Web 1.0, which was mostly informational. Later on, web evolved to a new concept called Web 2.0, which concentrates on the capacity to cooperate and share information online and besides reading the content, it gave its users the power to edit and update the online content (Nath et al., 2014). Internet evolved once again until Web 3.0, however we may not be there yet at 100%, since it is a recent subject and there is a lack of information regarding this matter. Defining Web 3.0, it is very important to mention that it is represented by a higher degree of personalization of the online content to each user and when compared to Web 2.0, Web 3.0 is mainly categorized by being individually oriented (content customization), focusing on a worldwide database, while Web 2.0 is categorized by being more community oriented.

With the evolution of the internet and new technological media, Millennials have easy access to a high quantity of information (Sweeney, 2006), resulting into a generation that is frequently connected to digital information, entertainment, family and friends (Eisner, 2005). Many industries and, in particular, tourism industry have been encouraged in order to adapt their business models to the 21st century and to the new tools of marketing (Bennett et al., 2017).

Nowadays, social media can be defined as an online service to create and share different content such as social networking sites (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), blogs, online reviews/rating sites, online communities, forums, where the consumers can reveal their personal experiences and opinions about products or services (Bolton, 2013). Furthermore, due to the evolution of Web 2.0, user-generated content has evolved and became a new way of

consumer engagement. In fact, travel-related UGC represents a key source for prospective travelers to understand previous travelers' experiences about destinations and UGC is considered to be more trustworthy than any information provided by official tourism websites or travel agents (Varkaris & Neufer, 2017).

Consequently, with the evolution of the Internet and user-generated content and, more specifically, online communications such as social networks gives an opportunity to organizations to share their business since they represent a low cost way to reach the pretender audience and, on the other hand, allows companies the access consumers with different interests and easily collecting their feedback (Katona and Sarvary, 2014).

With this study, the researcher will try to provide new information for marketers on how Instagram influence travel decision-making process of consumers and, thus, their purchasing behaviour.

1.2   Research objectives and research question

The purpose of this dissertation is the study of the possible influence of Instagram in travel decision-making process of consumers and the potentials of Instagram as a marketing tool in travel industry. The aim is also to give some suggestions about how destination marketing organizations and other tourism services could improve their online marketing strategies.

The travel industry is composed of several markets with different activities and purposes, attract different tourists with several motivations. Hence, it should be segmented in order to achieve more reliable results to the study. Therefore, this dissertation will only focus on the study of the Generation Y.

The overall research question that should be answered through this dissertation will be the follow:

Is Instagram a potential marketing tool for the travel industry among Generation Y?

1.3   Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters that compose the research. A brief summary explaining each chapter is given below:

Chapter 1: This chapter provides an introduction to the topic, with an explanation of Generation Y and its consumer behaviour. It follows with an introduction to the evolution of the Web and the influence of social media on the daily basis of this generation and, in particular, on a process decision-making of a destination. At last, an introduction to the visual communication as well as Instagram which is the social media focused in this study. It is also presented the research objectives and the structure of the study.

Chapter 2: In this chapter it is the literature review, divided into four fundamental subchapters. First, the focus is the generational theory and some limitations regarding it. Then, the focus is the Generation Y, the social context that shaped it, the traits that characterizes this cohort and also, how they behave as consumers. Following, there is a subchapter concerning the evolution of Web 2.0 with the definition of the concept and the changes related to tourism industry. After, it analyses the concept of social media, the main platforms and the impact of social media on businesses and consumers behaviour. Afterwards, the concept of user-generated content is analysed. Lastly, it analyses and describes the concepts of visual communication and Instagram and their importance in tourism, especially on travel decisions.

Chapter 3: This chapter includes the methodology that is devoted to the research objectives, the conceptual model and the hypothesis definition of the study, data methodology and questionnaire design employed to study the possible influence of Instagram in travel planning and destination choice of the Millennial generation. The description of the statistical analyses applied is also included.

Chapter 4: The data analysis chapter comprises the descriptive statistical analysis of all the data gathered through the questionnaire and the defined hypotheses of the study.

Chapter 5: This last chapter includes the major conclusions of this dissertation, taking into account the literature review and the results of the questionnaire, the limitations of the study, and the future research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter will concentrate on previous studies conducted in the corresponding fields, to better understand the major components of this research – generational theory, Y generation definition and behaviours as consumers, internet evolution and Web in 2020, social media, user-generated content on social media, visual communication and Instagram in travels.

According to Rifai (2016), the present generation of young people have much more information than the previous generations had, consequently, they are more mobile and adventurers than ever before. Furthermore, Morrison (2016) in the Millennial Traveller Report mentioned that Y Generation through social media have grown up with more connections to the world than the previous generation and, for this reason, there is a strong desire to travel around the world.

It is revealed the power that the young people have in social change, leading to a positive change in the global tourism sector. Consequently, it is very important to understand how and why Millennials' generation see such value in investing in travel experiences and the influence of social media on their decision-making process.

2.1. Generational theory

The generational theory has been studied for various researchers, due to the fact that each generation should be treated differently depending on their preferences and behaviours. This fact can be explained because each generation has unique expectations, histories, lifestyles, demographics and values that influence their buying decisions. For this reason, recognizing their characteristics will allow managers to easily adapt and build relationships with the consumers and gain their trust (Williams, 2011).

Firstly, it is important to emphasize that there is not a legitimate theory regarding the generational theory and there are many that could be used in this dissertation. However, this research will focus on the more popular and renowned theories, namely Mannheim (1952), Howe and Strauss (1991), Pendergast (2010), Fields et al. (2008) and Donnison (2007) will be utilized.

The concept "Generational theory" emerged in America, however is widely applicable to those who have the English as a native language and also have a cultural background

associated with it. With the Globalization and the access to the World Wide Web (WWW), the number of people included in these cohorts is increasing. Furthermore, the tourism industry, which has a global reach, uses English as the main language and this leads to generational impacts (Fields et al., 2008).

The major concept of Howe and Strauss' generational theory (1991) defends that people who belong to the same age group share similar values, expectations, beliefs, skills, capacities and interests. For these reasons, researchers characterize the cohorts' profiles and their comprehension will help managers to understand incentives, motivations and culture of each generation (Pendergast, 2010). Besides, allocating people according to their age group represents a consistent framework, which focuses on a group's characteristics and not as individuals.

Many years ago, Mannheim (1952) defined the principal concepts of generational theory, which includes the generational location, generation actuality and generation units. Each of these concepts will be explained. Generational location means that a cohort that shares the same location will likely limit the generations to the same experiences during their early life and, consequently, it will influence and shape their values and beliefs (Pendergast, 2010). However, according to Mannheim (1952), not all individuals will necessarily share the same experiences, even if belonging to the same generational location. For this reason, the author defends that individuals who were born in the same chorological time and location, but also have experienced identical experiences related to that historical location, can be defined as 'generation as actuality' (Donnison, 2009). This means that a cohort who belongs to the same location will share the same experiences and social and economic environments.

The concept 'generation units' is the last one to be considered in the generational theory, according to Mannheim (1952). Generation units are defined as subgroups that belong to the same generational time, however, from a range of 20 to 22 years of generation location span (Pendergast, 2009; Huang, 2010). Though individuals belong to the same subgroup and share the same external events, each individual may realize the experiences in distinct several ways, because each person act as a singular human being (Mannheim, 1952).

The three concepts – generational location, actuality and units – are essential to understand the intergenerational differences exemplified by the differences in values, traits and beliefs from the several cohorts (Pendergast, 2009). These characteristics of the cohorts are defined by demographers, market researchers, media, the press and also sociologists, who aim to determine common characteristics between individuals that share the same generational

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cohort, such as attitudes at work, political behaviour, consumer pattern, family orientation and tourism behaviour (Pendergast, 2009).

Howe and Strauss (2000) defend that generations move as a collective through society, having four phases of life – childhood (acquiring values), young adulthood (testing), mid-adulthood (asserting) and elder hood (transferring) – but always preserving their generational characteristics and also, depending on each stage of life. The first phase of life, childhood years or formative years of each generation, is determinant in acquiring values and beliefs.

Summarizing, generational theory brings together five main components:

1. People who belong to the same age group share similar values, expectations, beliefs, skills, capacities and interests;

2. Even if individuals belong to the same subgroup and share the same external events, each individual may realize the experiences in distinct several ways;

3. The life-cycle stage are divided into four phases - childhood, young adulthood, mid-adulthood and elder hood and there exists particular characteristics for each generation at each stage.

4. Formative years of childhood are determinant to distinguish values and beliefs of the generation;

5. The birth generation has its unique attributes at any given time (for example, Generation X and Baby Boomer).

In order to completely understand the generational theory, it is important to comprehend the current major living generations, according to Howe and Strauss (2000).

Firstly, the Silent Generation, born between 1925 and 1942, with ages from 78 to 95 years old in 2020, is an adaptive cohort due to the fact that they were born after a civic generation. They were the children of the depression and war and also, the youngest-marrying generation in America´s history. Now, "they give freely to charity, are inclined to see both sides of every issue, and believe in fair process more than final results" (Howe and Strauss, 1991).

Baby Boomers (born between 1943 and 1960, with ages between 60 and 77 years old in the current year) "come of age inspiring an awakening, fragment into narcissistic rising adults and emerge as visionary elders who guide the next crisis" (Howe & Strauss, 1991). They were born after World War II, into an era of optimism and reveal perfectionism and self-esteem. Identified as an idealist, currently belongs to the mid-adulthood and also entering to the elder hood. This generation spent their life developing and refining their expertise, with a strong work ethic, believing in authority and accepting authoritarian leadership (Pendergast, 2009).

Following the idealist generation is the reactive generation, which is characterized as cynical and often depressed, because it is a response to the energy of the previous generation. Known as the X Generation or Thirteenth Generation (born between 1961 and 1981, with ages between 39 and 59 years old) is considered the most Republican-leaning youths of the twentieth century and also characterized by a cynical realism (Strauss and Howe, 1991). They are usually professionals in theirs fields, however they differ from Baby Boomers since they see cooperative leadership and teams as work practices.

The next in the cycle is Y Generation (born between 1982 and 2004 – with 16 to 38 years old), and known as the hero generation. They are conventional, committed, and good at learning new things. They usually are collaborative and interactive and believe in merit, not seniority unlike the values of both X Generation and Baby Boomer managers. Also, according to Home & Strauss theory, millennial generation is mostly characterized for their intelligence, obedience and optimism. The present research will focus on this generation, for this reason, it will be explained in more detail forward.

The generation following the previous one is the artists, an emotional and indecisive generation, called Z Generation (born from 2005 to present – with 15 years old or less). According to Strauss and Howe, the artist generation is born during a time of crisis, which resulted in an overprotected by adults and therefore, become more sensitive, showing a conservative behaviour.

2.1.1. Limitations

The study of the generations and their lifestyle characteristics is very useful for managers, since it allows to achieve a perception of their consumer behaviours (Williams, 2011). Generational labels started with the generation "Baby Boomers", due to the impact of the post-World War II, which revealed the importance of the study of its effects on the population by demographers and the media (McCrindle, 2011). However, there are some limitations to the study about the generational cohorts that it is necessary to take into account before focusing on Y Generation:

i. The concept "generational theory" is worldwide spread to those who have the English as a native language or a cultural background associated; despite this, there are no researches focusing on generations born outside the United States of America (Pendergast, 2010).

ii. There are different theories regarding the years of each generational cohort and there is no consensus about the exact years of each one (Pendergast, 2010; Reeves, 2007).

iii. Each generation is affected by several external events, which may be different across locations and different cultures (Moscardo, 2010).

iv. There are some difficulties about distinguishing the influence of generational cohorts and lifecycle stages. It is usual, but wrongly so, assumed that cohorts only differ in age periods as well as comparing the characteristics of two generations, forgetting the influence of their life cycle stages (Moscardo, 2010).

2.2. Generation Y

The present section emphasis on the focus of the research – the generation Y.

The Millennial generation, also known as Y Generation (or Gen Y), has been studied by many scholars, such as Howe and Strauss (2000), Huntley (2006), Donnison (2007), Fields et al. (2008), etc. These range of theorists allow a foundational understanding of this generation in our society, which is increasingly in the tourism market and has the capability to affect society as consumers (Pendergast, 2009). For this reason, this particular generation was chosen as the focus of this dissertation and, in order to achieve the goal of the dissertation, a full analysis of their characteristics and social contexts that shaped them will be made.

In the generational literature, there are different theories regarding the years of each generational cohort and there is no consensus about the exact years. The study of Donnison (2007), which compares the researches conducted throughout the years, concludes that the birth year of this generation may vary between 1977 and 1983. On the other hand, the comparison on what year the generation ends, shows that it may vary between 18 and 25 (1995-2002). Furthermore, the author emphasises the differences that were found when studying the Millennials leading to a discrepancy about the generation's size. Disregarding these issues, this study will focus in the definition of Neil Howe and William Strauss (2000), which defend that the generation Y were born between 1982 and 2002.

The characteristics of this cohort have been studied by many researchers, who collected several information and achieved to a profile. According to Huntley (2006), the social context had influence on the cohort's personality. Regarding the social context, it is possible to identify the definitions of consumerism, neoliberalism and global society. On one hand, it is an era characterized by technological developments and a more peaceful world. On the other hand,

this generation is the first one exposed to constant acts of terrorism. Additionally, Rebecca Huntley describes Millennials as the "Paradoxical Generation" related to their way of living. The author refers to some contradictory examples as "they drink and take drugs, but eat organic food" or "they are obsessed with technology but fear it is depriving them of deeper personal relationship" and also "they want to get married but resist settling down with a partner" (Huntley, 2006).

Several researchers came up with different characteristics to describe the generation, such as multitaskers, ambitious, collaborative, educated, digital natives, worried about the security and credit dependent are some of them (Pendergast, 2010). These characteristics are the result of the influence of the external events (demography, social and financial context, technology, etc).

The authors Howe and Strauss (2000) believed that through technology and information, reactions, beliefs and other behaviours of a generation could be tracked. Consequently, researchers identified seven traits that characterize the millennial generation, which are more visible with age. Each characteristic will be analysed:

a) Special – Millennials generation is considered special mostly because they belong to smaller families with less children. Some researchers even defend that some of these kids were planned with the support of medical technology and the related birth facilitates (Pendergast, 2010). Another important factor is their digital proficiencies, which differentiates them from the previous generations.

b) Sheltered – This generation is more family oriented being protected by them as well as their government and school systems more so than any previous generation (Pendergast, 2010; Moscardo, 2010). Besides this, millennials are more worried about safety and security issues (Pendergast, 2010).

c) Confident – The cohort is considered as very positive and also with a high self-esteem (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Moreover, this group had to deal with numerous changes during the most of their life concerning the economic situation, technological evolution and also the safety of their countries. These external factors have led Millennials to easily adapt in uncertain situations (Pendergast, 2010). Also, they have been told several times they can do everything and they believe it (Eisner, 2005).

d) Team-Oriented – When compared to previous generations, this cohort is distinguished by its characteristic of being team-oriented. The members of Y Gen have experienced in their early lives several activities provided by the educational system such as school

games, volunteer programs or even sport games, which encourages the teamwork and prepared the cohort to team activities (Pendergast, 2010).

e) <u>Conventional</u> – Gen Y values the balance between personal and professional life, unlike previous generational cohorts that worked longer hours to succeed in their career, neglecting their personal life (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Moreover, they value time and flexibility in order to better manage the options that may arise for them (Sweeney, 2006).

f) <u>Pressured</u> – According to Howe and Strauss (2000), Millennials are seen by their families as "trophy kids" and they must accomplish all opportunities they receive. The researchers defend that as a result this cohort feels more pressured in comparison with other cohorts, since this one "experience busy school days, busy social life, after-school care calendars regardless of their social economic profile" (Pendergast, 2010).

g) <u>Achieving</u> – The 80's were the beginning of a big change in the value of the education. The same happened with the professional success. At that time, the education was highly valued and as a consequence, it is possible to observe the decline in the labor market and an increase of applications for a higher education (Pendergast, 2010). Regarding America, Howe and Strauss even mentioned that Y Gen could become the most educated and well-behaved adults in the history (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Additionally, with the evolution of the Internet it made information something that can be easily accessed by everyone, hence, this generation prefers to learn by themselves and they revealed being very good at performing multiple activities at the same time – multitasking (Sweeney, 2006; Pendergast, 2010).

