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Notes:

**Tourism and Instagram. How important is social media for  
the  
Tourism industry?**

Complied by:  
**Ulisses Gomes de Andrade e Costa**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Social media have been playing a significant factor in our daily life and have changed many industries and innovated them. However, industries like tourism agencies have been struggling to stay in the market, people are now their agents, and they can book flights, hotels, and restaurants by themselves. With quantitative research, this paper aims to understand and show how tourism agencies can use digital tools to stay in the market and how people rely on them. This work aims to understand how tourism agencies have been using their Instagram page as a marketplace and the perceptions of younger travellers on how to use tourism agents.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Tourism agencies have been battling to remain in the market since new technologies and the internet has become the primary agents, and the agencies are gradually fading from the market. Thomas Cook, The travel operator, has gone bankrupt after 178 years in business. Many other tour operators were alarmed by the company's demise. However, the industry remains one of many countries most important economic sectors. Now, post-pandemic, the agency must exceed and comprehend new trends and how they might reach new generations.

The services' main target is elderly individuals who trust in the competence of someone who can book their vacation, but Brichle (2015) said that younger travellers "think they can find anything they want" and "would rather deal with a computer or an algorithm than a human." On the other hand, older millennials are more willing to place their reliance on the wisdom of others and are less likely to commit the time necessary to trip planning on their own.

Social media has played an essential role in many industries, including tourism. Park (2012) stated that by understanding the characteristics of each social medium, the effectiveness of the company's marketing activities is maximized. Clearly, social media's power is in the market today, and studies show that it is acting as a middleman between customers and businesses.

#### **1.1 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

Many causes have motivated people to use and purchase via the internet nowadays, such as the pandemic and people who have been stranded wanting to travel to more areas. The time has come for tour agencies to resurge. The information above prompted us to wonder how these tourism agencies have used their web presence to get this new generation to rely on their expertise. The first question was how tourism promotion organizations and agencies have reached out to individuals online. How has social media, such as Instagram, displaced travel agents? Furthermore, how do individuals arrange their vacations when they rely on social media?

Because tourism and social media are such vast topics, this assignment focuses on how Instagram, tour operators, and clients interact. Instagram was chosen to restrict the research because social media platforms have made it easy for entrepreneurs to reach out to potential clients and inform them about their products. Moreover, Instagram is extremely popular among younger people (Appel, 2020).

This work aims to understand how travellers use social media, focusing on Instagram to choose their destinations and how tour operators use social media to attract travellers to purchase their services. To understand the problem, this paper will give a background using authors that have researched the theme to gather information and analyze the questionnaire to draw how people perceive social media as a tourism agent.

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- How has social media affected travellers' choice of destination?
- Do travellers still use tourism agencies?
- Have firms that advertise locations reached more people than influencers?
- Do these companies use Instagram as a marketing tool for their services?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This assignment section will focus on the themes chosen to gather information for the empirical research. This topic will embrace tourism themes, such as how the industry and social media are connected.

#### **2.1 1.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF TOURISM**

Even though the world has experienced difficult times when people have been unable to travel due to the pandemic, tourism remains one of the most lucrative industries in the world. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism industry accounted for 10.4% of the global GDP in 2019, making it one of the world's largest economic sectors. Of course, the number has decreased owing to the lockdown and travel restrictions, but the WTTC's figures indicate the business's importance. Tourism is challenging to define because it encompasses a variety of products, industries, services, attractions, and more.

The Grand Tour marked the beginning of contemporary tourism. The movement became a rite of passage for aristocratic young men in the 18th century. The tour usually took three or four years, and these noblemen travelled to study the arts, archaeology, and architecture. It was dubbed "culture tourism" (Zuelow, 2016). However, tourism's timeline can be linked to humanity's history; humans have always been on the road in search of food and shelter. Hence the origin of tourism might be different according to different authors. However, as we all know, modern tourism begins with the development of trains that aid in the growth and popularization of the sector.

As previously stated, transportation is one of the primary factors contributing to tourism's growth. With the industrial revolution, people began to think of travel as leisure and enjoyment. As a result, the industry has become one of the most critical industries in developed countries. It is crucial to highlight Thomas Cook, who was the first to establish a travel agency. He created holiday and excursion packages for groups, including transportation and lodging (Rodriguez,



2020). People at the time preferred to travel for pleasure, and the agency that sold it created this desire by offering services and a gateway for the routine. We can confidently assert that Thomas Cook was the first to market the service, with everything included, and to alter the global landscape.

This research focuses on how social media has surpassed traditional travel firms and how the middle agent no longer exists due to technological advancements. To gain a deeper understanding, the project will concentrate on modern tourism and how people's desires have changed due to social media platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok. The following topic will include a brief history of agencies and how they are still desired by individuals, followed by a discussion of how social media has transformed tourism into a new manner of selling, offering, and instilling a desire in people to visit specific locations.

## **2.2 TRAVEL AGENCY AND PHOTOGRAPHY AS A TOURISM PROMOTION**

As was mentioned previously, Thomas Cook opened the first agency in the world.

The industry is enormous, and travel agencies are the easiest way for people to travel due to the number of things and papers they need. Postwar, the business saw a bloom, and different agencies worldwide were created. At that time, the agencies booked hotels, transport, restaurant and excursions, so the customer chooses what kind of package would best fit them. The operations and books were made by telephone or even manually.

Despite the tourism agency's relevant history, this paper focuses on how customers' images and desires have changed, and the tool that plays a crucial role in this change is photography. The photography was through many media practices, brochures, television commercials, pictures and postcards. So it is clear that photography was the first tool to create the desire to travel to destinations (Garrod, 2017).

The tourism campaign was massive; companies used to spend money on printed Ads, billboards, television and all kinds of campaigns to create the customer's desires. The buying process involves many sociopsychological factors such as motives, attitudes, values and others (Liu, 2019). However, the main factor of choice is the expectations the customer creates when

seeing a picture, a small clip of the place it sees as desired. Moreover, with this, photography has become a tool for agencies to offer packages and for tourists to show their pictures to friends and families to recall personal memories.

Lakhani (2015) commented that the behaviour of travellers has five steps in the buying process. First is the recognition of the need to travel, the second is the information search, and following the evaluation of alternatives, the purchase definition and the post behaviour decision. It is essential to highlight that buying decisions for a customer in tourism are linked with photography since the first desire to travel comes with a need created by marketing.

All the information cited above is essential to understand what motivated people to travel, technology has constantly been growing, and innovation is always bringing new things for businesses and industries. In the tourism business, it would not be different; with technology, travel started to be more accessible, and everyone started to be able to travel. E-commerce was a big game changer for the industry; The internet makes everyone do business online, fast and reliable. The travel agencies took advantage of the technology by creating websites and offering packages online. According to Ying (2017), tourism e-commerce aims to improve the internal and external connectivity of tourism institutions through advanced information technology, resulting in a closer relationship between tourism enterprises, more efficient information communication, and a form of electronic commerce between tourism enterprises and tourists.

