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**WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS FOR
INFORMATION SEEKING AND INFORMATION SHARING AMONG ITALIAN
AND PORTUGUESE MILLENNIALS?**

Deborah Caterina Condemi

Master (MSc) in Erasmus Mundus in Tourism Development & Culture
(EMJMD)

Supervisor

Dr. Catarina Maria Valente Antunes Marques, Associate Professor,
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I dedicate this to my parents, Francesco and Nuccia, who are always there to support me.

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Resumo

O objetivo desta investigação foi compreender as principais motivações para utilizar as Redes Sociais entre Millennials italianos e portugueses em duas fases da viagem: procura de informação e partilha de informação. Outro objetivo desta investigação foi perceber se a procura de informação influenciaria a vontade de partilhar experiências de viagem, e se haveria diferenças ou semelhanças nas motivações para utilizar as Redes Sociais entre estes dois grupos culturais. Este estudo segue uma abordagem quantitativa e os dados foram recolhidos através de um questionário. Obteve-se um total de 300 respostas. Os dados foram analisados através de estatística descritiva, análise de componentes principais e análise de regressão múltipla. Os resultados mostram que os Millennials italianos e portugueses comportam-se de forma semelhante. As principais motivações para utilizar as redes sociais são a utilidade, a facilidade de utilização, a perceção de prazer e as motivações altruístas.

O estudo revelou que a procura de informação influencia a vontade de partilhar entre estes dois grupos culturais.

Palavras-chave: Redes de redes sociais, Geração Y, processo de decisão de viagens (férias), procura de informação, partilha de informação.

JEL Classification:

M31: Marketing

L83: Sports, Gambling, Restaurants, Recreation, Tourism

Abstract

The aim of this research was to understand the main motivations to use Social Media among Italian and Portuguese Millennials in two phases of the trip: information seeking and information sharing. Another objective of this research was to understand if the seeking of information would influence the willingness to share travel experiences, and if there would be differences or similarities in the motivations to use Social Media among these two cultural groups. This study follows a quantitative approach and data was collected using a questionnaire. A total of 300 responses were obtained. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, principal component analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The results show that Italian and Portuguese Millennials behave in a similar way. The main motivations to use Social Media are usefulness, ease of use, perceived enjoyment and altruistic motivations.

The study revealed that information seeking influences the willingness to share among these two cultural groups.

Keywords: Social Media networks, Gen Y, travel (holiday) decision-making process, information seeking, information sharing.

JEL Classification:

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CHAPTER I

1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance of the topic

Over the years, the Internet has completely changed how people communicate and purchase online. Its evolution started with the Web 1.0 phase, characterised by mainly static sites, and went on to the Web 2.0 phase, characterised by interactive-based sites, also known as Social Media networks, where people can easily interact and share contents with each other (Funk, 2009).

In the tourism industry, before the advent of Web 2.0 and social media networks, people did not have the possibility to access a wide range of resources to collect information about travel-related services and products (Hu & Wei, 2013). In order to plan their trips, they relied mainly on brochures and travel agents (Baruca & Civre, 2012).

With the development of new technologies, such as the Internet and Social Media networks, the consumption of travel-related products and services radically changed, enabling people to become more independent and gather more information also from other travellers, without the aid of an intermediary (Fotis et al., 2012; Browning et al., 2013).

In two phases of the trip, consumers started using Social Media for several reasons, such as gathering information in order to plan their holiday and sharing their travel experiences after their trips (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

The use of Social Media networks for travel-related purposes has become increasingly common, especially among Generation Y (Millennials), individuals who were born between 1981 and 1999 (Bolton et al., 2013). This generation is also known as the “Net Generation”, and it is defined as being technologically savvy and more used to being exposed to the Internet and its features (Lester et al., 2005).