2.2.1. Generation Y as consumers

The youth market is considered an important segment due to the fact that they have a great purchasing power, they are very receptive to new products and they can easily become lifetime customers (Huang, 2010). Also, with the evolution of new technological media, the Millennials consider to go shopping as a new hobby and also as a way of leisure and not as a simple act of buying something (Huang, 2010; Valentine, 2013). Since they have easy access to a high quantity of information, they expect personalized and customized products depending on their interests and needs (Sweeney, 2006). According to Huang (2010), they reveal a growing satisfaction in the products, advertising, brands and also decision-making strategies on the

current market when compared to previous generations. Besides, they can be defined as impatient due to the fact they demand instant and quality services anywhere they go (Sweeney, 2006).

The early exposure to technology resulted into a generation that is frequently connected to digital information, entertainment, family and friends (Eisner, 2005). They use the technology to interact with their friends and family and they depend on it to value their opinions in social media. Bolton (2013) argues that technology has influence on their consumers' identity, their expectations and habits, engagements with firms and brands, purchase behavior, brand loyalty and even on the value of the firm.

The previously mentioned characteristics make Millennials a generation difficult to reach, when it concerns to advertising (Huang, 2010). Scholars found that this generation is individualistic and supports social causes. For this reason, they are careful when choosing a company, giving priority to social responsible companies when buying products (Valentine, 2013), paying attention to the environmental consequences of the product but also on the corporation's background and behaviors (Eisner, 2005).

One of the best marketing tools that seems to work with Y generation is word-of-mouth, since they value more their friends and family opinions, via social media or personally, than any other tool of advertising (Huang, 2010). Last but not least, humorous and emotional advertisements that reflect their lifestyle can easily reach this generation instead of advertisements that focus on presenting the product's features (Bakewell, 2003; Huang, 2010).

2.3. Internet Evolution and Web in 2020

In the recent years, the evolution of the Internet has encouraged many industries and, in particular, tourism industry to adapt their business models to the 21st century and to the new tools of marketing (Bennett et al., 2017).

As a consequence of the development of these new technologies, marketing has suffered a digital transformation in which products and services can be obtained 24 hours a day and 7 days a week around all the world (Sutherland et al., 2018).

In a world where consumers are dependent on Internet, buying experiences suffered a big transformation. As a result, consumer behaviour has changed due to the large quantity of products and services delivered through all the communication channels provided by the Internet (Onete, 2017).

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Firstly, the World Wide Web was defined by Web 1.0, the first stage of the internet, which was mostly informational and users could only read or share information by web pages. This type of internet didn't present two-way communication between its users.

It is important to acknowledge the definition of Web 2.0. It describes a second generation of the World Wide Web that concentrates on the capacity to cooperate and share information online. It results from the development from fixed html Web pages, as mentioned before, to a more organized Web that provides Web applications to users. The main purpose of Web 2.0 is to offer the capability of sharing more open information (Constantinides & Stefan, 2008).

Using Web 2.0 can bring benefits but it also can bring some disadvantages, depending on how people use it. On one hand, organizations can benefit by promoting their products and services, on the other hand, if they do not share their messages properly and according to the expectations of the consumers, they may lose their image. In addition, although users have the possibility to access a big quantity of information, they can easily be influenced by other customers to purchase other products or services that they do not need or that do not suit their expectations (Onete, 2017).

The evolution of Web 2.0 continued to the new concept of Web 3.0, defined mainly by two developments, which are the development of the Semantic Web and the Internet of Things (IoT). The main purpose of Web 3.0 is to evolve out of upgrades and extensions to the existing Web functionalities (Onete, 2017). The Web 3.0 began with the smartphone period and, as a result, connects people with services and devices, having a basis of Wi-Fi, sensors, mobile devices and also social networks (Newman et al., 2016). However, this is a still recent subject and there is a lack of information in the existent literature. Comparing to Web 2.0, Web 3.0 is represented by a higher degree of personalization of the online content to each user while Web 2.0 is categorized by being community oriented, Web 3.0 is mainly categorized by being individually oriented (content customization), with user developed smart applications and concentrating on a worldwide database (Nath et al., 2014).

2.3.1. Definition of Social Media

The concept of social media is often associated with the term of Web 2.0, since social media tools emerged and developed in the second phase of the evolution of the World Wide Web (Onete, 2017).

In a broad sense, social media can be defined as an online service through which users can create and share different content such as social networking sites, blogs, online reviews/rating sites, online communities, among others (Bolton, 2013). Social media is a huge and a fundamental tool in Gen Y daily basis and in their social life. In other words, social media can be described as Internet-based applications that are responsible for consumer-generated content, which includes archives with content shared online for others to easily have access (Blackshaw, 2006). These applications allows consumers to "post", "tag" or "blog" on the Internet.

Moreover, consumers share several contents on social media with the intention of sharing to each other about brands, products and services (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2006). When compared with content shared by marketers and suppliers, the main goal of social media created by consumers is sharing personal information among themselves.

With the Web 2.0 technologies, consumers are now able to build and maintain relationships with the companies that manage their favorite brands (Uncles, 2008).

To sum up, through the emergence of Web 2.0, brands have now access to an incomparable tool that allows them to cooperate with their most loyal consumers and also bring value for the brand (Cova & Cova, 2002) and, it also allows Y generation to keep in touch with their friends and family by sharing personal information or simply sending private messages.

2.3.2. Main Social Media Platforms

According to a study conducted by Ali (2020) that provides the most important insights on the world of social media in 2019, and comparing in terms of monthly active users (MAUs) – an industry metric used to measure the success of these platforms, the 11 most popular platforms worldwide in 2019 can be observed in the Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 - Top 11 Social Media Platforms in 2019

Rank	Social Network	Monthly active users in Millions
1°	Facebook	2,603
2°	Whatsapp	2,000
3°	YouTube	2,000
4°	Messenger	1,300
5°	WeChat	1,203
6°	Instagram	1,082
7°	Tik Tok	800
8°	QQ	694
9°	Weibo	550
10°	Qzone	517
11°	Reddit	430

(Adapted from visualcapitalist.com, 2020)

According to the table, it is possible to observe that Facebook is in the first position of the rank with 2.6 billion monthly active users and Instagram is in the sixth position with approximately 1 billion monthly active users. Statistics from 2020 show that there are 3.8 billion social media users worldwide and this number is only growing. Moreover, it represents almost 50% of the current world population (Ali, 2020).

One of the reasons for this high usage of social media is the continuous improving of mobile capabilities for users which make it easier to access social media. Furthermore, most social networks are now available in mobile apps allowing users to access their favourite sites no matter where they are at any time (Emarsys, 2019).

According to Emarketer (2019), the results of active social media users in the US population by generation is very interesting. The data speaks for itself: 90.4% of Millennial Generation use social media, 77.5% of Generation X also use at least one social media and only 48.2% of Baby Boomers use social media. Hence, Millennials continue to be the generation with the highest use of social media, and also the one with the most access to smartphones. Although Generation X is more likely to use tablets. Finally, Baby Boomers are increasingly getting more familiar with social media platforms (Emarketer, 2019).

Facebook is the most widely used social platform with approximately 2.6 billion active monthly users in 2019. It was the first ever social network to reach the one billion active users mark in the third quarter of 2012. In the present day, Facebook is the leading platform and in 2018 it reached 60.6% of the total number of internet users (Facebook, 2018) and 96% of Facebook's user activity is from a mobile device (DataReportal, 2019). Another interesting fact is that according to Statista (2019), 65% of Facebook users are under the age of 35 years old and, in average, they spend 58.5 minutes on this social media each day (Recode, 2018).

Focusing on Instagram, this social network was created by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom and it was originally launched on iOS in October 2010. The main purpose was to share pictures and videos, both publicity and privately. It was acquired by Facebook in 2012, by $1 billion and according to Bloomberg Intelligence report, Instagram was worth $100 billion by 2018 (Bloomberg, 2018), which is 100 times the 1 billion Facebook bought for it.

After 9 years of existence, in 2019, Instagram has over 1 billion monthly active users and 600 million daily active users. It is also known that, since its creation, more than 40 billion photos have been shared and there are now approximately 4.2 billion likes per day. Analysing Graph 2.1 below, with the statistics on the age and gender of Instagram users in July of 2020, it is possible to observe that 6,9% of Instagram users are minors with ages between 13 and 17 years old; followed by 29.3% with ages between 18 and 24 years old; 33.8% with 25-34 years old; 15.9% between 34 and 44 years; 11.9% between 45 and 64; and the remaining 2.2% are over 65 years old (Statista, 2020).

Graph 1 - Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of July 2020, by age and gender
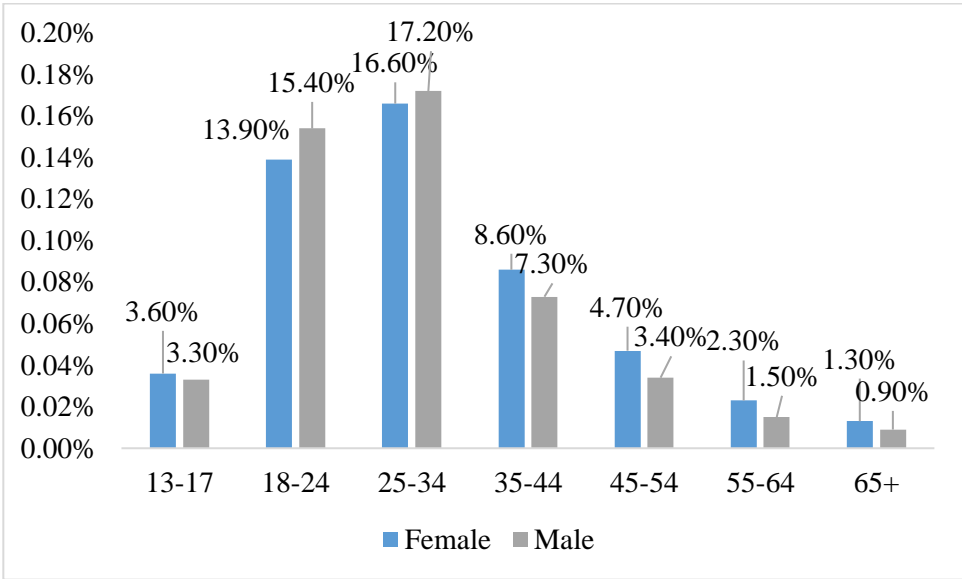
(Adapted from statista.com, 2020)

2.3.3. The importance of Social Media for businesses and consumers

Web 2.0 technology plays an important role in every daily life activities in our society and it also allowed the expansion of the Internet in a marketing environment (Darwish & Lathtaria, 2011). Moreover, online consumers have perceived Web 2.0 applications as a way of empowerment and not only as a source of content sharing and dialogue but also as a way of dealing with the producers and vendors concerning their commercial, ethical and social responsibilities (Constantinides & Stefan, 2008).

Since the engagement aspect reached marketing, the conventional communication has been seriously changed (Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan, 2001). People used to communicate

with face-to-face conversations, also known in marketing terms as Word-of-Mouth strategy. This strategy relates to the communication from costumer to costumer according with their perceived image of the brand. Despite this, in the present days, with the IT development, people communicate in a high percentage through computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Sadovykh et al., 2015).

Another concept that can also be applied to the internet users is observational learning, defined by the consumers seeing other people buying decisions (previous consumers) that can generate a consumer belief (Chen et al., 2011). The authors also defend that companies would benefit if they create their own observational learning and word-of-mouth strategy. Furthermore, these two ways of social interaction are very different since word-of-mouth reveals more credibility. This happens because observational learning exposes only a visualization of the actions done by previous consumers, while word-of-mouth provides recommendations, opinions and personal experiences (Chen et al., 2011).

Additionally, Sadovykh et al. (2015) defend that the manner of internet participation is what differentiates users in online community. For example, there are people who share comments/reviews every day, while other just gather information resulting from already developed recommendations/opinions.

Furthermore, it is very important to mention that social media marketing for business companies is crucial in order to follow their customers suggestions, allowing a growth in their performance based on direct feedback. Consequently, this feedback provided by consumers will increase brand awareness, create a strong relationship with customers and encourage the use of new communication channels (Jucaityte and Mascinskiene, 2014).

The author Rodrigues (2012) performed a study that, even though the impossibility of it being extrapolated to the general population, showed in the sample that about 75% of the respondents followed brands on Facebook to about an average of 18 brands each. Therefore, one more reason for companies to make an impact in the consumer decision making process through social media (Jucaityte and Mascinskiene, 2014).

According to Xie and Lee (2015), the exposure on social media of brands have a positive influence on consumer's likelihood of purchasing the brands items. For this reason, the authors also recommend organizations to start online communities in order to create direct relationships with customers.

Concerning the type of online social networks, these have evolved from friendship websites (for example, Facebook, hi5, Myspace, among others) to more specific user oriented websites. Consequently, some social networks are focused on growing globally, such as

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Facebook, Google+ or YouTube, targeting all niche groups of internet users, while others have as a main goal to reach a specific niche market of internet users (for example, Goodreads, MUBI, Zomato, among others) (Sadovykh et al., 2015).

Moreover, the authors Shadkam and O'Hara (2013) defend that Instagram accounts and Facebook pages are examples of social networks that share the products of business companies, using the platforms to sell products/services to consumers. This way, social media and other digital platforms may be seen as a set of very useful tools that connect consumers on which marketing can be developed (Quinton, 2013).

To sum up, the evolution of the Internet and, more specifically, online communications as social networks, has given an opportunity for organizations to share their business since they represent a low cost way to reach the pretended audience and on the other hand, allows companies the access to consumers with different interests and easily collecting their feedback (Katona and Sarvary, 2014).

2.3.4. User-Generated Content on Social media

User-generated content can be described as uploaded information by users that is made available through the Internet (Munar, 2011). Furthermore, it is a new way of consumer engagement and it is a new tool that the consumers use to express themselves and interact with other people (Smith et al., 2012).

Due to the evolution of Web 2.0, UGC content has evolved and despite its developments, it is still a new concept and researchers have not reach a consensus regarding its universal definition (Christodoulides et al., 2012; Malthouse et al., 2016).

UGC can be considered branded related content that can be stimulated by brand managers and marketers, for example, contents, games, voting or simply because individuals naturally create content in their social media. According to Daugherty et al., (2008), individuals who usually engage with UGC are more likely to share their personal opinions about some brands or products. Instagram, Facebook or YouTube are examples of social media where there is a huge quantity of sponsored and non-sponsored content. Christodoulides et al., (2012) considers non-sponsored brand related UGC as co-creation, empowerment, community and self-concept.