However, in many such industries, the internet and innovation started to remould the way that service was sold, people started to book tickets and accommodation by themselves, assisted by apps, and the industry saw your middle agent disappear. The next topic will focus on how social media have overcome these middle agents and how to try to understand how they sell the destinations.

## **2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOURISM MARKETING TOOL**

Before we look at social media and tourism, it is essential to understand how technology has surpassed agencies and become the primary tool for travellers. As previously said, the tourist business encompasses numerous other industries, such as transportation, lodging, and restaurants. People no longer require the services of travel companies to book flights; instead, they may do so themselves using apps and the internet. This is one of the causes behind the global demise of the agency travel paradigm. (Manzano and Valpuesta, 2019).

Booking online flights are only one example of how e-commerce is disrupting the market; in the lodging sector, we see e-commerce such as Booking that allows anybody to book a hotel or hostel, or even Airbnb, which is a radical innovation that eliminates the need for people to stay in hotels. These examples merely demonstrate how advancements benefit travellers but cost travel agencies money. However, it is crucial to note that older generations struggle with technology, which may explain why agencies are still in business.

The internet and social media have ushered in a new era in the business; the internet and social media have become the deciding factors for travellers when selecting their locations; Instagram allows a wide range of audiences to participate as tourism destination promotion agents. (Fatanti 2015). Because individuals share their photos and generate a large audience that can be reached from anywhere in the globe, the engagement of a single tourism destination's photo has become a source of information for the business in recent years. According to Lazaridou (2017), social media platforms like Instagram have become the primary vehicle for raising brand recognition and promoting cultural tourism. According to Paquette (2013), the tools and methods for communicating with customers have changed substantially with the introduction of social media; as a result, businesses must learn how to use social media in a way that is compatible with their business plan.

Terttunen (2017) also emphasizes the importance of tourism locations, saying of social media marketing, "It is the act of advertising a destination to increase the number of visitors to that region." Destination marketing also comprises creating and maintaining a location image that meets the expectations of both travellers and the destination.

## 2.4 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON INSTAGRAM

Baggio and Costa published research in 2008 on how tourism consumer behaviour has changed, and today's travellers use other applications like Vacation Advisor before booking a trip. Tourists base their judgments on classification rankings and discussion boards where specific questions about a resort can be asked. Tourists in these forums are interested in many aspects of the vacation, such as transportation, restaurants, and pricing ( Baggio et al., 2008).

These examples demonstrate how essential social media and the internet have become in the travel marketplace. "Likes" and "shares" are essential in today's market for any company. We can see influencers who use videos of their journeys worldwide to get millions of followers to do the same. Given the potential reach and engagement influencers command, companies have either begun to embrace influencers on social media or plan to push their efforts in this field even further. Several social media executives recently mentioned the growing importance of influencers and how firms are increasingly adopting influencer marketing into their marketing plans (Appel et al., 2020).

Instagram's visual content, which has become one of the most important ways to promote and advertise items and is a marketplace with the highest engagement (Uşaklı et al., 2017), has become one of the most significant ways to promote and advertise products. Furthermore, social media can influence other people's behaviour and provides several advantages (Aytemiz,2018). Both authors emphasize Instagram's relevance in promoting various products, and their research focuses on the tourism market.

In another study by Istudor and Ana (2019), The writers commented on how UGC has been growing in the industry and how it is vital for the new generations. The UGC is unique content explicitly made for a brand by customers and posted on social media or other platforms. This content can be reviews, video recommendations and even podcasts. The writers above cite a TripAdvisor survey from 2017 showing that social media posts are the most popular information source for travellers and that people find user-generated content (UGC) sites and platforms to be the most dependable, entertaining, and current.

Word-of-Mouth marketing has evolved into electronic-word-of-mouth, and the potential

audience is beyond the traditional parties, family, and friends, to new, more expansive, geographically dispersed networks of strangers, which is another point that gives a firm idea of how social media is essential for the industry is cited by Mckercher, Lo, Cheung & law (2011).

The main goal of this report is to determine how travel agencies have been using Instagram to promote their destinations and how important Instagram is to travellers nowadays, as well as to determine how influential Instagram can be when choosing a destination and whether they still believe that contacting one agency can change the perceptions and expectations of travel. Therefore the work will focus on the research made, and the next topic will explain the methodology used and how the people for the research were reached.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The research is still pertinent because it demonstrates how the behaviour of purchasing an entire tourism service has been used mainly on the internet, even though the subject has been studied and analyzed a few times, as was mentioned by Appel (2020) about the influence and social media on buying decisions and consumer behaviour on the internet. It is also vital to note that, according to Ana and Istudor (2019), travel and tourism investors still need to be more convinced about the benefits of UGC (user-generated content) sites and uncertain of how to react to these more recent trends in online and digital.

The writers discussed how crucial the internet and users have been for the sector. This brought up the primary study question, which is how significant Instagram is in the consumer purchasing process for travellers.

The assignment's methodology will be quantitative, with few open questions where the interviewers can give their opinion. The quantitative questions would help us collect crucial information for my study project. Quantitative research, according to Madrigal and McClain (2012), provides essential information for business decisions. The information that may be gleaned through qualitative research and used in product design includes information on user desires, behavioural patterns, and use scenarios.

The choice of quantitative research was more suitable for the theme and easy to understand with the vast number, Casebeer and Verhoef (18997) commented that deductive quantitative research uses experimental and survey approaches to evaluate particular hypotheses based on general principles.

#### **3.1 METHOD ADOPTED**

As mentioned above, the method used is quantitative research with few open-closed questions. Created on google forms, the survey had 13 questions, and three were open where people could give their opinion. Those questions were created after the empirical research focused on the authors in this assignment and analyses on 3 Instagram pages that companies sell tourism packets in Dublin.

## **3.2 SAMPLING**

The pilot interview was done first, and I sent it to a few friends after they reviewed my questions and also gave their opinions. After the pilot research, I changed a few questions and had to delete a few. I collected 104 answers from the survey to make it the analysis of the questions. The research was carried out online and was sent by email and Whats App to around 130 people. It was sent to people from different nationalities. Creating a demographic group was unnecessary since everyone travelled. However, I focused on people around 25 – 35 years old due to their connection to the internet.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4 ANALYSIS OF INSTAGRAM PAGE IRISH TOUR OPERATOR / AGENCIES

The analyses would focus on the number of followers, reels, and storeys, and how they use the platform to engage with their followers and users, and how the activity and posts are good and appealing to younger generations. This topic would only focus on the Instagram pages of the three travel agencies in Dublin. The three agencies were chosen to concentrate on the Trustpilot website and their location selection. It is vital to emphasise that the analysis will only look at the agencies' Instagram pages because they were chosen after the pilot poll in which the tree above was identified.