1.2 Research aim and objectives

This aim of this research is to understand the motivations behind the use of Social Media networks in two phases of the trip: information seeking and information sharing among Italian and Portuguese Millennials. The study focuses on Millennials because they represent one the largest demographic age groups (1981-1999) and are also the first generation who grew up being constantly exposed to technology and its features. As a result, analysing how they engage online and how they use technology can provide useful insights of long-term trends in their online behaviour and contribute to future research in this field.

Furthermore, this study explores the online travel behaviour of Italian and Portuguese Millennials because it aims to fill the gap in the existing literature since there are not many studies that analyse and compare their travel behaviour. These two cultures are similar, but they have some differences (such as language, geographical location, mindset etc.) (Ferrini, 2017). Therefore, this research tries to explore whether these differences and similarities reflect on their same or different online travel behaviour.

Another purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between information seeking and the travel sharing phase and understand if information seeking would influence the willingness to share travel content online. Due to the lack of existing literature, this research contributes to understand the relationship between these two phases.

1.3 Research questions

This study addresses the following research questions and sub-questions:

What are the motivations to use Social Media networks for travel purposes among Italian and Portuguese Gen Y travellers in the two phases of the trip: information seeking before the trip and information sharing after the trip.

Sub question 1: *What are the motivations to use Social Media for travel planning (information seeking)?*

Sub question 2: *What are the motivations to use Social Media for travel experience sharing?*

Sub question 3: *Are the motivations for using Social Media for information seeking and information sharing different or similar between Italian and Portuguese Millennials?*

1.4 Thesis structure

The next chapter sheds light on the literature review, which explains the concepts of Web 2.0 and Social Media in tourism, the stages of the Holiday Decision-Making Process and the travel behaviour of Gen Yers. Chapter two also presents the hypotheses and the conceptual model, which are proposed based on several theories - *TAM (Technology Acceptance Model)*, *Source Credibility Theory*, and *Social Influence Theory* – and tested in the methodology. Chapter three presents the methodology, and showcases the techniques used to answer the research questions. The thesis follows a quantitative approach. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 300 respondents. Data collected was analysed through several techniques: descriptive statistics, principal component analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Chapter four is characterized by the presentation of the results from the data collection and in the fifth chapter the research is presented in a final conclusion along with its contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction to Gen Y

The term *generation* has been defined by Benckendorff et al. (2009) as a group of people who have been influenced during their formative years by common attitudes and behaviours that are distinctive to them and differ from other age groups. Currently the marketing field mainly addresses four generational age groups: Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1960), Generation X (born between 1961 and 1980), Generation Y, also known as Millennials, (born between 1981 and 1999), and Gen Z (2000-2012) (Bolton et al., 2013). However, as Duffett (2015) notes, the actual specific year range for generational boundaries is not set in stone neither among researchers nor the media.

Williams and Page (2011) describe Gen Y as possessing unique qualities that distinguish them from previous generations. They grew up during a period of rapid and substantial change, which included women having equal employment opportunities, dual-income households being the norm, and the establishment of diverse family structures becoming commonplace. There has also been an increased drive to acknowledge and incorporate ethnic and cultural diversity, which, in turn, has led to heightened social awareness. Additionally, Millennials are considered to be technologically savvy because computers were standard in both homes and schools during their upbringing (Williams & Page, 2011).

Furthermore, Benckendorff et al. (2009) explains that, unlike previous generations, Gen Y tends to find themselves staying longer with their parents because they need to obtain higher levels of education in order to find an adequate career. Subsequently, this generation is also described as being driven by the desire for success. It often prioritises working hard to achieve their goals over settling down immediately after marriage (Williams & Page, 2011). In addition, Generation Y tends to give a lot of importance to their families and close friends and tries to build strong and long-lasting relationships with them (Benckendorff et al. 2009).

Scholars such as Sheahan (2009) and Williams and Page (2011) often refer to Generation Y as the *Net Generation* or *Digital Natives* because of their familiarity with the use of technology, including the Internet and Social Media networks. Lester et al. (2005) also believe that Gen Y is more used to being exposed to mobile devices and use them to communicate with other users or access online content on different websites. According to the

Consumer Behaviour Report (2008), Gen Y tends to engage more in online behaviours such as social networking, text messaging, blogging and podcasting than previous generations.