According to Scheinbaum (2016), successful branding requests engaging consumers on social media and digital settings. This engagement is very important since it allows community outcomes and individual's connecting with others who share the same interests.

Travel-related UGC represents a key source for prospective travelers to understand previous travelers experiences regarding destinations, facilities and restaurants (Varkaris & Neufer, 2017). In fact, almost 80% of the users who use social media for travel-related reasons are searching information regarding travel destinations and accommodations, with the majority of users consulting online reviews (Varkaris & Neufer, 2017). In this process, consumers trust material from other travelers on social media, while UGC is considered to be more trustworthy than any other information provided by official tourism websites, travel agencies and other mass media advertising.

2.4. Visual communication and Instagram

This chapter will focus on visual communication and Instagram, there are many marketing possibilities related to traveling.

According to the authors Dunlap & Lowenthal (2016), people easily learn and remember more efficiently through the use of text and also visuals than just through text alone. John Medina (2008) described how vision stands out from the other senses since human brains are designed to involuntarily understand images. The author also defends that vision is the best tool the human being have for learning anything. Therefore, if an informational message is visual, the probability to be recognized and recalled is higher (Medina, 2008). Consequently, visuals have the potential to be an efficient and clearer way to communicate than text alone.

The World Wide Web has revolutionized the way people publish and consume information (Guadiano, 2014). One of the innovations that came up with the Web was the capability to use text with other media such as pictures and videos. This innovation led to the success of some companies such as Flickr, Instagram and YouTube. The capability to publish multimedia content has also been a driver of other paradigm changes in our behavior, as for example online shopping. However, the majority of activities people do online are still fundamentally based on reading text as social media, news, search, e-mail and consumers reviews. Despite this, people do not do very well with large amounts of text on Internet, since reading consumes valuable time.

Almost all social media platforms incorporate visual communication and it has evolved with the increased usage of smartphones. According to a survey conducted by DataReportal (2020), there were 7 million active social media users in Portugal in January 2020, which means this number increased 433.000 (+6.6%) between April 2019 and January 2020. Moreover, the major platforms with visual communication in Portugal are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest (DataReportal, 2020).

Nowadays, sharing travel experiences has become a lot easier and sophisticated than twenty years ago when people could only search information buying paper guidebooks in bookstores. Instagram is becoming more and more a social media to share travel experiences, due to the fact that people are trying to immortalize their experiences through photographs, by sharing it with their followers (Martino, 2016).

Instagram has created a wave of social media-fueled tourism among the users and mostly Millennials. With a billion users on the platform, 71% of which are under 35 years old (Statista, 2019). Moreover, according to this statistic about the distribution of Instagram users worldwide concerning January 2019, the most popular age range is users between 25 and 34 years old, followed by users between the ages of 18 and 24.

According to a survey conducted on Instagram (2015), 48% of people choose this platform when they are looking for a destination to travel and 35% of them use Instagram to get inspiration and also to search for new places. When entering the hashtag #travel in the search function of Instagram, it is shown over 524 million posts and it is continuously increasing (Instagram, 2020), which it is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.
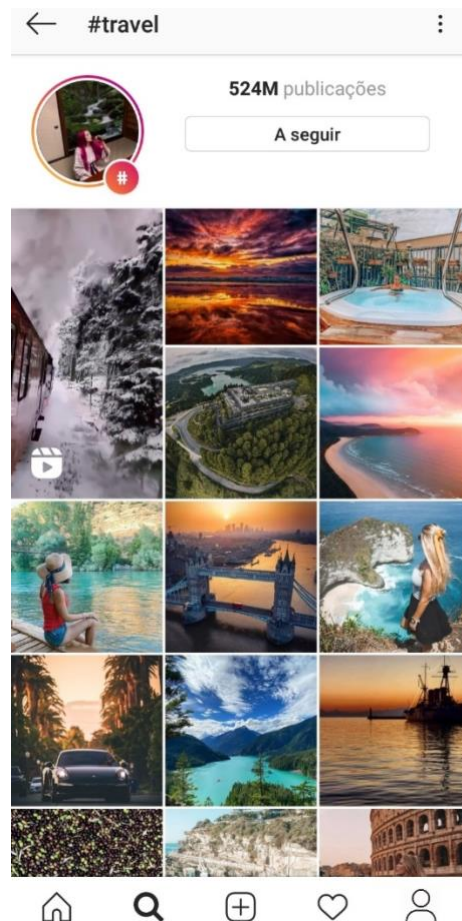
Figure 2.1 - Most popular posts with the hashtag #travel
(Adapted from Instagram.com, 2020)

Even though tourism is continuously increasing in the last 10 years because travelling become more affordable nowadays, it is also very important that people keep in touch with their travel goals. For this reason, social media, particularly Instagram, has a crucial role in tourism, especially on travel behaviour in the present days. Also, the shared information by other users is an important source in our planning process (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017).

With over 1 billion active users on Instagram, the main goal of companies is to conquer consumer interest using the platform as a visual tool. However, to make this happen it is necessary to exceed consumer's expectations and also to meet their needs (Martino, 2016). For

this reason, the challenge is to know how the company can attract likes, comments and shares to enhance social media engagement. It is important to have in mind the power of word-of-mouth recommendations but also user-generated content that if multiplied on a worldwide scale will increase the engagement (Martino, 2016).

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and sampling methodology employed to study the influence of Instagram in travel planning and destination choice of Generation Y that will help to determine the potential of Instagram as a marketing tool in the travel industry and come up with suggestions to how destination marketing organizations and other tourism service providers can develop their marketing strategies.

The methodology used to collect evidence for the research had its beginning with analysing the literature, such as scientific papers, journals publications, books, among others, hence, a deep analysis of the literature at the date regarding generation Y, internet evolution, social media, user-generated content and Instagram was made by the researcher.

In the next subchapters, the research objectives will be presented, as well as the model of analysis, the consequent investigation hypotheses being tested and the variables definition. Furthermore, there is also a subchapter dedicated to present the methodology considered in this study regarding the gathering of the data and its interpretation and, lastly, the questionnaire structure, fundamental in data collection.

3.1. Research Objectives

The goal of this dissertation is to study the possible influence of Instagram in travel decision-making process of Millennials and the potential of Instagram as a marketing tool in the travel industry. The purpose is also to give some suggestions about how destination marketing organizations and other tourism services could improve their online marketing strategies.

3.2. Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Definition

In this subchapter, the focus will be to determine the model that will achieve the main goal of this dissertation, which consists in determining if Instagram has influence on Millennials decision-making process in travels. The presented model is graphical, a visual model and has the purpose of presenting the relationships between the variables and the research problem.

Therefore, with the previous research in the literature review, it was possible to identify some concepts that represent variables with impact in the general hypothesis (the influence of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials travels). These variables can be defined as the following:

- Profile of the consumers (socio-demographic and travel profile);
- The importance of visual platforms (defining the visual platforms used more often and the importance of seeing photos or videos);
- Consumers' online profile (Instagram frequency and main activities);
- Consumers' attitudes on information search (search for feedback, online sources used and trust in travellers' reviews of destinations).

Hence, the next step is to measure the impact that each variable provide on the general hypothesis, on the main goal of the research.

The measurement of these variables will be made through some indicators, such as: age, gender, home country, level of education, current occupation (socio-demographic context of the consumer); regarding the consumers' travel profile, the importance of visual platforms, consumers' Instagram profile and consumers' attitudes on user-generated content, other indicators were used, such as opinion concerning visual platforms, frequency of Instagram usage and opinion regarding user-generated content.

Consequently, the conceptual model of this research can be visualized in Figure 3.1 below.
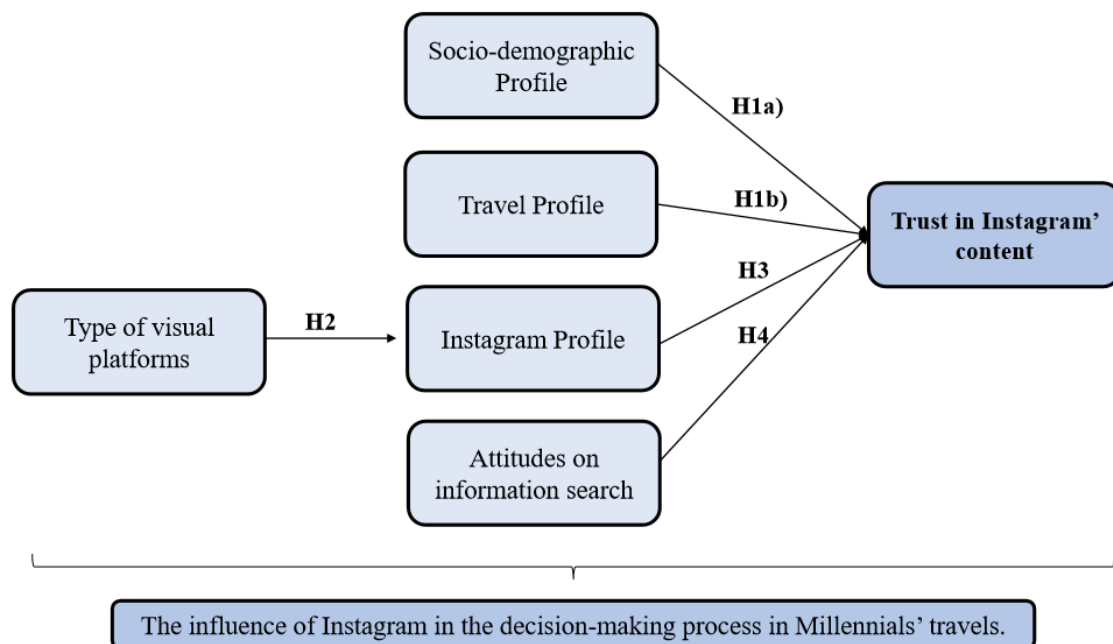
Figure 3.1 - Conceptual Model: The influence of Instagram in the decision-making process of Millennials' travels.

Following, it is possible to observe the hypotheses to be tested in the dissertation. They are already identified in the conceptual model relationships (see figure 3.1) above.

> **H1** – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the consumer's profile.

With H1, the main goal of the researcher is to understand if socio-demographic and travel profile of the consumers influence the decision-making process when it comes to using Instagram when searching for travels. Consequently, H1 is divided in H1a, destined to measure socio-demographic characteristics and its levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram, and H1b, with the goal of identify information about the consumers' travel habits. These two sub hypothesis are also subdivided with an aim of better understanding these factors:

> **H1a)1:** Men and women have different levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H1a)2:** Individuals from different age groups have different levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H1b)1:** Consumers' travel frequency presents a statistical significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H1b)2:** Consumers' companion frequency presents a statistical significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

With H2, the main goal is to measure the effect of visual platforms on Millennials, analysing the most used visual platforms and the perceived importance of seeing photos or videos by the consumers.

> **H2:** The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the type of visual platforms.

Similar to the previous hypothesis, H2 is also divided into two sub hypothesis: H2a and H2b. H2a destined to provide information about the relationship between the most used visual platforms in the sample and the motivations that lead consumers to use visual platforms. And H2b with the goal of providing information regarding the importance of seeing photos or videos before selecting a travel destination. These sub hypotheses can be observed below:

H2a): There is a relationship between the most used visual platforms and the motivations for accessing this type of platforms.

H2b): There are differences between Millennials who consider important seeing photos and videos before selecting a travel destination and the ones who do not consider according to their Instagram frequency.

With H3, the researcher intends to understand in what degree the online habits of the consumers influence the decision-making process when it comes to Instagram. For this reason, this hypothesis is divided into two sub hypotheses: H3a with the goal of providing information concerning consumers' Instagram frequency and H3b related to consumers' Instagram activities. H3 and the respective sub hypotheses can be visualized below:

H3: The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by a consumer's Instagram profile.

H3a): Consumers' Instagram frequency presents a statistically significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

H3b): Consumers' Instagram activities presents a statistically significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

Following, with H4 the researcher intends to understand in what degree the user-generated content influence the decision-making process when it comes to Instagram. As the previous hypotheses, H4 is also divided into: H4a, H4b and H4c. H4a with the goal of providing information regarding consumer's attitudes on user-generated content and its relationship with a consumer's trust in the information provided on Instagram. H4b with an aim of measuring the impact of consumer's attitudes on user-generated content in the probability of not using social

media when searching a travel destination. H4c with the goal of providing information regarding the consumers who agree that tourism operators should incorporate travelers' photos and comments into their websites and its relationship with a consumer's trust in the information provided on Instagram. H4 and respective sub hypothesis can be observed below:

H4: The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the consumer's attitude on information search.

H4a): Consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers presents a significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

H4b): The level of trust in the information provided on Instagram presents a significant impact in the probability of not using online sources when searching a travel destination.

H4c): Consumers who agree that tourism operators should incorporate travelers' photos and comments into their websites presents a significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

The hypotheses previously defined are an answer to the research problem of the dissertation. Hence, the researcher will have the goal of reaching the general hypothesis by measuring the impact of these variables on the influence of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels in Portugal. This study will also try to give some suggestions about how destination marketing organizations and other tourism services could improve their online marketing strategies.

After presenting the hypotheses to be tested, it is possible to present the model of analysis which can be visualized in Figure 3.2 below.
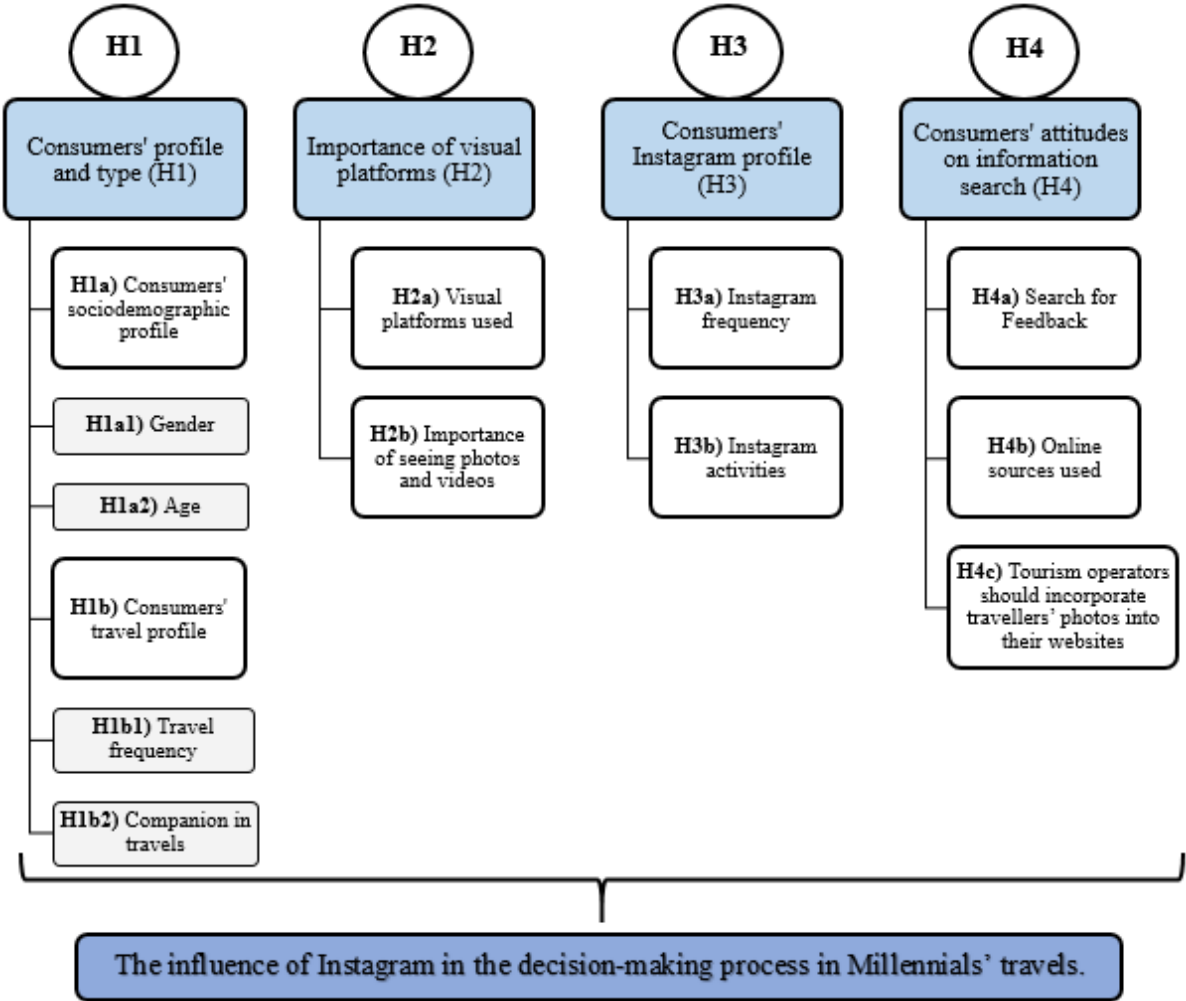
Figure 3.2 - Model of Analysis: The influence of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels.