#### 4.1 CASSIDY TRAVEL

A 4.8 out of 5 ratings is given to Cassidy Travel on the Trustpilot website.

The business has 35.9k followers, which is decent for an Irish business. Additionally, the business is among Ireland's oldest and most well-known travel agents. They have received recognition in Ireland for their efforts and the vast range of travel destinations.

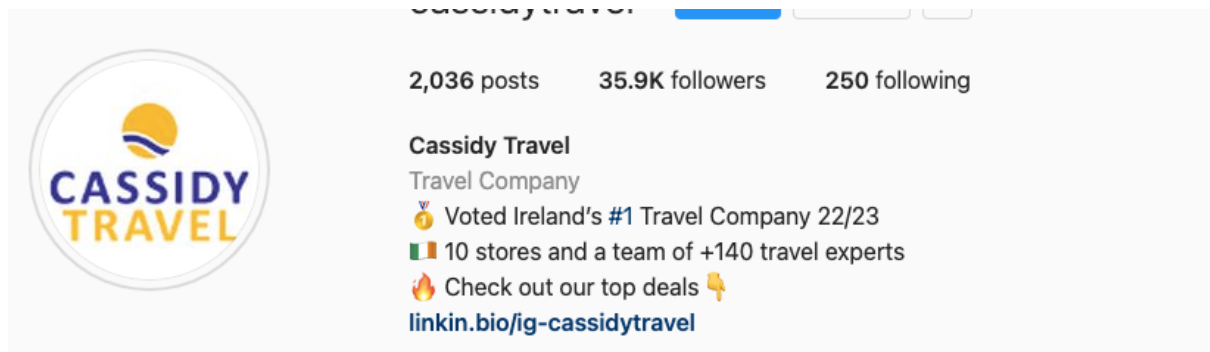


Image 1: Cassidy Travel Instagram Page

At least one post or story appears to be published daily by the company. However, the majority of their posts need more appealing photographs and place little emphasis on the younger generation, instead focusing primarily on family vacations.



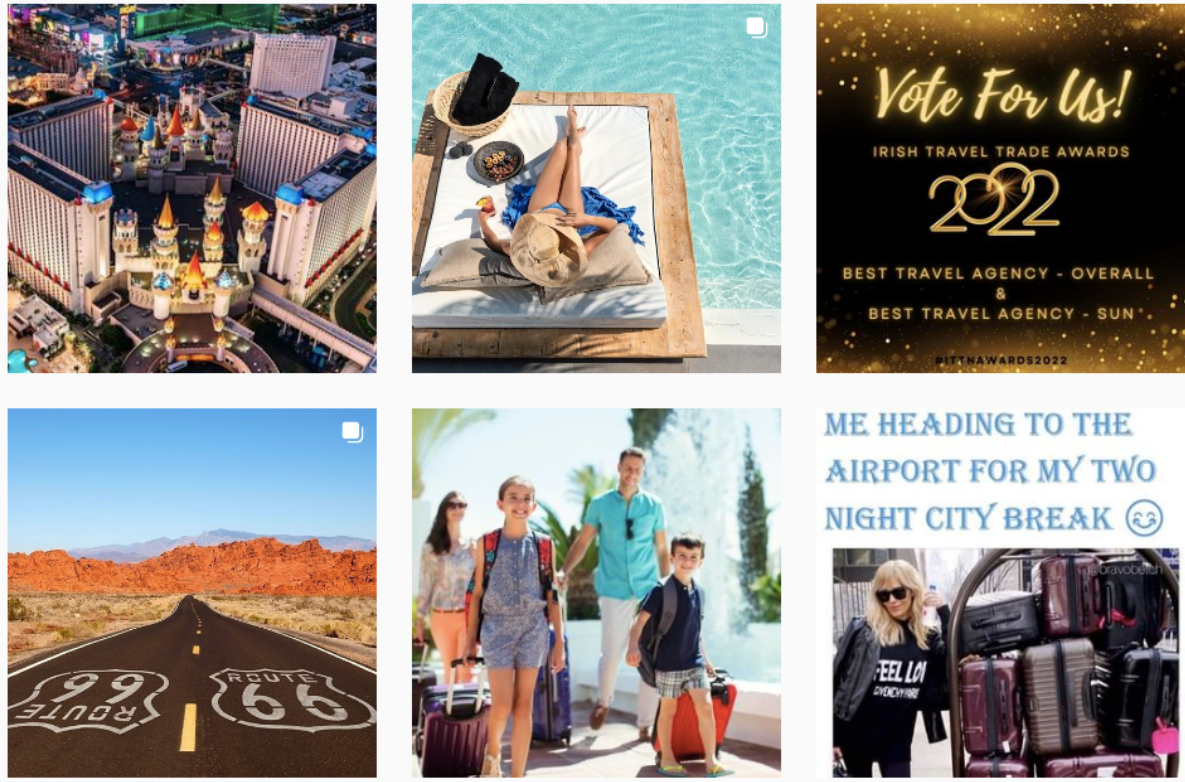


Image 2: Cassidy Travel Instagram Page

It is also crucial to note that the company's Instagram page does not feature many humorous posts, photographs, or videos that have the potential to become viral and that customer engagement with the brand is relatively low—posts never receive more than 400 likes and 100 comments.