Pinto et al. (2012) suggest that the vast majority of Millennials nowadays see computers and mobile devices as necessary and steady components of their daily lives that they cannot imagine living without. Indeed, for this generation, the Internet and Social Media networks have become essential parts of their daily routine; they feel the impulse to check what other people are doing or posting online and have become addicted to doing so. A study conducted by GlobalWebIndex (2018) reveals that Millennials tend to spend around two hours and 38 minutes on a daily basis on Social Media networks and have more than nine accounts on several platforms.

2.2 Web 2.0 and Social Media Networks

According to Baym (2010), websites were mostly stationary when the World Wide Web was first developed (1989 - 2005). They did not offer all the unique features that make them so valuable today, such as the possibility to create interactive and user-generated content that allows users to express their opinions and communicate with each other in a more easily and creative way.

This specific time range is defined as Web 1.0. Over the years, as the Internet was gradually evolving, the development and improvement of Web 1.0 led to the emergence of Web 2.0 or the so-called social media. Unlike the first phase, the latter is characterised by more interactivity, allowing users to have more control over their online activities (such as photo and video sharing, messaging, and commenting), as well as aiming to increase engagement (rates) among them (O'Reilly, 2007; Funk, 2009).

Regarding Social Media networks, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) define them as “*a group of Internet-based applications which build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and which allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC)*”. Thus, Social Media networks are software applications that can be accessed via web browsers or mobile devices that enable users to create, edit and share online content as well as chat online, post comments under other people's photos, and request to “follow” others (Cabiddu et al., 2014).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Perakakis et al. (2016), there is now a wide range of Social Media options available, which includes social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, sites where users can write reviews such as TripAdvisor and where they can upload and share images and videos such as Instagram, video-hosting sites such as

YouTube, sharing economy platforms like Airbnb, and social knowledge sharing sites like Wikipedia or Wikitravel, among many others.

All in all, the rise of social media has been characterised by a great deal of technological innovation, which created a virtual world that has transformed the way people interact and communicate with each other online (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

2.2.1 Social Media in Tourism

As noted by Fotis (2012), Social Media is now playing an important role in the tourism industry, in particular regarding the information search process and decision-making behaviours of potential tourists.

Social Media networks have enabled travellers to share every aspect of their travel experiences, from images or videos regarding a specific destination to more detailed travel recommendations (e.g., which restaurant to try, etc) (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Currently, in many cases, the information shared on Social Media by unknown users is seen as trustworthy and reliable and might even influence the travel decisions of potential tourists (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). In fact, in 2015 a survey on travel trends found that 73% of travellers considered TripAdvisor the most influential source for making travel plans, overcoming word-of-mouth recommendations (TripAdvisor, 2015).

2.3 Stages of the Holiday Decision-making Process

When planning a holiday, customers have to make many travel-related decisions, such as booking package holidays, purchasing flight tickets, choosing accommodations, arranging short excursions, selecting destination tours, or renting cars (Pizam & Mansfield, 2009). This approach was based on the standard model of how customers make purchasing decisions, which involves the process of selecting, purchasing, and evaluating a product or service (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). The study of consumer behaviour aims to understand why buyers behave in certain ways and make certain decisions. To do so, experts analyse a range of factors, such as demographics, social and cultural influences and psychological traits that may influence their buying behaviour (Vaughn, 2012).

In their study, Blackwell et al. (2006) outline the consumer decision model stages of the holiday decision-making process (HDMP). These stages were also used by Morrison (2010) and Cox et al. (2009) to illustrate the decision-making process in the hospitality and tourism industries, as shown in Figure 1 (Morrison, 2010).