3.3. Data Methodology

The first phase of the process of a dissertation is the review of previous research about the chosen topic that will provide the researcher some insights and possible gaps that need to be improved. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyse the present situation about the chosen topic and determine and report its results that will contribute for future research.

This dissertation follows a descriptive research which uses a quantitative research method, such as a questionnaire, since it is the most reliable approach to collect information for statistical analysis of the population sample, and in this case, data about Generation Y regarding Instagram. Consequently, to achieve the goal of this dissertation a quantitative approach was used to collect the data, by means as online questionnaire that was created using Google Forms. Since the target population are members of Generation Y and the research is related with social media, in particular, Instagram, the method chosen to spread the online survey was via Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. The survey's link was first post in groups and later private messages were send. The total valid responses are 416 online questionnaire responses.

According with Malhotra (2010), research data can be categorized in primary data or secondary data. Primary data can also be subdivided into descriptive or causal data. Descriptive data can be collected through survey data or observational data. Hence, the data of this study is considered quantitative and descriptive, taking into consideration that it was collected through an online questionnaire.

Moreover, the aim of the sampling was to achieve the maximum amount of responses, during the period of time destined to share the survey. Some restrictions were considered in the sampling process, since it was mandatory to have an Instagram account and to belong to the age group from 18 to 38 years old to be part of the sample. For that reason, the sample destined for the study would be Portuguese consumers who had an Instagram account and belonged to the age group 18 to 38 years old (born between 1982 and 2002).

To collect the answers from the target, an online questionnaire was created and been available from 20th September until 28th September. As previously mentioned in the dissertation, the decision to use social media to share the survey and reach the target was due to the fact that the target population were members of Generation Y and the research is also related to social media, in particular, Instagram.

After a brief analysis of the responses of the questionnaire, the researcher had to exclude in total 11 responses, leaving the final number of responses to be 416 valid responses. These

cases were excluded because the respondents answered that they did not have an Instagram account and also considering that foreign respondents could not be accepted in this study so they were also excluded.

Afterwards, the collected data was analysed using the statistics' software SPSS, in order to draw real conclusions from the data obtained.

3.4. Questionnaire Structure

A five-section questionnaire, in English, was developed to understand the influence of Instagram in travel planning on Generation Y, determining the potentials of Instagram as a marketing tool in travel industry. The five sections were the following:

1. The first part of the questionnaire was about the respondents' travel frequency on holidays. Firstly, the respondents had to answer if they had an Instagram account or not. If the respondents answered to the first question that they did not have an Instagram account, the questionnaire would end. Then, the respondents were asked about how many times a year they travel on holidays and with who they usually travel with.

2. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of the importance of visual platforms when selecting a destination. It was composed of four questions: a question about the most used visual platforms from the consumers to get information on travel destinations; the next question was about the visual platform that they use the most considering the previous question; following it was asked what are the main motivations and actions to access these visual platforms; lastly, a 5-likert scale question regarding the importance of seeing photos or videos when selecting a destination.

3. The third part of the questionnaire was about the usage of Instagram with the purpose of defining the consumers' Instagram profile. It was divided into four questions: the first one asked how often they check their Instagram account; what are the type of activities when they access the Instagram account; how they check their Instagram account; and what type of accounts they follow.

4. In the fourth part, the respondents were presented with six questions regarding the consumers' attitudes on information search. First, the respondents were asked if they usually search for feedback from previous consumers, then, with a 5-likert scale question the respondents were asked to rate their level of trust on comments and posts

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made by travellers on Instagram; by which means do they usually try to search for information; they were asked about their main thoughts when they see a lot of posts regarding a travel destination. Lastly, they were asked to rate from 1 to 5, their level of agreement on two sentences regarding the travellers' reviews and if tourism operators should incorporate travellers' photos into their websites.

5. In the fifth and last part, the respondents had to answer to five demographic questions about the age, gender, home country, last level of education and current occupation.

3.5.   Statistical Analyses

Several hypothesis tests were used to analyse the information, taking in consideration that each test to analyse a variable is dependent on the scale present in the questionnaire.

The researcher started by analysing descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions and descriptive measures in order to characterize the consumers who responded to the study and infer their main characteristics and preferences. In the questionnaire, most of the variables were measured as nominal scales, resulting in a non-parametric form of test. The researcher also used ordinal scales, most of them measured in a 5-point likert scale.

Some options were taken in order to hypothesis testing. One of them is related to the significance level of a test. It was considered 0.05 in this study because it is the most used value in the literature.

Although it was possible to consider that the probability distribution of the variables is normal, since in most of them sample/group size is greater than 30 (applying the central limit theorem), the researcher did not take this option. On the contrary, the variables normality in each hypothesis test was tested and, if it did not exist, the corresponding non-parametric test was used.

4. Data Analysis

The following chapter provide an analysis of the statistical tests used to characterize and study the collected data, in order to reach a conclusion to the investigation hypotheses.

4.1. Socio-demographic sample characterization

As previously mentioned, the collected sample was constituted by 416 valid responses. Regarding the gender of the sample, it is possible to state that the majority of the respondents were female, representing a total of 238 respondents, 57.2% of the total sample, which can be verified in the Chart 4.1 below. The gender distribution does not represent a high degree of contrast, which benefits the future analysis in this research.

Chart 4.1 - Sample Gender Distribution
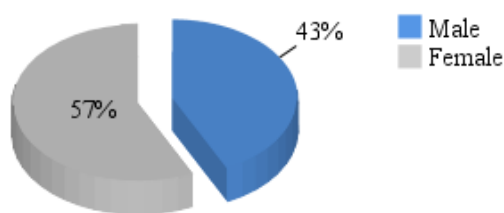
Furthermore, the sample was mainly characterized by a higher number of individuals between 21 and 25 years old, representing 45.4% of the total responses, which can be verified in Chart 4.2. The age group with ages between 26 and 30 years old represents 20.4% of the total sample. The older age group with ages between 36 and 38 years old was the one which it was possible to collect less answers (40 individuals), representing 10% of the total sample.

Chart 4.2 - Sample Age Distribution
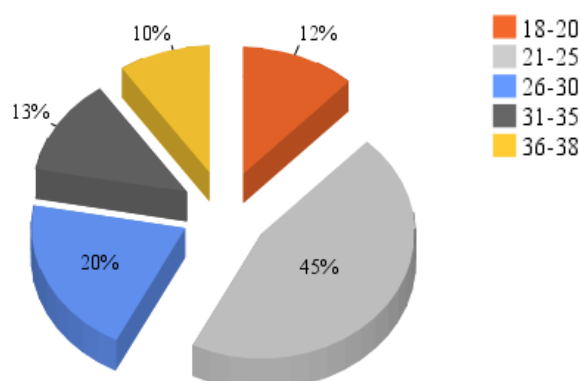
In Table 4.1 below, as previously mentioned, it is possible to conclude that the sample is mainly composed by females, especially between the ages of 21 and 25 years old, representing 43.3% of the total gender. Males belonging to the same age group represent also a high percentage of the male gender (48.3%). The age group 26-30 is the following with the highest percentages, being represented by 52 female individuals (21.8% of the female gender) and 33 males (18.5% of the male gender).

Table 4.1 - Sample Distribution by Age and Gender Simultaneously

| | | | Age Groups | | | | | Total |
			18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-38	
Gender	**Male**	N	19	86	33	24	16	**178**
		N% Gender	10.7%	48.3%	18.5%	13.5%	9.0%	100.0%
		N% Age	38.0%	45.5%	38.8%	46.2%	40.0%	42.8%
	Female	N	31	103	52	28	24	**238**
		N% Gender	13.0%	43.3%	21.8%	11.8%	10.1%	100.0%
		N% Age	62.0%	54.5%	61.2%	53.8%	60.0%	57.2%
Total		N	**50**	**189**	**85**	**52**	**40**	**416**
		N% Gender	12.0%	45.4%	20.4%	12.5%	9.6%	100.0%
		N% Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Concerning the level of education, it was asked to the respondents about the last level of education completed. A higher number of the sample has completed a Bachelor's degree, representing 41% of the total sample (169 respondents). Following, 124 respondents have completed a Master's degree, representing 30% of the sample. Furthermore, 16% of the sample has a High School degree, a total of 66 individuals, while 14% has completed a Post-graduation. These data can be verified in Chart 4.3 below.

Chart 4.3 - Sample Last Level of Education Distribution
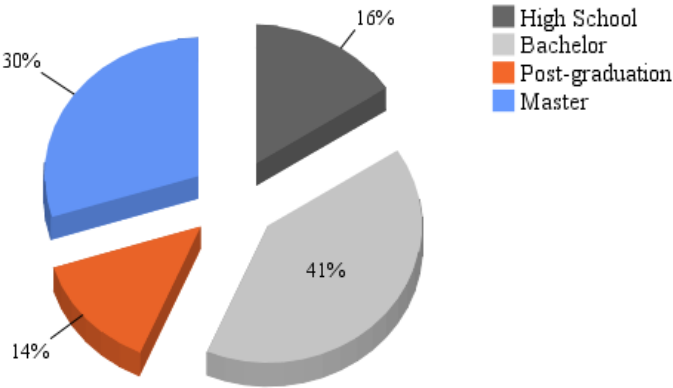
In Chart 4.4 below, it is possible to observe that the majority of the sample is currently employed by someone else, representing 52% of the total sample (216 individuals), and 28% of the sample is still a student (representing 117 individuals). Furthermore, 15% of the sample are students, working at the same time, representing 61 respondents.

Chart 4.4 - Sample Current Occupation Distribution
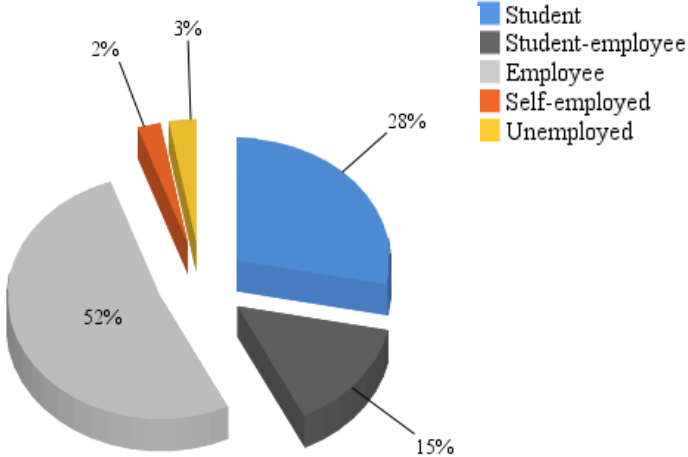
4.2. Travel frequency on holidays

In this subchapter, the researcher focused in understanding the consumers' travel profile. Therefore, the respondents were asked about how many times, a year, they travel on holidays and with who they usually travel with. Also, it was underlined that they should consider going out of their home city as traveling. The first variable of this section of the survey had as a goal to verify the frequency of consumers traveling on holidays. These data can be verified below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 - Travel Frequency on Holidays

Travel frequency	N	N%
1	57	13.7%
2	213	51.2%
3-5	121	29.1%
>=6	24	5.8%
Monthly	1	0.2%
Total	**416**	**100.0%**

Hence, the collected sample usually travel, on average, 2 times a year, representing 51.2% of the total sample (213 individuals). Following, 29.1% of the sample travel, on average,

3 to 5 times a year (121 individuals), while 13.7% travel only once a year. Options revealing a higher frequency of travels such as 6 or more times and monthly, represent 6% of the total sample, combined together.

Additionally, the respondents were asked about with who they usually travel on holidays. These data can be observed below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 - People the Respondents Usually Travel With

People they usually travel with	N	N%
A friend/friends	278	66.8%
Family	277	66.6%
Partner	244	58.7%
Alone	59	14.2%

The respondents were able to choose more than one option. Most of the individuals usually travel with a friend or friends, representing 66.8% of the total sample (278 individuals) and with family, with 66.6% of the total sample considering this option (277 individuals). About 244 respondents usually travel with the partner (boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife), representing 58.7% of the sample. Lastly, only 59 individuals travel alone, representing 14.2% of the total sample.

In Appendix B it is possible to observe that respondents who belong to the age groups 21-25 and 26-30 were more likely to travel alone. In the remaining categories, the most significant age group is 21-25 years old, mostly because it is the one with a higher proportion in the collected sample.

4.3.   Tendencies Regarding Online Sources and Visual Platforms

In this subchapter, the researcher focused in characterizing the tendencies regarding online sources and the perceived importance by consumers regarding visual platforms.

Hence, the individuals were asked about the visual platforms that they usually use to get information on travel destinations, what are the main motivations when accessing these type of platforms and the level of importance of seeing photos and videos before selecting a destination.

The first variable of this section of the survey had as a goal to verify the visual platforms that the respondents use the most. These data can be verified below in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 - Most Used Visual Platforms When Planning Travels

Visual platforms	N	N%
Facebook	88	21.2%
Instagram	288	69.2%
Booking	314	75.5%
Trivago	195	46.9%
Tripadvisor	252	60.6%
Travel blogs	198	47.6%
YouTube	101	24.3%
Pinterest	14	3.4%

Regarding the visual platforms that the respondents usually use to get information on travel destinations, the majority of the sample (approximately 76%) uses Booking to get information regarding the destination. Following, Instagram was selected by 288 individuals (69.2% of the total sample) and Tripadvisor chosen by 252 individuals (60.6%). About 198 individuals use travel blogs, representing 47.6% and YouTube was only chosen by 101 respondents (24.3% of the sample). Among the less used visual platforms are Facebook and Pinterest, representing 21.2% and 3.4% of the total sample, respectively.