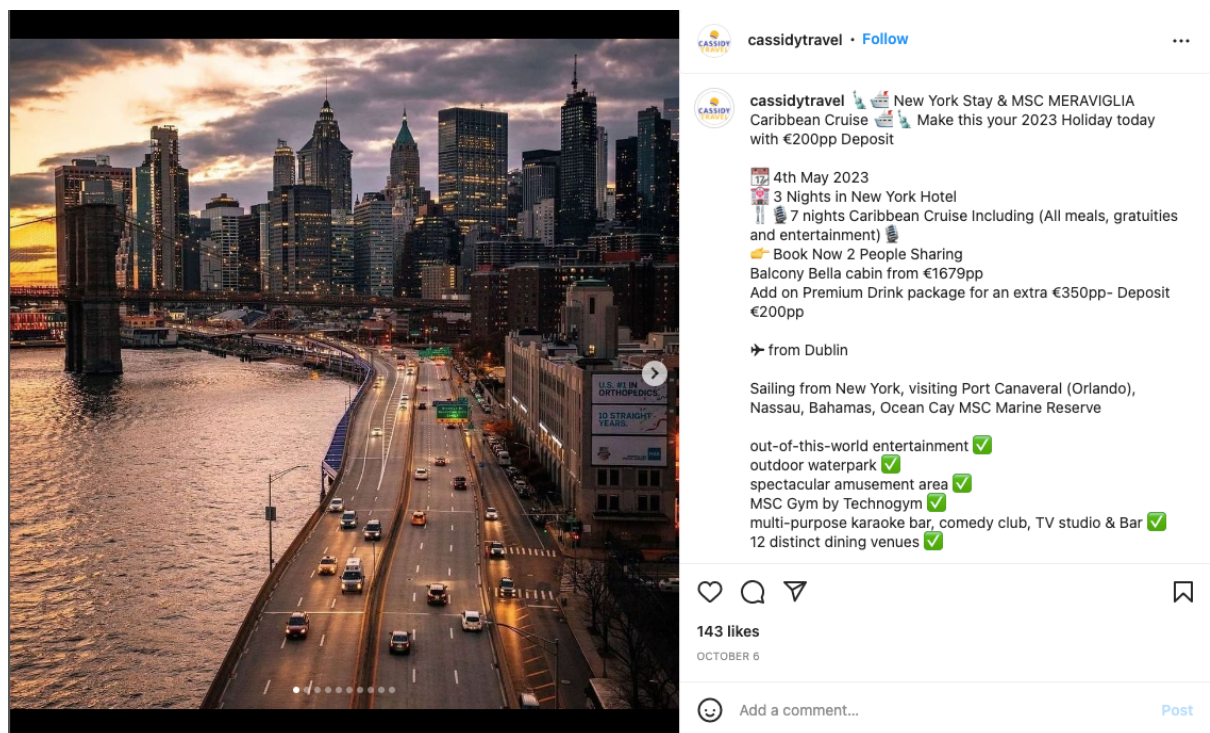


Image 3: Cassidy Travel Instagram Page

The company's ads are ineffective and do not demand attention. The business publishes photos they took and includes many unwise details in the post. The organization needs a content strategy, as evidenced by the disorganized posts and sparse use of hashtags. However, their page does feature FAQs, a quiz to interact with fans, and other details in their highlighted stories.

## 4.2 ABBEY TRAVEL

Abbey Travel received a 4.8 on Trustpilot. Similar to Cassidy, the rationale for choosing the company was that it was mentioned by one of the interviewers in the pilot questionnaire. The company is also one of the best-known in the nation and has a few ads throughout the city. They also have a physical location in the country, yet their online presence on Instagram appears to be rather weak and unimpressive:

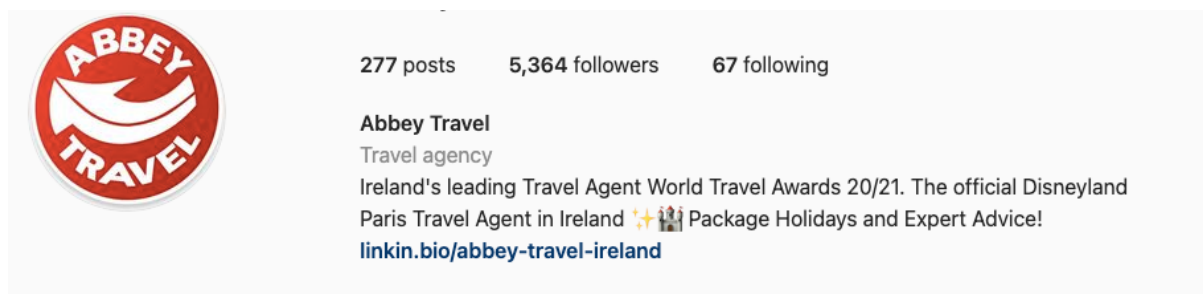


Image 4: Abbey Travel Instagram page

They only have 277 posts, and compared to the number of followers on Cassidy's Instagram page, they only have 5,364, which is very low. However, their web content appears well-organized, and travellers will likely find their posts and images engaging due to their attractive style.



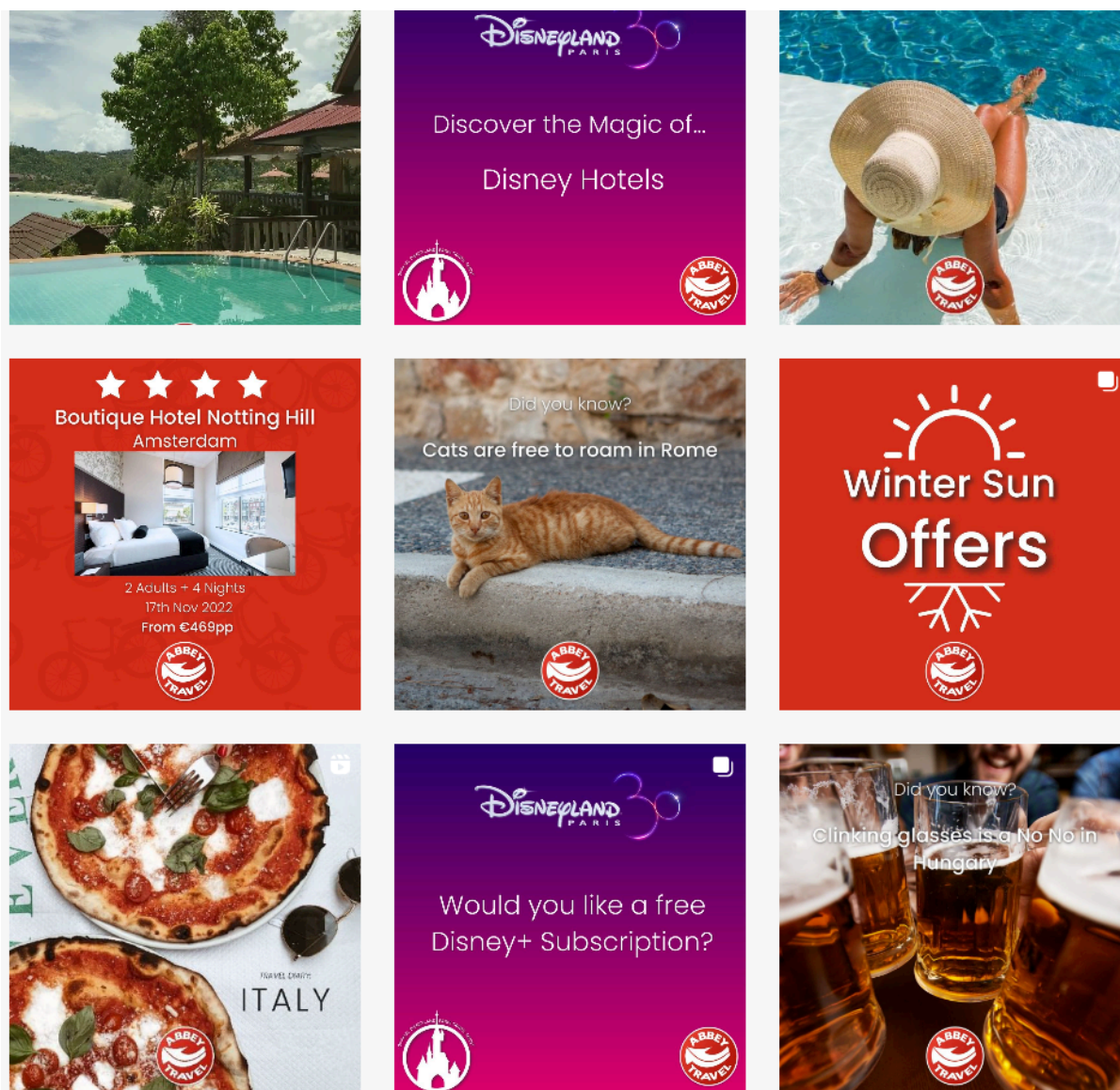


Image 5: Abbey Travel Instagram page

They have a well-organized feed with colours and calls to action, and they make transparent prices and essential information that draw customers' attention—although it is evident that their content calendar is not very current, that they have barely posted Instagram stories, and that their highlighted stories have only two subjects. The page has very little involvement; most of their most recent posts receive less than 100 likes and very few comments.



Image 6: Abbey Travel Instagram page

However, they use hashtags and appealing pictures with good information.

#### 4.3 TRAILFINDERS

Trailfinders was the last one to be picked for analysis. The business was also included in the pilot questionnaire; the travel agency is ranked first among the top agencies in Dublin on Bestinireland.com. The business provides a wide range of tourism-related services in addition to the abovementioned services. However, it is also evident from the agency Instagram's analysis how poorly the brand is represented online when people look for their

page.



Image 7: Trailfinders Instagram page

With only 514 followers, the page does not use Instagram as a marketplace. The business also does not use Instagram stories; they only have one highlighted story with a picture of a location with no other information.

Their post feed appears to be different from a regular content calendar; the photographs are low quality, but they have an appealing look; in their postings, they employ a few hashtags and provide details about a few packages. However, there was no evidence of page involvement during the analysis because no post received more than 50 likes.

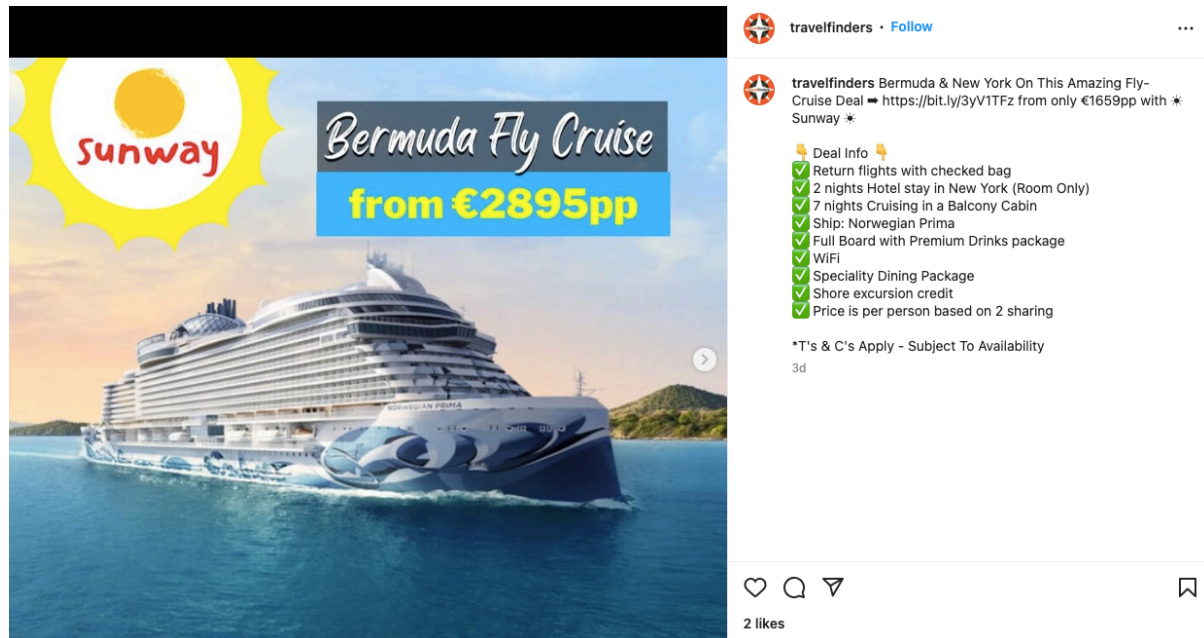


Image 8: Trailfinders Instagram page

It is important to note that none of the Instagram page analyses looked at the user's Instagram account. Instagram is used to promote the brand and direct users to its website, where they may shop, but they might take advantage of more of social media's advantages for their business. There are only two likes on the image above, no comments, and no call to action. Additionally, the social engagement on Instagram is low, the digital content—such as photos and posts—is fragile, and the social media company frequently uses tools to grow its audience and raise brand awareness.

The topic above provides us with a view of how businesses utilise Instagram, and the following is how travellers understand social media as a tool to comprehend the impact of Instagram in their process of purchasing a service in the industry.

## 5 ANALYSES OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

This topic is focused only on the analysing of finding in the survey applied, as Demographic information only focuses on the group's ages, which shows the perception of generations.

So the first question was to draw the demographic group according to their age, and the focus group was a younger audience since, as cited by many authors, the old generation has still using agencies which is one of the reasons that the physical one still exists.

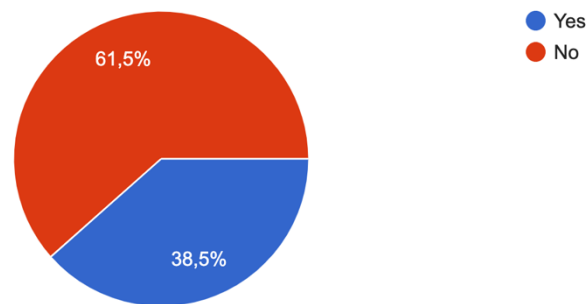
AGE	PERCENTAGE
18 - 24	12, 5%
25 - 30	26%
31 - 37	48,1%
38 - 45	12,5%
Over 45	1 %

The Marjorie group, which answers 31 – 37 and 25 – 30 years old, being the Millennials, the majority group in this survey, in a survey in the US by Statista (2020), highlighted that 86 % of millennials are digital buyers.

The next question is to understand the behaviour of the travellers and how the travel agencies use how the process of gathering information for travel. As questioned about how many times they travel for leisure per year, The majority, 59,6% answered that they travel over twice per year for leisure, followed by 25 % answered that they travel twice a year, and 15,4 % travel only once a year for leisure.