Following, the respondents were asked to choose between the previous platforms the one that they use the most to get information regarding a destination. Analysing the Chart 4.5 below, it is possible to state that the preferable visual platform of the collected sample is Instagram (239 individuals), then Tripadvisor (65) and Booking (52).

Chart 4.5 - Preferable Visual Platform When Planning Travels
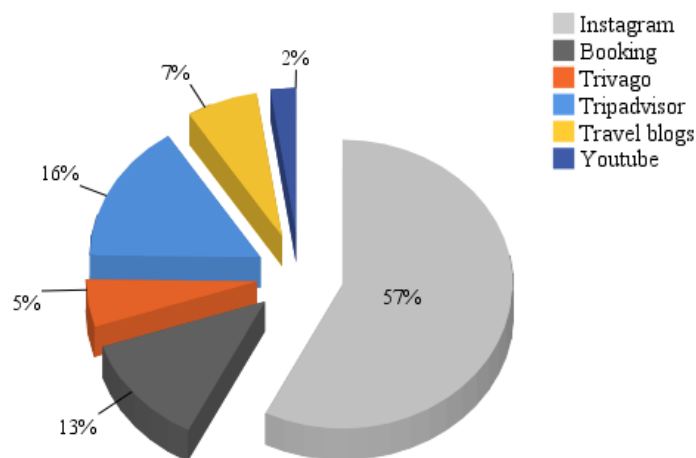
The respondents when asked about the main motivations and actions when accessing visual platforms, 32% of the sample (144 individuals) answered that they usually access it to look for previous opinions from other consumers, however another 32% (143 individuals) responded that they usually access the platform to check the place before visiting it. Moreover, 20% of the total sample visit these platforms to look for inspiration through the images and videos. Only 11% of the sample, corresponding to 45 respondents, use these platforms to book a place or experience. Also, only 19 respondents (5%) considered that they usually access visual platforms in order to give their personal opinion regarding the place through an online review or comment. These data can be observed in the Chart 4.6 below.

Chart 4.6 - Main Motivations and Actions When Accessing Visual Platforms
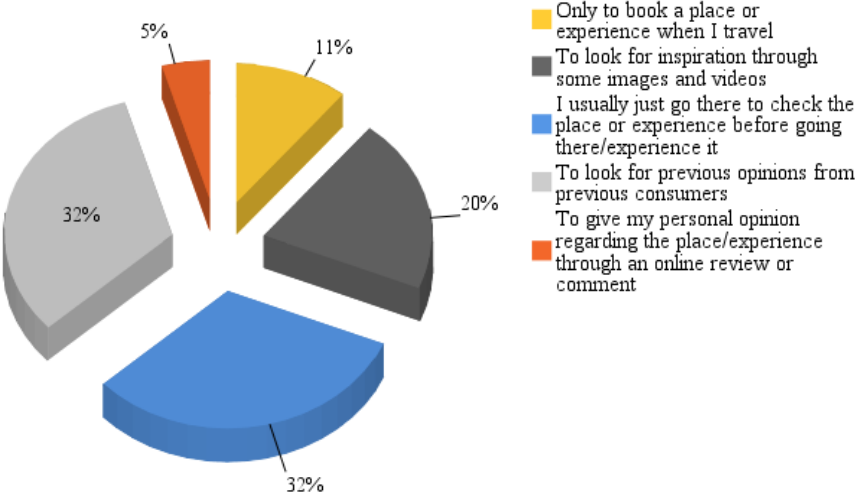
The last variable of this Section was measured using a Likert scale question and it had as a goal to understand the perceived importance of the consumers of seeing photos and videos before selecting a destination. In Table 4.5 below, it is possible to observe that the minimum was 1 (not important at all) and the maximum was 5 (very important). The mean was 4.50, which means that the majority of the respondents considered that it is very important to see photos and videos before selecting a destination. In Appendix C it is possible to state that more than half of the sample considered that it is very important to see photos and videos (59.1%) and 33.9% of the sample considered important.

Table 4.5 - Importance of Seeing Photos and Videos before Selecting a Destination

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance of seeing photos and videos	416	1	5	4.50	0.708

Note: 1 – Not important at all, 2 – Not important, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Important, 5 – Very important

4.4. Tendencies Regarding Instagram Usage

In this subchapter, the researcher focused in identifying the Instagram profile of the consumers in the sample. The first variable of this section of the survey (Section III)) was a variable that had as a goal to verify the frequency of consumers accessing to Instagram. These data can be verified below in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 - Instagram Frequency of the Respondents

Instagram frequency	N	N%
Once a week	2	0.5%
Several times per week	9	2.2%
Every day	44	10.6%
Every day and several times per day	361	86.8%
Total	**416**	**100.0%**

Most of the respondents usually access Instagram every day and several times per day (361 individuals, which represents 86.8% of the total sample). Following, 10.6% of the sample accesses Instagram every day (44 respondents). Only 9 individuals access Instagram several times per week, representing 2.2% of the total sample and 2 individuals access Instagram once a week.

When analysing Appendix D, it is possible to observe that the only respondents who access Instagram once a week are 2 individuals with ages between 36 and 38 years old. Moreover, between the respondents who access Instagram several times per week, the majority belong to the age group of 21-25 (4 individuals), 2 respondents belong to 18-20 years old and 2 respondents to the age group of 36-38. The part of the sample who accesses Instagram every day and several times per day belong mostly to the age group of 21-25, representing 44.9% of the total sample.

When observing the collected data regarding Instagram general activities of the sample, in Chart 4.7, it is important to notice that 39% of the individuals consider as their top activity to go there in order to post photos, videos or stories, but not updates of emotional status and opinions. However, 31% of the total sample like to follow their friends and see the updates but they do not like to post personal things. 26% of the sample like to post photos, videos, stories and updates of emotional status and opinions.

Chart 4.7 - Sample Instagram Activities Distribution
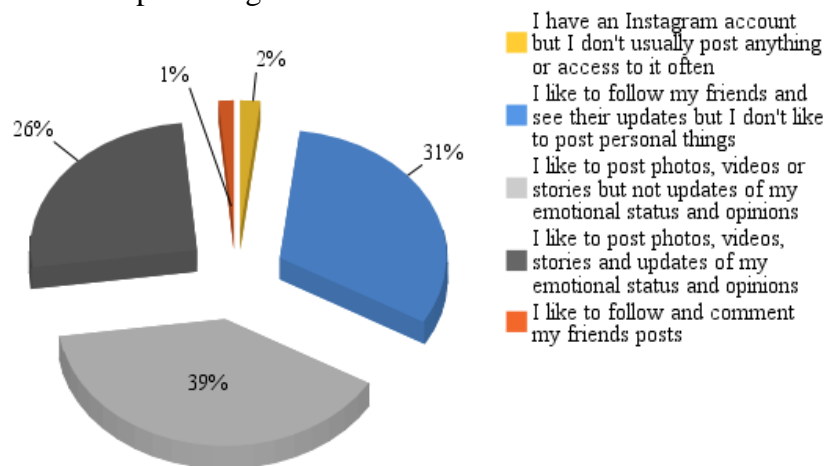
Only 2% of the sample answered as to have an Instagram account but they do not usually post anything or access to it often (8 respondents) and 1% of the total sample like to follow and comment their friends posts (6 respondents).

From these data, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the sample uses Instagram to check their friends' lives and also to post photos, videos or stories (65% of the total sample), however 31% of the collected sample do not like to post personal things. Hence, the majority of the sample uses Instagram through a personal use, representing a way of connecting with their friends.

Another important tendency verified during the statistics' analysis and observed in Appendix E is the fact that when considering the category of individuals in the sample that do not usually access or post anything on Instagram, they tend to access to Instagram only once a week (6 individuals, representing 75%) or several times per week (2 individuals, representing 25%). On the other hand, regarding the category of individuals that like to go to Instagram looking for updates of their friends, but do not usually post personal things, they usually access Instagram every day and several times per day (112 individuals, corresponding to 85.5%). Considering individuals who usually post photos, videos or stories but do not like to post their

personal opinions or emotional status, they usually access to Instagram more often - every day and several times per day (141 respondents, representing 86%) or every day (23 respondents, representing 14%).

The third variable of Section III was related with the consumers' means of accessing Instagram: whether by smartphones, tablets or iPads, personal or public computers. Therefore, this variable presented several options, however, the respondents could only choose the mean they access to Instagram in a higher degree. These values can be observed below in Chart 4.8.

Chart 4.8 - Sample Instagram Access in a Higher Degree Distribution
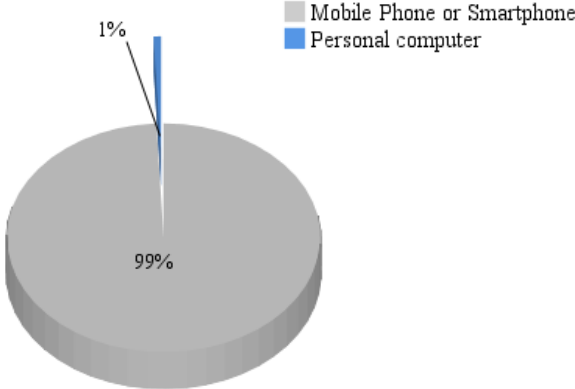
It is possible to conclude that the majority of the sample (99.3%) accesses Instagram mainly through mobile phone or smartphone. Only 3 individuals access in a higher scale to Instagram through tablet or iPad, representing 0.7% of the total sample.

The fourth variable of Section III was related with the types of accounts the consumers follow on Instagram. Therefore, this variable presented several options and the respondents were able to choose more than one option. These values can be observed below in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 - Type of Accounts Respondents Follow on Instagram

Type of Accounts	N	N%
Beauty	140	33.7%
Decor	121	29.1%
Family	146	35.1%
Fashion	181	43.5%
Fitness	228	54.8%
Food	207	49.8%
Pet	87	20.9%
Travel	289	69.5%
Sports	184	44.2%

From these data, it is possible to conclude that the types of accounts that the respondents prefer to follow are travel accounts, with 69.5% of the total sample following these type of accounts (289 respondents), fitness accounts (54.8% of the total sample) and food accounts (207 respondents, representing 49,8% of the total sample). The less followed accounts are decor and pet accounts, with only 29.1% and 20.9% of the total sample following this type of accounts, respectively.

When analysing Appendix F, it is possible to conclude that the accounts that the female respondents prefer to follow are travel accounts, with 78.2% of the female sample following, food accounts (65.1%), fashion accounts (60.1%), beauty and fashion accounts with both 54.6% of the female sample following. Regarding the male respondents, they prefer to follow sports accounts with 158 individuals following, representing 88.8% of the male sample, travel accounts (57.9%) and also fitness accounts (55.1%).

4.5. Information search: trends' analysis

In this subchapter, the researcher focused in identifying the trends regarding the information search of the consumers in the sample. The first variable of this section of the survey (Section IV) was a variable that had as a goal to verify if the respondents usually search for feedback

from previous consumers before selecting a destination. The distribution of frequency is presented in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 - Search for Feedback from Previous Consumers by the Respondents

Search for feedback from previous consumers	N	N%
No	20	4.8%
Yes	396	95.2%
Total	**416**	**100.0%**

When observing the Table 4.9, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the collected sample usually search for feedback from previous consumers before selecting a destination, since 396 respondents answered "yes" to the question, representing 95.2% of the total sample. Only 20 individuals do not usually search for feedback from previous consumers before selecting a destination.

The second variable of the section IV of the survey had as a goal to measure the level of trust of the consumers on comments and posts made by travelers on Instagram. Therefore, the researcher created a Likert scale question. The distribution of frequencies is presented in Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9 - Level of Trust of the Respondents on Comments and Posts Made by Travelers on Instagram

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of trust on comments and posts made by travelers on Instagram	416	1	5	3.86	0.933

Note: 1 – Not trustful at all, 2 – Not trustful, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Trustful, 5 – Very trustful.

In Table 4.10 above, it is possible to observe that the minimum was 1 (not trustful at all) and the maximum was 5 (very trustful). The mean was 3.86 which means that the majority of the respondents considered that comments and posts made my travelers on Instagram are trustful. In Appendix G it is possible to state that about 39% of the total sample considered that the comments and posts made by travelers on Instagram are trustful (160 individuals) and 117 individuals considered very trustful, representing 28.1% of the sample. However, 108

individuals gave a neutral answer (26%) and 31 respondents considered that comments and posts made by travelers are not trustful on Instagram (7.5%).

The following variable had as a goal to understand by which means the respondents usually search for information regarding a travel destination. The question presented four options from which respondents could only choose between one of them. These options and respective frequencies can be observed below in Chart 4.9.

Chart 4.9 - By Which Means Do the Respondents Usually Try To Search for Information
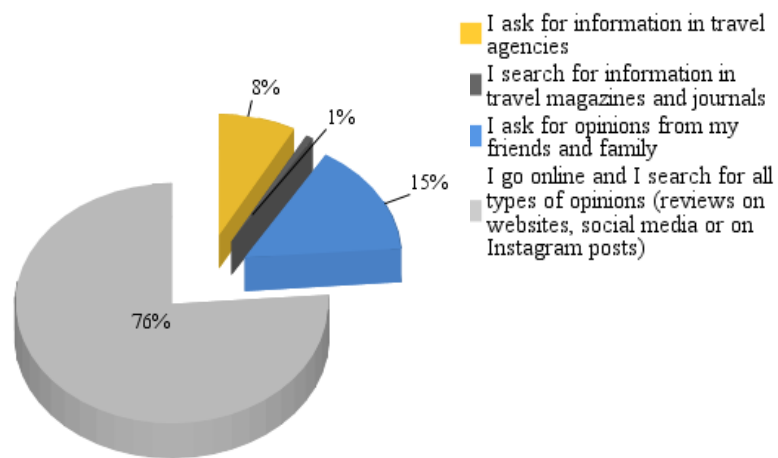
When analysing the chart, it is possible to state that the majority of the individuals usually search for information online (reviews on websites or social media), representing 76.2% of the total sample (317 individuals). About 63 individuals prefer to ask for opinions from friends and family (15.1%) and 33 individuals usually ask for information in travel agencies (7.9%). Only 3 respondents prefer to search for information using travel magazines and journals (0.7%).

In Appendix H it is possible to observe that all the respondents who usually search for information on travel magazines or journals (3 individuals) belong to the age group 31-35, representing 100%. Regarding the respondents who prefer to ask for opinions from friends and family, stands out the percentage of individuals with ages between 21 and 25 years old (38%), corresponding to 24 respondents. From the 317 respondents who prefer to search for information online, about 47.6% (151 individuals) belong to the age group 21-25 years old.

The fourth variable of the section IV of the survey had as a goal to understand if the respondents consider that the information shared on Instagram is reliable and, therefore, if they believe in the information shared. Hence, the researcher asked what were the main thoughts

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when the respondents see a lot of posts regarding the same destination. A summary of statistical descriptive measures is presented in table 4.10.