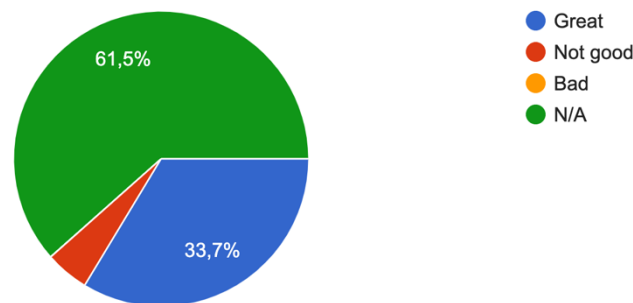
Have you ever hired a travel agency to assist with planning a vacation?

104 respostas



if so, how would you rate the entire service?

104 respostas

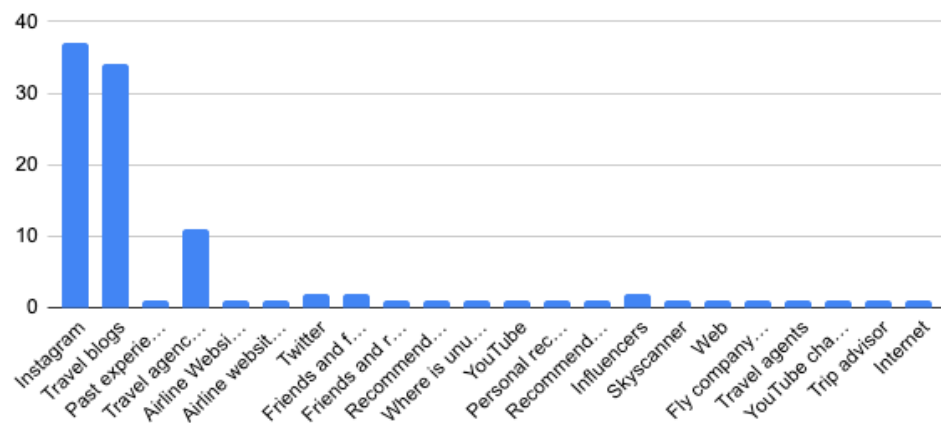


The answer above shows us how travel agencies are perceived by the people interviewed. The majority have never used a travel agency to book travel, 61,5%. However, it is essential to highlight that they might have yet to book their travels with any agency, but they probably already had booked something indirectly. While 38,5% already use travel agencies, most people rate the service as great ( 33,7%). Still, to understand the perception of the agencies was questioned if the interviewees believed the travel agencies are still helpful for travellers, and most of the interviewees, 75%, believed that agencies are still helpful against only 25% who said no.

The next block of questions is focused on gathering information, which was commented on by Lakhani (2015) as the second step of the buying process of the traveller after recognising the need. The questions were given a few options, and the interviewee could put another channel that they found helpful for information the answer. It was given six options: Instagram, Travel Blogs, Websites, Friends or Family and Youtube. Also, the open option is to write other



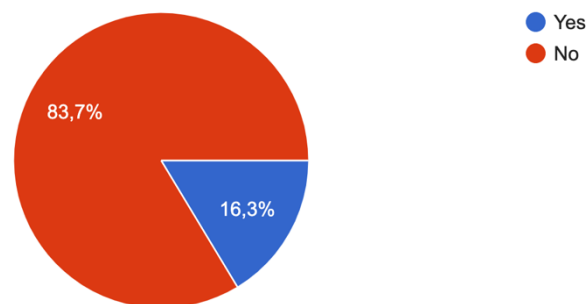
Chanel, which they think is helpful. Instagram was voted as one of the channels more helpful channels which 35,6 %, followed by 32,7 % of travel blogs and 10 6% of travel agencies; it is vital to comment that the interviewees cited different channels such as airlines websites, TripAdvisor, Influencers and other channels that can be part of travel agencies. However, they might not know about it.



The next session was to give us a perception of how Instagram users and travel agencies have in any way, a relationship.

Have you ever contact a travel agencie due to Instagram post?

104 respostas

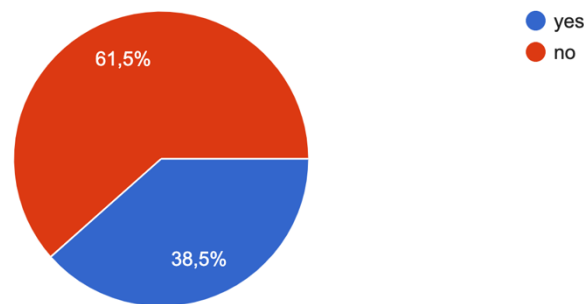


In the chart above you can see that 83,7% have never contacted a travel agency due to an Instagram post which brings us to the idea that travel agencies are not using this tool for digital marketing.



Do you follow any Tourism agencies on social media?

104 respostas

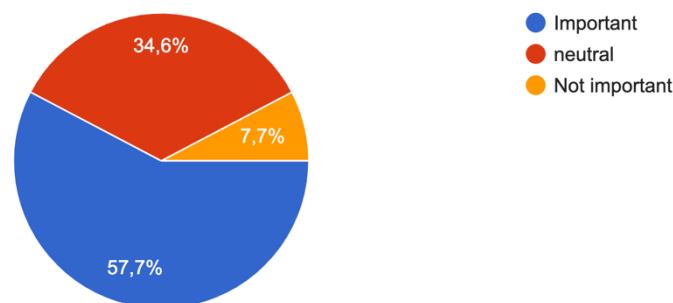


However, at the same time, 61,5% do not follow any travel agency on Instagram, which gives us an idea of why they never contacted one due to their post. Is important to

To highlight what was commented on in the literature review by Lazaridou (2017), Instagram has become the primary tool for raising brand recognition. The next question gives us this idea: whether they believe Instagram is important in deciding where to go, and 57,7% believe that Instagram has an essential role in the buying process.

How important is platforms like Instagram are when it comes to deciding where to go?

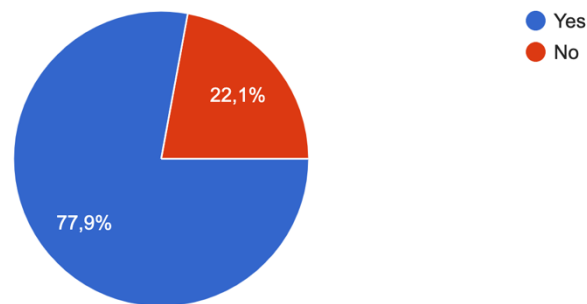
104 respostas



Also, to understand how important the role of this social media the next question was focused on posts like Reels.

Reels on Instagram create a desire for you to visit a place where influential people are?