Table 4.10 - Main Thoughts of the Respondents when Seeing a Lot of Posts on Instagram Regarding a Destination

Main thoughts when seeing a lot of posts on Instagram regarding a destination	N	N%
I believe in the information received and I look forward to visit the destination	258	62.0%
I believe in the information online but I do not believe it is enough to go there	79	19.0%
I pass along the information that the travel destination has very good comments to people I know	54	13.0%
I do not believe the information received because it is not trustful	25	6.0%
Total	**416**	**100.0%**

According to the Table 4.11, it seems that 62% of the total sample (258 individuals) believe in the information received on Instagram and look forward to visit the destination. About 19% of the individuals, believe in the information online, however it is not enough to make them visit the destination. 54 respondents (13%) considered that when they see a lot of posts on Instagram of a destination, they would pass along the information to family or friends that the destination has very good comments. This means that this percentage of the sample also believe in the information received, leading to information share with the closest ones. Only 6% of the total sample (25 respondents) do not believe in the information received because they consider it not trustful. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the sample believe in the information shared on Instagram (94% of the total sample).

The last two variables of the Section IV of the survey had as main goal to measure the level of agreement of the respondents regarding two important statements, in order to understand their point of view on the matters. Consequently, the researcher created two Likert scale questions. The values can be observed in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11 - Level of Agreement of the Respondents on the Statements

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ordinary travelers reviews cannot be relied on	416	1	5	2.11	0.866
Tourism operators should incorporate travelers photos or comments into their websites	416	1	5	4.48	0.662

Note: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree.

After analysing Table 4.11 above, and considering the information regarding the statements, it seems that the sample disagreed with the first sentence, and, on the other hand, agreed with the second one. This means that a higher number of the sample disagreed that ordinary travellers reviews cannot be relied on (Mean=2,11) and, in the second sentence regarding tourism operators, the collected sample strongly agreed with it (Mean=4,48), which means that a higher number of the sample agreed that tourism operators should incorporate travelers photos or comments into their websites.

In Appendix I, it is possible to observe the percentages regarding each value of the scale. About 70% of the total sample disagreed or strongly disagreed that ordinary travelers reviews cannot be relied on (292 respondents). However, 100 respondents had a neutral opinion about this statement (24%). On the other hand, regarding the second and last statement, 381 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that tourism operators should incorporate travelers photos/comments into their websites, representing 91.6% of the total sample.

4.6. Hypothesis Testing

4.6.1. Testing H1

H1 – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the consumer's profile.

This hypothesis is subdivided into sub hypotheses in a more specific statistic way. These sub hypotheses will be presented in the following subchapters below.

4.6.1.1. Testing H1a and Operational Hypothesis

H1a investigation hypothesis is defined below:

H1a – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by a consumer's socio-demographic profile.

This hypothesis was also subdivided into two more specific investigational hypotheses, defined below:

> **H1a)1:** Men and women have different levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H1a)2:** Individuals from different age groups have different levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

In order to be validate in a statistical way the mentioned hypotheses, operational hypotheses were defined for H1a)1 and H1a)2:

i. **H1a)1** – *The means for both gender groups for the variable trust in the information provided on Instagram are different.*

The null hypothesis of H1a)1 is represented by: "the means for both gender groups for the variable trust in information provided on Instagram are equal". The Mann-Whitney U test results can be observed in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12 - Testing H1a)1: Mann-Whitney U Testing

	Trust in the information provided on Instagram
Mann-Whitney U	15653.000
Wilcoxon W	31584.000
Z	-4.795
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

The results from the Mann-Whitney U test reveal a significance level (sig 2-tailed =0.000) lower than 0.05 (α = 0.05). Therefore, there is a statistical significant difference between the two distributions: consequently, we reject the null hypothesis, stating that the mean for both gender groups for the variable trust in the information provided on Instagram is different. Hence, H1a)1 is validated as a hypothesis. The Mann-Whitney U is a non-parametric test and it was used since the assumptions for parametric tests were not covered (Shapiro-Wilk value was lower than 0.05 (p-value = 0,000), consequently not covering the assumption of normality).

The operational hypothesis of H1a)2 can be verified below:

ii.   **H1a)2** – *The means for at least two groups for trust in the information provided on Instagram is different according to the age group of the consumer.*

H1a)2 was tested via a Kruskal-Wallis test, considering as the null hypothesis "the means for each group in the variable trust in the information provided on Instagram are equal". However, observing the results below in Table 4.13 and in Appendix J, it is possible to conclude that the asymptotic significance level was below 0.05 (p-value is approximately equal to 0.000), leading the researcher to conclude that the means in the different age groups are different regarding the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram. Therefore, H1a)2 is validated as a hypothesis and it is possible to conclude that the age group has influence on the positioning as a user of Instagram in this sample.

Table 4.13 - Testing H1a)2: Kruskal-Wallis Results

	Trust in the information provided on Instagram
Kruskal-Wallis H	20.191
Df	4
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

4.6.1.2. Testing H1b and Operational Hypothesis

H1b – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the consumer's travel profile.

Similar to previous hypothesis, H1b was also divided into two investigational hypotheses, described below:

> **H1b)1:** Consumers' travel frequency presents a statistical significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H1b)2:** Consumers' companion frequency presents a statistical significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

These hypotheses, in order to be validated in a statistical way, were transformed into operational hypotheses, described below:

i. **H1b1)** – *The frequency of travels is correlated with the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.*

The researcher tested H1b)1 through a Spearman Correlation Coefficient, in order to test two ordinal variables. In Appendix K it is possible to observe the results, which revealed that there is a negative correlation among the two variables, since the significance level is higher than alpha (0.788 > 0.05). Moreover, it is a weak negative correlation since Spearman's correlation coefficient is approximately -0.013. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that in the present sample, travel frequency will not have a positive statistically significant correlation with the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram. Therefore, H1b)1 is validated.

The operational hypothesis for H1b)2 can be visualized below:

ii.   ***H1b2)*** *– Consumers' main companion are associated with the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.*

This hypothesis was tested through a Chi Square Independency Test, with a Cramer's V association coefficient, in order to understand the relationship between each variable. Consequently the null hypothesis is the following: "the consumer's main companion and the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram are independent/not related variables".

Since the researcher used a multiple question to identify with who the respondents usually travel with, it was necessary to study each variable individually. The results of the tests of each variable can be observed below in Tables 4.15 to 4.18 and in Appendixes L to S. Only the variable Alone did not fulfilled the main assumption of the Chi Square test, since the values of expected cells should be 5 or more in at least 80% of the cells and, in this case, 30% of the cells have expected count less than 5. For this reason, in this specific variable (Alone), the researcher will take in consideration the results of the association coefficient in order to understand if there is a correlation among the variables.

In the variable Friend(s), present in Table 4.14 below, the significance level of the test was lower than the alpha (014 < 0.05), therefore the researcher had to reject the null hypothesis, concluding that there is a relationship between the variables.

Table 4.14 - Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Friend(s)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.441[a]	4	0.014
Likelihood Ratio	13.555	4	0.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.769	1	0.096
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.33.

When analyzing the Chi Square test results regarding the variable Partner in Table 4.15 below, it is possible to observe a significance level of the test higher than the alpha (0.061). Hence, the researcher did not reject the null hypothesis and had to conclude that the two variables are not related.

Table 4.15 - Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Partner

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.986[a]	4	0.061
Likelihood Ratio	10.378	4	0.035
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.075	1	0.079
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 2 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,65.

The variable Family also presented a significance level of the test lower than the alpha (0.035), which can be observed in Table 4.16 below. Therefore, the researcher had to conclude that there is a correlation between this variable and the trust in the information provided on Instagram.

Table 4.16 - Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Family

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.374[a]	4	0.035
Likelihood Ratio	10.227	4	0.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.988	1	0.026
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.34.

As mentioned before, the variable Alone did not fulfilled the main assumption of the Chi Square test, as can be observed in Appendixes R and S, since 30% of the cells have expected count less than 5. Hence, the researcher took in consideration the results of the association coefficient, which can be visualized in Table 4.17 below. As the significance level of the test was lower than the alpha and the value of the Cramer's V analysis was also close to the alpha (0.049), the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and had to conclude that there is a weak association between the variables.

Table 4.17 - Association Coefficients' Results: Testing H1b)2 – Alone

Alone		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.151	0.049
	Cramer's V	0.151	0.049
N of Valid Cases		416	

Hence, H1b)2 was partially validated, since there was a relation between three from the four variables (Friend(s), Family and Alone) with the variable trust in the information provided on Instagram.

4.6.2. Testing H2

H2 – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the type of visual platforms.

This hypothesis was subdivided into two more hypotheses:

> **H2a):** There is a relationship between the most used visual platforms and the motivations for accessing this type of platforms.

> **H2b):** There are differences between Millennials who consider important seeing photos and videos before selecting a travel destination and the ones who do not consider according to their Instagram frequency.

In order to continue with the statistical analysis of the investigation hypotheses, operational hypotheses were created:

i. **H2a)** *– There is a statistically significant relationship between the most used visual platforms and the motivations for accessing this type of platforms.*

This hypothesis was tested through a Chi Square Independency Test, with a Cramer's V association coefficient, in order to understand if there is a relationship between each variable. Therefore, the null hypothesis is the following: the type of preferable visual platforms and the motivations for accessing these platforms are not related variables.

The results of the test can be observed below in Table 4.18 and 4.19 and also in Appendix T. Firstly, it is important to mention that the assumptions of the Chi-Square test have been violated, since approximately 40% of the cells in the table of the test had expected count less than 5. Consequently, an analysis of the Chi Square was not desirable and the researcher focused on the Cramer's V association coefficient. Taking in consideration that the significance level of the test is 0.000, lower than the alpha (0.05), the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and had to conclude that the variables are related/dependent, validating H2a). Also, it is a positive relationship since the Cramer's V association coefficient is 0.457, as it is possible to observe in Table 4.19 below.

Table 4.18 - Chi Square Test Results: Testing H2a)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	347,264[a]	20	,000
Likelihood Ratio	344,892	20	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	21,504	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 12 cells (40,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,46.

Table 4.19 - Association Coefficients' Results: Testing H2a)

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,914	,000
	Cramer's V	,457	,000
N of Valid Cases		416	

Source: Own elaboration

The operational hypothesis for H2b) can be visualized below:

ii. **H2b)** – *There is a statistically significant relation between the importance of seeing photos and videos before selecting a destination and the Instagram frequency.*

The researcher tested H2b) through a Spearman Correlation Coefficient, in order to test two ordinal variables. In Appendix U it is possible to observe the results, which revealed that there is a correlation among the two variables, since the significance level is lower than the alpha (0.001 < 0.05). Moreover, it is a positive and weak correlation since Spearman's correlation coefficient is approximately 0.159. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that in the present sample, Instagram frequency has a positive statistically significant correlation with the importance of seeing photos and videos before selecting a destination.

4.6.3. Testing H3

H3 – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by a consumer's Instagram profile.

From the previous hypothesis, the researcher defined other two investigation sub-hypothesis:

> **H3a):** Consumers' Instagram frequency presents a statistically significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H3b):** Consumers' Instagram activities presents a statistically significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

In order to test the sub hypotheses, the researcher had to create the operational hypotheses. Therefore, H3a and H3b can be defined as the following operational hypotheses:

i.   *H3a) – The mean level of trust in the information provided on Instagram is different for at least two groups of consumers' frequency*

Hence, the null hypothesis of the Kruskall Wallis test is the following: the means for all the groups and for trust in the information provided on Instagram and consumer's Instagram frequency are equal.

ii. *H3b) – The mean level of trust in the information provided on Instagram is different for at least two groups of consumers' activities.*

Similar as H3a, it is possible to state that the null hypothesis of H3b is: the means for all the groups and for each variable are equal.

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The researcher conducted two Kruskal-Wallis tests in order to test both the hypotheses, in order to understand if different groups of consumers trusting in the information provided on Instagram have different means according to their Instagram frequency and activities. In H3a, since p-value was approximately 0.000 (lower than the alpha), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significance, resulting in different means for at least one pair of groups of the two variables. Concerning H3b, the p-value was also approximately 0.000, hence the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and, consequently, validated the hypothesis. The tests results of H3a and H3b can be observed in Tables 4.20 and 4.21 below.

Table 4.20 - Kruskal Wallis Test: Testing H3a

	Trust in the information provided on Instagram
Kruskal-Wallis H	21.328
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

Table 4.21 - Kruskal Wallis Test: Testing H3b

	Trust in the information provided on Instagram
Kruskal-Wallis H	38.927
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

4.6.4. Testing H4

<u>H4 – The impact of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is influenced by the consumer's attitude on information search.</u>

From the previous hypothesis, the researcher defined other three investigation sub-hypothesis:

> **H4a):** Consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers presents a significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

> **H4b):** The level of trust in the information provided on Instagram presents a significant impact in the probability of not using online sources when searching a travel destination.

> **H4c):** Consumers who agree that tourism operators should incorporate travellers' photos and comments into their websites presents a significant relationship with their level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

In order to test the sub hypotheses, the researcher had to create the operational hypotheses. Therefore, H4a can be defined as the following operational hypothesis:

i. *H4a) – The means for at least two groups for trust in the information provided on Instagram and consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers is different.*

The null hypothesis of H4a) is represented by: "the means for both gender groups for the variable trust in information provided on Instagram are equal". The Mann-Whitney U test results can be observed in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22 - Mann-Whitney Test: Testing H4a

	Trust in the information provided on Instagram
Mann-Whitney U	3570.000
Wilcoxon W	82176.000
Z	-0.782
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.434

The results from the Mann-Whitney U test reveal a significance level (sig 2-tailed =0.434) higher than 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, there is not a statistical significant difference between the two distributions: consequently, we do not reject the null hypothesis, stating that the mean for both gender groups for the variable trust in the information provided on Instagram is equal. Hence, H1a)1 is not validated as a hypothesis.

H4b and H4c can be defined as the following operational hypotheses:

ii. **H4b)** – *The level of trust in the information provided on Instagram and the probability of not using online sources when searching a travel destination are related variables.*

The null hypothesis for H4b will be that the two variables are independent/not related from one another.

iii. **H4c)** – *Consumers who agree that tourism operators should incorporate travellers' photos and comments into their websites and the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram are related variables.*

The null hypothesis for H4c will be that the two variables are independent/not related from one another.

In order to test H4b) and H4c), the researcher conducted a Chi Square Independency Test, with a Cramer's V association coefficient, in order to understand the relationship between each variable.

The results of H4b) can be observed below in Tables 4.23 and 4.24 and also in Appendix V. Firstly, it was not fulfilled the main assumption of the Chi Square test, as can be observed in Table 4.23 below, since 50% of the cells have expected count less than 5. Hence, the researcher took in consideration the results of the association coefficient, which can be visualized in Table 4.24. As the significance level of the test was lower than the alpha and the value of the Cramer's V analysis is 0.304, the researcher reject the null hypothesis and had to conclude that there is a moderate relation between the variable.

Table 23 - Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H4b)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	115.424[a]	12	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	102.007	12	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	41.633	1	0.000
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.03.

Table 24 - Association Coefficients' Results: Testing H4b)

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.527	0.000
	Cramer's V	0.304	0.000
N of Valid Cases		416	

Similar as H4b), the researcher tested H4c) through a Chi Square Independency Test, with a Cramer's V association coefficient, in order to understand if there is a relationship between each variable. Therefore, the null hypothesis for H4c is that the two variables are independent/not related from one another.

The results of the test can be observed below in Tables 4.25 and 4.26 and also in Appendix W. Firstly, it is important to mention that the assumptions of the Chi-Square test have been violated, since approximately 45% of the cells have expected count less than 5. Consequently, an analysis of the Chi Square was not desirable and the researcher focused on the Cramer's V association coefficient. Taking in consideration that the significance level of the test is 0.000, lower than the alpha (0.05), the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and had to conclude that the variables are related/dependent, validating H4c). Also, it is a positive relationship since the Cramer's V association coefficient is 0.262, as it is possible to observe in Table 4.26 below.

Table 4.25 - Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H4c)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	85.489[a]	12	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	68.065	12	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	34.738	1	0.000
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.02.

Table 4.26 - Association Coefficients' Results: Testing H4c)

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.453	0.000
	Cramer's V	0.262	0.000
N of Valid Cases		416	

4.6.5. Hypotheses Conclusions Summary

In Table 27 below, it is possible to observe a summary of the conclusions to each tested hypothesis, and also the statistical method used for each one. In the following chapter, it will be presented a summary of the main conclusions and limitations to retain from the research.

Table 27 - Hypotheses' Results Summary

HYPOTHESES		STATISTICAL TEST
H1		
H1a)	**Validated**	
H1a)1	Validated	Mann-Whitney Test
H1a)2	Validated	Kruskal-Wallis Test
H1b)	**Partially validated**	
H1b)1	Validated	Spearman Correlation Coefficient
H1b)2	Partially validated	Chi-Square Independency Test
H2		
H2a)	**Validated**	Chi-Square Independency Test
H2b)	**Validated**	Spearman Correlation Coefficient
H3		
H3a)	**Validated**	Kruskal-Wallis Test
H3b)	**Validated**	Kruskal-Wallis Test
H4		
H4a)	**Not validated**	Mann-Whitney Test
H4b)	**Validated**	Chi-Square Independency Test
H4c)	**Validated**	Chi-Square Independency Test

5. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

This chapter aims to present the primary research conclusions to retrieve from the study and its main contributes, but also the limitations found across the investigation, some suggestions for DMO's and tourism marketing managers and opportunities for regarding future research.

Therefore, the chapter is divided in five subchapters: 5.1 with the most important conclusions to gather from the statistical results, 5.2 with the main contributes of this research in an academic and professional view, 5.3 with some suggestions for DMO's and tourism marketing managers, 5.4 with some limitations found in the investigation, and 5.5 with some opportunities regarding future research.

5.1. Main Research Conclusions

In this subchapter the researcher will proceed with a summary of the main conclusions of the investigation, taking in consideration the sample characterization and the hypotheses considered in former chapters.

Starting with a brief description of the sample, it is important to mention that the data collected from the study of the sample revealed that a higher percentage of the sample is characterized by individuals with ages between 21 and 25 years old, representing 45.4% of the total sample and the sample is mainly composed by females (238 individuals, representing 57.2% of the total sample). Also, a higher number of the sample has completed a Bachelor's degree (169 individuals, 41% of the total sample) or a Master's degree (30% of the total sample). Furthermore, the majority of the sampled individuals travel, on average, 2 times a year (213 individuals, 51.2% of the sample) or 3 to 5 times a year (29.1%). Most of the individuals usually travel with a friend or friends (278 individuals, 6.8% of the total sample), with family (66.6%) or with a partner (58.7%).

Additionally, an interesting fact about the tendencies of the usage of online sources and visual platforms of the collected sample is that the majority of the sample usually use Booking (314 individuals, corresponding to 75.5% of the total sample), Instagram (288 individuals, representing 69.2% of the sample) or TripAdvisor (60.6%) to get information on travel destinations. However, when asked to choose the preferable visual platform between the options, the one they use the most is Instagram (239 individuals, 57% of the total sample), then TripAdvisor (16%) and Booking (13%). Another interesting fact regarding the visual platforms

is that a higher number of the sample access this type of platforms before selecting a destination in order to look for previous opinions from other consumers (32% of the total sample) or just to check the place or experience before visiting it (32%). Furthermore, the majority of the sample consider that it is very important to see photos or videos before selecting a destination (on a scale of 1 to 5, from not important at all to very important the mean was 4.50).

Regarding the tendencies about the Instagram usage of the respondents, the majority of the sample access Instagram every day and several times per day (361 individuals). Moreover, this social media is mostly used by the respondents in order to check their friends' lives and also to post photos, videos or stories (271 individuals, representing 65% of the sample), however there are still 131 individuals (31%) who do not like to post personal things. Hence, the majority of the sample use Instagram through a personal use, representing a way of connecting with their friends. Another important tendency verified is that when considering the individuals that do not usually access or post anything on Instagram, they tend to access to Instagram only once a week or several times per week. When observing the statistics' analysis, it is evident that the majority of the sample accesses Instagram mainly through a mobile phone or smartphone (413 individuals, 99% of the sample). Another important fact is that the preferable type of account to follow on this social media is travel accounts (289 individuals, representing 69% of the sample), then fitness (54.8%) and food accounts (50%).

Considering the trends regarding the information search of the consumers in the sample, it was clear to the researcher that the majority of the sample usually search for feedback from previous consumers (95%). Also, most of the individuals trust in the information provided on Instagram (67%), despite the fact that there are still 108 individuals who preferred to give a neutral opinion (26%). Furthermore, most of the respondents, when they are looking for a travel destination, they usually search for information online (76,2% of the total sample) instead of other sources as travel agencies, travel magazines and journals or family and friends' opinion. Moreover, the majority of the sample when sees a lot of posts regarding a destination, believe in the information received and look forward to visit the place (62% of the sample). Also, the sample was asked to rate the level of agreement on two sentences and the majority disagrees that ordinary travellers reviews cannot be relied on and, on the other hand, the majority agrees that tourism operators should incorporate traveller's photos or comments into their websites.

Regarding the hypotheses under study and starting with H1, which it was divided into two sections: the first one (a), referring to some of the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample and the second one (b), referring to travel habits observed in the collected sample. Each

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section was divided into two sub hypotheses as previously mentioned in the methodology chapter.

Concerning the testing of H1a), the first sub hypothesis (H1a1) was validated, leading the researcher to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between female and male trust regarding information provided on Instagram. This means that both will have different trust levels according to the information provided on Instagram, consequently, different reactions and differently impacted by how they perceive information. The hypothesis H1a)2 was also validated, concluding that different age groups present different levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram in Portugal, therefore, it is relevant to mention that the age has a clear impact in the positioning of the sample as a consumer in Instagram.

H1b) was also segmented in two sub hypothesis as former mentioned in the dissertation (H1b1 and H1b2). According to the results of H1b)1, it is possible to conclude that travel frequency has a negative and weak statistically significance correlation to the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram in the sample, meaning that H1b)1 was validated. H1b)2 was tested with four variables individually, since it was used a multiple question to study with who the respondents usually travel with (friends, family, partner or alone) and if each variable had a statistically significant relationship with the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram. According to the results, the researcher concluded that there is a relationship between the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram and with three from the four variables (friends, family and alone, but not to the variable partner). Hence, H1b)2 was partially validated.

The hypothesis H2, that stated that the type of visual platforms used had an effect in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels, was also divided into two different hypotheses. The results of the investigation revealed that H2a was validated, which means that there is a dependency level between the most used visual platforms and consumer's motivations for accessing these type of platforms. Additionally, H2b was also validated, which means that Instagram frequency will have a positive statistically significant relation with the importance of seeing photos and videos before selecting a destination.

From hypothesis H3, which specified that the consumer's Instagram profile had an impact on the decision-making process in Millennials' travels, it was defined other two investigation sub hypotheses in order to understand if different groups of the consumers who trust in the information provided on Instagram had different means according their Instagram's frequency and activities. The results from testing H3a) and H3b) revealed that the difference between the significance level of the different groups is statistically significant, translating into

consumers that have different levels of trust in the information provided on Instagram regarding Instagram's frequency and activities.

Through H4, the main goal of the researcher was to bring conclusions regarding the effect of the consumer's attitude on information search. Similar as the previous hypotheses, H4 was also subdivided into three more specific hypotheses. H4a proved the researcher that, in the collected sample, the means in the different consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers are equal regarding the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram. Hence, the researcher rejected H4a. However, H4b and H4c were validated, which means that the researcher proved through H4b that the probability of not using online sources when searching a travel destination will have a positive statistically significant relation with the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram. With H4c, it was concluded that in the present sample, consumers who agree that tourism operators should incorporate travellers' photos and comments into their websites will have a statistically significant relation with the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

5.2. Main Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The influence of Instagram in the decision-making process in Millennials' travels is it not a recent marketing subject, however it needs further studies and investigations. Both academic literature and organizations are still working in the information available regarding this matters. Consequently, the main goal of this research was to bring insights on if Millennials in Portugal are influenced by Instagram when it comes to choose a travel destination in 2020. In order to reach this goal, the researcher tried to understand which were the most important platforms used in 2020 by the Millennials, which were the tendencies regarding the Instagram usage of the consumers, the main motivations to access this social media and the level of trust in the information provided on Instagram.

Taking in consideration the fact that Instagram is gaining a lot of importance between consumers when looking for a travel destination, it is important for marketing departments in the academic point of view to consider Instagram as a very important marketing tool.

Furthermore, it is important for destination marketing organizations and other tourism services to start considering Instagram as a marketing tool in travel industry or invest more in

this platform, since the majority of the Millennials spend most of their time on this social media as it was proved in this research.

Although the results are not able to extrapolate to the Portuguese population, since the convenience sampling method, this study allowed to obtain a lot of results regarding the collected sample that it should be considered in future marketing strategies by companies.

5.3. Suggestions for DMO's and Tourism Marketing Managers

As previously mentioned in the dissertation, Millennials travel quite a lot, which is why companies and tourism marketers should turn their focus on them.

From the results of the survey conducted for the thesis, it is revealed that incorporating user-generated content to the marketing strategy is very important. Instagram is the perfect platform for this, since provides tools to repost users' posts without violating user rights. It is also known that Instagram users share lots of interesting and beautiful content, and reposting or sharing a post is usually taken as a compliment. Consequently, this gives businesses and destination marketers a big opportunity to take advantage of this content. They should feature their followers' posts on Instagram, since the majority wants to see photos taken by real travellers rather than photos taken by professionals. Also, users' photos gives a genuine and real feel and are seen as a more credible source of content. Therefore, marketers should let the users to share the story of the brand or destination and it is also important that they encourage consumers to share content on Instagram.

The results of the survey also revealed that many Instagram users follow travel accounts on Instagram. This gives a reason for the marketers to consider collaborating with influencers and bloggers to achieve more audience. Also, according to the survey, consumers trust in the information provided on Instagram, which means that having influencers visiting a place or destination and sharing photos on their Instagram accounts will create more visibility to the brand and reach potential visitors.

To sum up, travel companies and destinations should recognize the importance of Instagram as a marketing tool that can impact consumer behaviour. The key is also to keep the account active and genuine, inspiring the consumers and not to push advertisements or directly to sell to consumers. Furthermore, taking advantage of the user-generation content shared on Instagram would be beneficial for tourism companies and destinations.

5.4. Limitations

One limitation identified in the study was the fact that the question destined to understand the home country of the respondents was an open ended question, leaving the respondents to commit some mistakes or identifying other countries that were not included in this study, beyond Portugal.

Another limitation was the fact that the question destined to understand with who the respondents usually travel with was a multiple question, leaving the respondents to choose more than one option, and it was interesting if it was also asked to the respondents who is their main companion when they travel.

Other limitation was related to the question destined to understand if the respondents consider that the information shared on Instagram is reliable and what are their main thoughts when they see a lot of posts on Instagram regarding the same destination. The respondents had four options and one of them was that they considered to believe in the information online, but they did not considered that it was enough to go there. It would be interesting to ask to the respondents which were their reasons, as for example, the cost or the lack of information regarding the place, among others.

Other limitation was related to the fact the study included more nominal type variables than ordinal type variables, which did not made possible certain type of statistical tests that could be possible to bring other interesting results and conclusions to the study.

The most important limitation is related with the academic part of the study since the influence of Instagram on the choice of Millennials' travels is a recent subject, which made it difficult to search for relevant reference journals and articles regarding the matter. Additionally, the achieving of deadlines was also a limitation since it obliged the researcher to establish some objectives to accomplish, regarding the results.

Another important limitation is the fact that this study only considered certain visual platforms as options because they were the most known, consequently biasing in a certain level the results regarding the preferable platform to search for information regarding travel destinations.

Other limitations are related with the sampling process, since the questionnaire was designed by the researcher, taking in consideration the hypotheses intended to study with the relevant data to collect from the sample. However, later, it was verified that not all the questions or variables were needed in order to test the hypotheses previously defined. Although a pre-test

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was made to the survey, it was found some improvements that could be made in order to reduce the biasing of some responses. Furthermore, regarding the sampling process, it was not a random sample but a convenience sample, which does not allow the opportunity to do statistical implications to the general population and it only provides information about the collected sample.

5.5. Future Research

Regarding future investigational opportunities, it would be interesting if the theories related to the thesis subject were covered in a more-in-depth and delimited survey, since the theories were covered in a rather general overall perspective to give a rough understanding of the topic to the respondents.

Other possible contributions for future investigations would be the correction of the limitations specified in the former chapter, such as some lacks on the questionnaire and include more ordinal variables.

Other suggestion could be for example interviewing people from different age groups and gender to increase knowledge on their behaviour, attitudes and bring out possible differences in the responses of males and females and people from different age groups.

Another interesting opportunity could be, for example, the creation of a similar survey like the one carried out for this thesis, however improving the limitations mentioned before, and distribute it in different times of the year to understand if there are differences in travel planning for Millennials between the different seasons.

It would also be interesting to interview people in different destinations about how they had chosen that place in particular to visit. Other suggestions would be researching about the negative impacts Instagram may have for the destinations, as for example, overcrowding of places.

Furthermore, expanding the research worldwide would be useful for marketers in the travel industry.

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Appendixes

Appendix A – Online Survey

Millennials' travels: the influence of Instagram on the decision-making process of a destination

My name is Rita Feliciano and I'm a Master student in Management at ISCTE Business School, longing to complete my dissertation. The purpose of this survey aims to study the millennials' travels and the influence of Instagram on decision-making process of a destination.

The recipients of this survey are millennials (born between 1982 and 2002) and who have already traveled.

The questionnaire has the maximum duration of 10 minutes and all the information given will be anonymous and confidential. Please, I ask you to read carefully the information and answer in the honest and truest way possible.

Your collaboration will be fundamental for the success of this study and for that I thank you in advance.

If you have additional questions regarding this study and/or survey please send me an e-mail: rafoe@iscte-iul.pt.

Thank you,
Rita Feliciano
*Required

Before starting...	The recipents of this survey are millennials (born between 1982 and 2002) and who have already traveled at least once.

1. Do you have an Instagram account? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

Section I - Consumers' travel profile	In the first section, the study will be focused in characterizing the consumers' travel profile.

2. How many times a year, on average, do you travel on holidays? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 0

   ◯ 1

   ◯ 2

   ◯ 3-5

   ◯ >=6

   ◯ Monthly

3. With who do you usually travel with? You can select several options. *

Tick all that apply.

☐ With a friend/friends
☐ With boyfriend/girlfriend/wife/husband
☐ With family
☐ Alone

Section II - Visual aspects when selecting a destination	In this second section, the study will be focused in characterizing the perceived importance of visual platforms by the consumer.