104 respostas

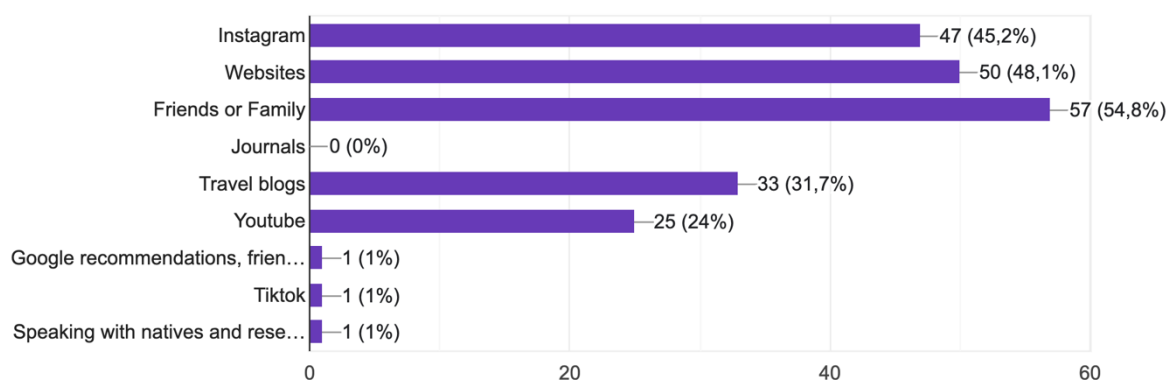


The figure above shows that 77,9% of people believe that posting on Instagram creates the desire to travel. This gives us the idea that Instagram is important not only for the second step cited by Lakhani (2015) but also Instagram can be involved in the first process of the recognition of the need. The reels and posts can create the desire in you. The question also mentions influencers and celebrities and how their influential power can be helpful in the buying process.

The last session of the questionnaire focuses on the last holidays of the interviewees to give us an idea of how Instagram or other social media have influenced them in their last purchase or destination. The following question was also open; we gave them the options and an open one.

Regarding to your last Holiday, where did you found the most relevant informations that made you choose your last destination?

104 respostas

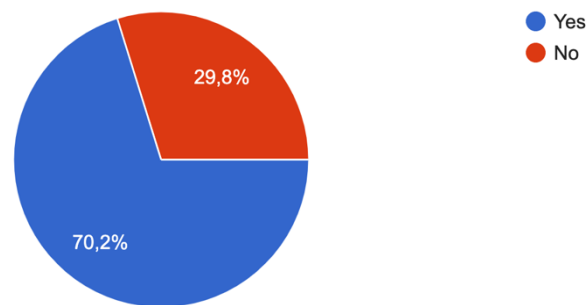


54,8% of friends or family gathered relevant information regarding their last holidays following websites (48,1%) and Instagram (45,2%). However, it is important to highlight when the interviewed chooses friends and family in which way this communication happens. They probably saw friends post on Instagram Like, as mentioned by Mckercher, Lo, Cheung & law

(2011), that word-of-mouth marketing had evolved into electronic-word-of-mouth. Regarding the last holiday was asked if they visited someplace where they had seen someone that posted on Instagram, such as posts, reels or stories of friends, influencers or other Instagram pages

Regarding to your last Holiday, Did you visit any location which you saw in any instagram? ( Influencers / friends / tourism pages etc.)

104 respostas

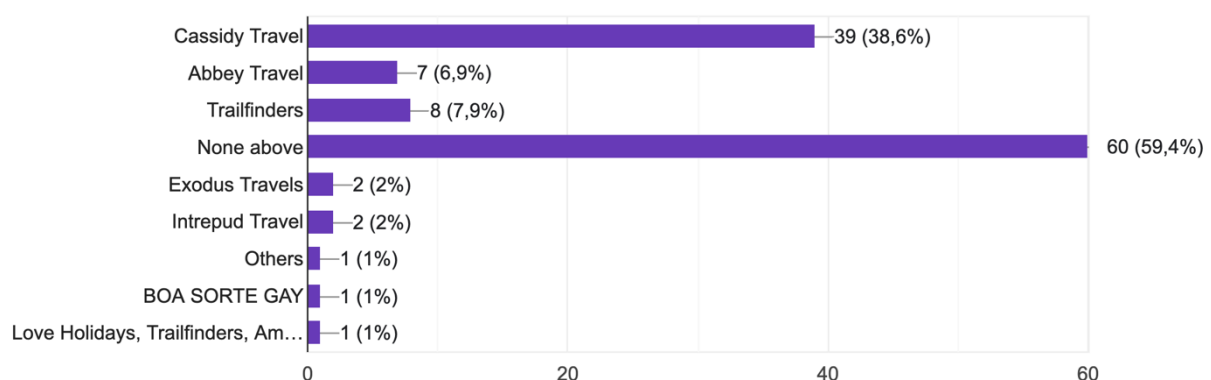


70,2% said they visited a place posted by someone, which forced the code used by Mckercher, Lo, Cheung & law (2011) about electronic word-of-mouth. Also show how Instagram give travellers options.

The last question on the survey was about travel agencies. This question was modified since the pilot questionnaire was given three options and an open to see if they know any more agencies in the country they could choose more than one option.

Have you ever heard any of the agencies cited below:

101 respostas



The three agencies were Cassidys, Abbey and Trailfinders where 38,6% know Cassidy travel which is not a surprise since their numbers on Instagram, however, most of the interviewees did not know any of the Agencies cited. It is essential to highlight that other agency, such as love holidays, were mentioned as online agencies. How were mentioned the analyses of the

three agencies in the topic before were chosen due to these answers.

The results show that the Authors used in the Literature review are right about consumer behaviour on Instagram and how people are now more willing to buy a service due to posts and how essential this post is in the decision-making of any customer. It was important to highlight that people go to places they see on Instagram, and this can be a gap where only some companies are used to benefit their business.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **6 CONCLUSION**

The questionnaire showed clearly that Instagram has an essential role in the process of buying decisions; however, Instagram can be involved in all processes of this decision since the recognition of the need can be influenced by social media, and the gathering of information can also be determined by the social media. The results show how influencers, friends, or family can now be considered tourism promotion agents. These people can sell to travellers. The travel agent for Millennials and Gen Z is the social media and people. Another result that calls our attention is that about 57% of people believe that Instagram is important when deciding to travel.

Photography has a central role in society and the market. As Fantastic (2015) mentioned, Instagram allows a wide range of audiences for tourism. This work shows how millennials rely on social media when choosing their destination. Also, the analyses made on the Instagram page of the companies show that they are unwilling to get this audience or need to be made aware of how to reach them. On the other hand, about 77% of these people went for a determined location due to Instagram.

The three agencies analysed had a poor digital marketing campaign on Instagram, and they need to be aware that the new generation is willing to buy from agencies. Even though things are easy, they need to create more campaigns to reach these people.

The results of the assignment show that millennials are willing to use agencies in order to book travel and also show how the pictures influenced them. Hence, these companies need social media to stay in the market.

Another conclusion that this work brings is that Instagram influences people in the building's desire to travel due to their image, and the users rely on the opinions of friends, family, or influencers.