4. What visual platforms do you usually use to get information on travel destinations? You can choose several options. *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Booking
☐ Trivago
☐ Tripadvisor
☐ Travel blogs
☐ YouTube
☐ Pinterest

5. Taking in consideration the previous question, which of the sources mentioned do you use more to get information on travel destinations? You can only choose one option. *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Facebook
◯ Instagram
◯ Booking
◯ Trivago
◯ Tripadvisor
◯ Travel blogs
◯ YouTube
◯ Pinterest

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6. When you access these type of visual platforms, what are your main motivations and actions? You can only choose one option. *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Only to book a place or experience when I travel

   ( ) To look for inspiration through some images and videos

   ( ) I usually just go there to check the place or experience before going there/experience it

   ( ) To look for previous opinions from previous consumers

   ( ) To give my personal opinion regarding the place/experience through an online review or comment

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is seeing photos and videos before selecting a travel destination? *

   Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Very important

8. How many times per week do you check your Instagram account? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Less than once a week

   ( ) Once a week

   ( ) Several times per week

   ( ) Every day

   ( ) Every day and several times per day

9. What type of activities do you do when you access your Instagram account? You can only choose one option, the one you think it identifies the most with yourself. *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) I have an Instagram account, but I usually don't post anything or access to it often

   ( ) I like to follow my friends and see their updates but I don't like to post personal things

   ( ) I like to post photos, videos or stories but not updates of my emotional status and opinions

   ( ) I like to post photos, videos, stories and updates of my emotional status or opinions

   ( ) I like to follow and comment my friends posts

10. How do you usually access your Instagram account? You can only choose one option. *

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Mobile Phone or Smartphone

    ◯ Tablet or IPad

    ◯ Personal computer

    ◯ Public computers

11. What type of accounts do you follow on Instagram? You can select more than one option. *

    Tick all that apply.

    ☐ Beauty

    ☐ Decor

    ☐ Family

    ☐ Fashion

    ☐ Fitness

    ☐ Food

    ☐ Pet

    ☐ Travel

    ☐ Sports

Section IV - Consumers' attitudes on information search	In the fourth section, the study will be focused in characterizing the consumers' attitudes on information search.

12. Do you usually search for feedback from previous consumers regarding a destination over tourism providers' description of themselves? *

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ Yes

    ◯ No

13. On a scale of 1 to 5, in which way do you trust comments and posts made by travelers in Instagram? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I don't trust at all the comments and posts made by travelers in Instagram	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	I highly trust

14. Considering travel planning and destination choice, by which means do you usually try to search for information? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ I ask for information in travel agencies

◯ I search for information on travel magazines and journals

◯ I ask for opinions from my friends and family

◯ I go online and I search for all types of opinions (reviews on websites, social media or on Instagram posts)

15. When you see a lot of posts in Instagram regarding a travel destination you were thinking of going, what are your main thoughts? You can only choose one option. *

Mark only one oval.

◯ I believe in the information received and I look forward to visit the destination

◯ I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to go there

◯ I pass along the information that the travel destination has very good comments to people I know

◯ I don't believe the information received because it is not trustful

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, in which way do you agree with the following sentence: Ordinary travelers' reviews of destinations cannot be relied on. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, in which way do you agree with the following sentence: Tourism operators and destinations should incorporate travelers' photos and comments into their websites. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

Section V - Sociodemographic profile of the consumer

In this last section, it'll be possible to characterize the sociodemographic profile of the respondents.

18. How old are you? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ 18-20
◯ 21-25
◯ 26-30
◯ 31-35
◯ 36-38

19. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Female
◯ Male
◯ Other

20. Indicate your home country. *

_____

21. What is your last level of education? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Primary or elementary school
◯ High school
◯ Bachelor
◯ Post-graduation
◯ Master
◯ PhD

22. What is your current occupation? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Student
◯ Student-Employee
◯ Employee
◯ Self-employed
◯ Unemployed

Appendix B – Custom Table of People the Respondents Usually Travel With and Age Groups.

			With who do you usually travel with				Total
			Friend(s)	Partner	Family	Alone	
Age Groups	**18-20**	N	32	6	48	0	50
		N%	11.5%	2.5%	17.3%	0.0%	
	21-25	N	148	123	123	30	189
		N%	53.2%	50.4%	44.4%	50.8%	
	26-30	N	61	48	52	20	85
		N%	21.9%	19.7%	18.8%	33.9%	
	31-35	N	25	37	20	5	52
		N%	9.0%	15.2%	7.2%	8.5%	
	36-38	N	12	30	34	4	40
		N%	4.3%	12.3%	12.3%	6.8%	
Total		N	**278**	**244**	**277**	**59**	**416**
		N%	**66.8%**	**58.7%**	**66.6%**	**14.2%**	**100.0%**

Appendix C – Importance of Seeing Photos and Videos According to the Respondents.

Importance of seeing photos and videos	N	N%
1 – Not important at all	3	0.7%
2 – Not important	4	1.0%
3 – Neutral	22	5.3%
4 – Important	141	33.9%
5 – Very important	246	59.1%
Total	**416**	**100.0%**

Appendix D – Custom Table of Instagram Frequency and Age Groups.

Instagram Frequency		Once a week		Several times per week		Every day		Every day and several times per day	
		N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%
Age Groups	18-20	0	0.0%	2	22.2%	2	4.5%	46	12.7%
	21-25	0	0.0%	4	44.4%	23	52.3%	162	44.9%
	26-30	0	0.0%	1	11.1%	8	18.2%	76	21.1%
	31-35	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	11.4%	47	13.0%
	36-38	6	100.0%	2	22.2%	2	13.6%	30	8.3%
	Total	6	100.0%	9	100.0%	40	100.0%	361	100.0%

Appendix E – Relationship between Instagram Frequency and Main Instagram Activities of the Sample

		Instagram Frequency								
		Once a week		Several times per week		Every day		Every day and several times per day		Total
		N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N
Main Instagram Activities	I have an Instagram account, but I usually do not post anything or access to it often	6	75.0%	2	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8
	I like to follow my friends and see their updates but I do not like to post personal things	0	0.0%	6	4.6%	13	9.9%	112	85.5%	131
	I like to post photos, videos or stories but not updates of my emotional status or opinions	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	23	14.0%	141	86.0%	164
	I like to post photos, videos, stories and updates of my emotional status or opinions	0	0.0%	1	0.9%	4	3.7%	102	95.3%	107
	I like to follow and comment my friends posts	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	100.0%	6

Appendix F – Custom Table of Favorite Type of Accounts and Gender.

		Gender				Total
		Male		**Female**		
		N	**N%**	**N**	**N%**	
Type of Accounts	Beauty	10	5.6%	130	54.6%	140
	Decor	10	5.6%	111	46.6%	121
	Family	42	23.6%	104	43.7%	146
	Fashion	38	21.3%	143	60.1%	181
	Fitness	98	55.1%	130	54.6%	228
	Food	52	29.2%	155	65.1%	207
	Pet	23	12.9%	64	26.9%	87
	Travel	103	57.9%	186	78.2%	289
	Sports	158	88.8%	26	10.9%	184
Total		178		238		**416**

Appendix G – Level of Trust by the Respondents on Comments and Posts made by Travellers on Instagram

Trust on comments and posts made by travelers on Instagram	**N**	**N%**
1 – Not trustful at all	4	1.0%
2 – Not trustful	27	6.5%
3 – Neutral	108	26.0%
4 – Trustful	160	38.5%
5 – Very trustful	117	28.1%
Total	**416**	**100,0%**

Appendix H – Custom Table of Means the Respondents Usually Use to Try To Search for Information by Age

			Age					Total
			18-20	**21-25**	**26-30**	**31-35**	**36-38**	
By Which Means Do the Respondents Usually Try To Search for Information	I ask for information in travel agencies	**N**	6	14	2	5	6	**33**
		N%	18.2%	42.4%	6.1%	15.2%	18.2%	100.0%
		N% within Age	12.0%	7.4%	2.4%	9.6%	15.0%	7.9%
	I search for information on travel magazines and journals	**N**	0	0	0	3	0	**3**
		N%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		N% within Age	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%	0.0%	0.7%
	I ask for opinions from my friends and family	**N**	11	24	10	10	8	**63**
		N%	17.5%	38.1%	15.9%	15.9%	12.7%	100.0%
		N% within Age	22.0%	12.7%	11.8%	19.2%	20.0%	15.1%
	I go online and I search for all types of opinions (reviews on websites, social media or on Instagram posts)	**N**	33	151	73	34	26	**317**
		N%	10.4%	47.6%	23.0%	10.7%	8.2%	100.0%
		N% within Age	66.0%	79.9%	85.9%	65.4%	65.0%	76.2%
Total		**N**	**50**	**189**	**85**	**52**	**40**	**416**
		N%	12.0%	45.4%	20.4%	12.5%	9.6%	**100.0%**
		N% within Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	**100.0%**

Appendix I – Level of Agreement of the Respondents on the Statements

Statements	Level of Agreement									
	1 – Strongly Disagree		2 - Disagree		3 - Neutral		4 - Agree		5 – Strongly Agree	
	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%
Ordinary travelers reviews cannot be relied on	105	25.2%	187	45.0%	100	24.0%	21	5.0%	3	0.7%
Tourism operators should incorporate travelers photos or comments into their websites	0	0.0%	2	0,5%	33	7.9%	146	35.1%	235	56.5%

Appendix J – Mean Ranks for Kruskal-Wallis Test: Testing of H1a)2

	Age Groups	N	Mean Rank
	18-20	50	250.94
	21-25	189	194.71
Trust in the information provided on Instagram	26-30	85	240.10
	31-35	52	185.21
	36-38	40	183.75
	Total	**416**	

Appendix K – Spearman Correlation: Testing of H1b)1

			Trust in the information provided on Instagram	Travel frequency
Spearman's rho	Trust in the information provided on Instagram	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-0.013*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.788
		N	416	416
	Travel frequency	Correlation Coefficient	-0.013*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.788	
		N	416	416

*Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed)

Appendix L – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing of H1b)2 – Friends

			Level of trust in the information provided on Instagram					Total
			1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
Friend(s)	0	Count	0	13	27	49	49	138
		Expected Count	1.3	9.0	35.8	53.1	38.8	138.0
	1	Count	4	14	81	111	68	278
		Expected Count	2.7	18.0	72.2	106.9	78.2	278.0
Total		Count	4	27	108	160	117	416
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0	108.0	160.0	117.0	416.0

Appendix M - Association Coefficients' Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Friends

Friend(s)		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.173	0.014
	Cramer's V	0.173	0.014
N of Valid Cases		416	

Appendix N – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing of H1b)2 – Partner

			Level of trust in the information provided on Instagram					Total
			1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
Partner	0	Count	4	14	42	70	42	172
		Expected Count	1.7	11.2	44.7	66.2	48.4	172.0
	1	Count	0	13	66	90	75	244
		Expected Count	2.3	15.8	63.3	93.8	68.6	244.0
Total		Count	4	27	108	160	117	416
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0	108.0	160.0	117.0	416.0

Appendix O - Association Coefficients' Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Partner

Partner		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.147	0.061
	Cramer's V	0.147	0.061
N of Valid Cases		416	

Appendix P – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing of H1b)2 – Family

			Level of trust in the information provided on Instagram					Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
Family	0	Count	2	6	33	46	52	139
		Expected Count	1.3	9,0	36.1	53.5	39.1	139.0
	1	Count	2	21	75	114	65	277
		Expected Count	2.7	18,0	71.9	106.5	77.9	277.0
Total		Count	4	27	108	160	117	416
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0	108.0	160.0	117.0	416.0

Appendix Q – Association Coefficients' Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Family

Family		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.158	0.035
	Cramer's V	0.158	0.035
N of Valid Cases		416	

Appendix R – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing of H1b)2 – Alone

			Level of trust in the information provided on Instagram					Total
			1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
Alone	0	Count	2	24	88	145	98	357
		Expected Count	3.4	23.2	92.7	137.3	100.4	357.0
	1	Count	2	3	20	15	19	59
		Expected Count	0.6	3.8	15.3	22.7	16.6	59.0
Total		Count	4	27	108	160	117	416
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0	108.0	160.0	117.0	416.0

Appendix S – Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H1b)2 – Alone

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.539[a]	4	0.049
Likelihood Ratio	8.428	4	0.077
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.548	1	0.459
N of Valid Cases	416		

a. 3 cells (30,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,57.

Appendix T – Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H2a)

			Most Used Visual Platforms						Total
			Instagram	Booking	Trivago	Tripadvisor	Travel blogs	YouTube	
Main Motivations When Accessing Visual Platforms	Only to book a place or experience when I travel	Count	0	30	7	6	2	0	45
		Expected Count	25.9	5.6	2.4	7.0	3.0	1.1	45.0
	To look for inspiration through some images and videos	Count	76	0	0	0	2	7	85
		Expected Count	48.8	10.6	4.5	13.3	5.7	2.0	85.0
	I usually just go there to check the place or experience before going there/experience it	Count	115	4	2	3	6	3	133
		Expected Count	76.4	16.6	7.0	20.8	9,0	3.2	133.0
	To look for previous opinions from previous consumers	Count	48	15	9	44	18	0	134
		Expected Count	77.0	16.8	7.1	20.9	9.0	3.2	134.0
	To give my personal opinion regarding the place/experience through an online review or comment	Count	0	3	4	12	0	0	19
		Expected Count	10.9	2.4	1.0	3.0	1.3	0.5	19.0
Total		Count	239	52	22	65	28	10	416
		Expected Count	239.0	52.0	22,0	65.0	28.0	10.0	416.0

Appendix U – Spearman Correlation: Testing of H2b)

			Importance of seeing photos and videos	Instagram Frequency
Spearman's rho	Importance of seeing photos and videos	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.159**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
		N	416	416
	Instagram Frequency	Correlation Coefficient	0.159**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
		N	416	416

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix V – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing of H4b)

			Trust in the information provided on Instagram					Total
			Not trustful at all	Not trustful	Neutral	Trustful	Very trustful	
By Which Means You Usually Try To Search For Information	I ask for information in travel agencies	Count	0	8	14	6	5	33
		Expected Count	0.3	2.1	8.6	12.7	9.3	33.0
	I search for information on travel magazines and journals	Count	0	0	0	0	3	3
		Expected Count	0.0	0.2	0.8	1.2	0.8	3,0
	I ask for opinions from my friends and family	Count	4	12	30	10	7	63
		Expected Count	0.6	4.1	16.4	24.2	17.7	63.0
	I go online and I search for all types of opinions (reviews on websites, social media or on Instagram posts)	Count	0	7	64	144	102	317
		Expected Count	3.0	20,6	82.3	121.9	89.2	317.0
Total		Count	4	27	108	160	117	416
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0	108.0	160.0	117.0	416.0

Appendix W – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing of H4c)

			Trust in the information provided on Instagram					Total
			Not trustful at all	Not trustful	Neutral	Trustful	Very trustful	
Level of agreement if tourism operators should incorporate travelers photos or comments into their websites	Disagree (2)	Count	0	0	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.6	2.0
	Neutral (3)	Count	4	4	8	17	0	33
		Expected Count	0.3	2,1	8.6	12.7	9.3	33.0
	Agree (4)	Count	0	12	55	48	31	146
		Expected Count	1.4	9.5	37.9	56.2	41.1	146.0
	Strongly agree (5)	Count	0	11	45	93	86	235
		Expected Count	2.3	15.3	61.0	90.4	66.1	235.0
Total		Count	4	27	108	160	117	416
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0	108.0	160.0	117.0	416.0