### **7 LIMITATIONS**

The first idea of the assignment was to carry interviews with two groups; however, due to the lack of time and changes that I had to make during the assignment, I could not carry the

interview with the second group, which would be with tourist agents. Since tourism is such an abroad, the theme, which includes many industries, was essential to focus only on tourism operators. Also, the range of social media was necessary to focus only on Instagram.

Another limitation noted is that few people who were interviewed needed to understand the difference between tourism concepts and see the industry as a whole which was noted in the answers to the open questions in the survey.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The topic is vast and has much information about the theme; however, further research would give the topic more solutions and a better understanding of companies. The work shows us that social media is essential, and tourism agencies urgently need to create digital market campaigns and a good marketing team to promote better their services on social media. These companies need to optimize their pages, focus on targeting young audiences, and use the tools of Instagram to sell directly on links to their service. The use of influencer and consumer reviews need to be posted so these companies would reach a vast audience and sell more of their services on social media.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I: ONLINE SURVEY**

#### **Tourism and social media**

The goal of this study is to better understand how social media sites like Instagram have developed into some of the most crucial platforms for promoting tourism and how the middleman has virtually disappeared as a result of the usage of social media for research and decision-making when booking a holiday.

This research is conducted by Ulisses Gomes de Andrade e Costa and supervised by Anthony Kennelly. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address. The questions are about the buying behaviour regarding travel and tourism.

Your information will be kept private. Each piece of information is kept in a password-protected electronic format. The surveys won't include any information that can be used to individually identify you in order to assist safeguard your confidentiality. Representatives of Independent College may be given access to the study's findings for scholarly use only.

**ELECTRONIC**

**CONSENT:**

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have ready the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

\*

Agree

Disagree

#### Tourism and social medias

1. What is your age\*

18 - 24

25 - 30

31 - 37

38 - 45

Over 45

2. How frequently do you travel annually for leisure?\*

Once per year

Twice

Over twice per year

3. Have you ever hired a travel agency to assist with planning a vacation?\*

Yes

No

4. if so, how would you rate the entire service?\*

Great

Not good

Bad

N/A

5. Do you still think that travel companies can be helpful when planning a trip?\*

Yes

No

6. Which channel do you find to be the most helpful when deciding where to travel?\*

Travel agencies website

Instagram

Influencers

Travel blogs

Outro:

7. Have you ever contacted a travel agency due to an Instagram post?\*

Yes

No

8. How important is platforms like Instagram are when it comes to deciding where to go? \*

Important

neutral

Not important

9. Do you follow any Tourism agencies on social media?\*

yes

no

10. Reels on Instagram create a desire for you to visit a place where influential people are?\*

Yes

No

11. Regarding to your last Holiday, where did you find the most relevant pieces of information that made you choose your last destination?\*

Instagram

Websites

Friends or Family

Journals

Travel blogs

Youtube

Outro:

12. Regarding to your last Holiday, Did you visit any location which you saw in Instagram?  
(Influencers/friends/tourism pages etc.)\*

Yes

No

13. Have you ever heard of any of the agencies cited below :\*

Cassidy Travel

Abbey Travel

Trailfinders

None above

Outro:

## APENDIX II : ETHICAL FORM

<b>Form A: Application for Ethical Approval</b>	
<b>Undergraduate/Taught Postgraduate Research</b>	
This form should be submitted to the module leader for the relevant initial proposal and/or the relevant supervisor if the proposal has already been accepted. <b>Please save this file as <i>STUDENT NUMBER_AEA_FormA.docx</i></b>	
<b>Title of Project</b>	Tourism and Instagram. How important is social media for the Tourism industry?
<b>Name of Learner</b>	Ulisses Gomes de Andrade e Costa
<b>Student Number</b>	51702304
<b>Name of Supervisor/Tutor</b>	Anthony Kelly

Check the relevant boxes. All questions must be answered before submitting to the relevant lecturer / supervisor. Note: only one box per row should be selected.

Item	Question	Yes	No	NA
1	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Will you obtain written consent for participation (through a signed or 'ticked' consent form)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Will you give participants the option of not answering any question they do not want to answer?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Will you ensure that participant data will be treated with full confidentiality and anonymity and, if published, will not be identifiable as any individual or group?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e., give them a brief explanation of the study)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	If your study involves people between 16 and 18 years, will you ensure that passive consent is obtained from parents/guardians, with active consent obtained from both the child and their school/organisation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	If your study involves people less than 16 years, will you ensure that <u>active</u> consent is obtained from parents/guardians <u>and</u> that a parent/guardian or their nominee (such as a teacher) will be present throughout the data collection period?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If your study requires evaluation by an ethics committee/board at an external agency, will you wait until you have approval from both the Independent College Dublin and the external ethics committee before starting data collection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Item	Question	Yes	No	NA
12	If you are in a position of authority over your participants (for example, if you are their instructor/tutor/manager/examiner etc.) will you inform participants in writing that their grades and/or evaluation will be in no way affected by their participation (or lack thereof) in your research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13	If you are in a position of authority over your participants (for example, if you are their instructor/tutor/manager/examiner etc.), does your study involve asking participants about their academic or professional achievements, motivations, abilities or philosophies? (please note that this does not apply to QA1 or QA3 forms, or questionnaires limited to market research, that do not require ethical approval from the IREC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15	Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
16	Does your project involve work with animals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
17	Do you plan to give individual feedback to participants regarding their scores on any task or scale?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18	Does your study examine any sensitive topics (such as, but not limited to, religion, sexuality, alcohol, crime, drugs, mental health, physical health, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
19	Is your study designed to change the mental state of participants in any negative way (such as inducing aggression, frustration, etc?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
20	Does your study involve an external agency (e.g. for recruitment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
21	Do your participants fall into any of the following special groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<i>(except where one or more individuals with such characteristics may naturally occur within a general population, such as a sample of students)</i>			

If you have ticked any of the shaded boxes above, you should consult with your module leader / supervisor immediately. **You will need to fill in Form B Ethical Approval** and submit it to the Research & Ethics Committee **instead** of this form.

There is an obligation on the researcher to bring to the attention of the Research & Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.

I consider that this project has <b>no</b> significant ethical implications to be brought before the relevant Research & Ethics Committee. I have read and understood the specific guidelines for completion of Ethics Application Forms. I am familiar with the codes of professional ethics relevant to my discipline (and have discussed them with my supervisor).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Name of Learner</b>	Ulisses Gomes de Andrade e Costa
<b>Student Number</b>	51702304
<b>Date</b>	18/11/2022

I have discussed this project with the learner in question, and I agree that it has no significant ethical implications to be brought before the Research & Ethics Committee.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Name of Supervisor/Lecturer</b>	Anthony Kelly
<b>Date</b>	18\11\2022