Figure 1: Model of trip consumption decision-making process



2.3.1 Pre-trip

2.3.1.1 Need Recognition

In the first stage of the consumer decision-making process, called the *need recognition* phase, the consumer recognizes a problem or need (Morrison, 2010).

According to Morrison (2010), in the tourism industry, the desire to travel is something that can be triggered in every individual by either external or internal stimuli.

Internally, people might experience the need to escape from their monotonous daily routines to a particular destination they have in mind, or they might feel the need to seek a particular type of holiday experience (Morrison, 2010; Blackwell et al., 2006).

On the other hand, external factors, such as destination advertisements, vacation photos on social media, or friends' travel stories, can also play an important role in triggering an individual's desire to travel, leading them to develop specific preferences and demands that shape their decision-making process in choosing travel-related products and services (Morrison, 2010; Blackwell et al., 2006).

2.3.1.2 Information search

During the second phase of the consumer decision-making process, the *information search stage*, which occurs once the need has been recognized, customers are likely to start looking for and gathering information in order to find the best option that meets their needs within their budget (Morrison, 2010; Blackwell et al., 2006).

Morrison (2010) suggests that customers typically rely on three main categories of information sources: internal, marketer-dominated, and non-marketer-dominated. Internal sources refer to a customer's prior knowledge and experience, while marketer-dominated sources include promotional materials such as advertisements and salespeople. Non-marketer-dominated sources, on the other hand, are external to the company or brand, such as online reviews and personal recommendations from friends and family. Through this process, customers gather information from multiple sources to help them make informed decisions.

2.3.1.3 Pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives

The *pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives* stage refers to the steps customers take before actually making the decision to buy a product or service (Kotler et al., 2010).

Kotler et al. (2010) suggest that, in the tourism industry, it is difficult to evaluate hospitality products and services before consuming them. To address this, Lovelock and Writz (2011) propose a method for evaluating services before consumption based on three types of service attributes: search attributes, experience attributes and credence attributes.

Search attributes refer to characteristics that customers can evaluate before purchasing the service, such as price, location or amenities. Experience attributes, on the other hand, refer to characteristics that customers can only evaluate during or after experiencing the service, such as the quality of customer service. Finally, credence attributes refer to characteristics that customers may find challenging to evaluate, even after purchasing the service, such as the quality of hotel safety or the effectiveness of food hygiene practices.

Therefore, Lovelock and Writz (2011) argue that customers evaluate hospitality services through these three types of attributes in order to determine their level of satisfaction with the service before its consumption.

2.3.2 During the trip

2.3.2.1 Purchase decision

At this stage, once the *information search* and *evaluation process* phases are over, customers are ready to make a *purchase* decision. This is the most important phase of the whole process.

According to Evans et al. (2009), the decision of purchasing a product or service may occur as a result of the evaluation of alternatives or due to other factors such as effective marketing techniques.

However, it is important to take into account that customers even after expressing their intentions to make a purchase, may often change their minds by postponing their purchasing decisions due to several unexpected factors, such as changes in circumstances or unforeseen costs (Evans et al., 2009). Morrison (2010) suggests that these unpredictable factors can alter the situation and impact the customer's decision-making process.

2.3.2.2 Consumption

When the purchase decision comes to an end, the customers begin to use the products or services they decided to buy. This stage is known as the *consumption* phase (Morrison, 2010).

According to Pizam and Mansfield (2009), in this phase, customers often tend to compare their initial expectations regarding a service with the one they receive, often without even realising it. As a result, this comparison affects their level of satisfaction with the product, which is crucial in the next stage of the consumer decision-making process.

2.3.3 After the trip

2.3.3.1 Post-consumption evaluation

In the *post-consumption* phase, consumers evaluate whether or not the product meets their expectations (Kotler et al., 2010).

According to Kotler et al. (2010), customers tend to create their expectations about a product or service by relying on their past experiences and information they receive from various sources, including the ones given out by the sellers.

However, Taegoo et al. (2009) argue that when sellers overpromise the quality and duration of a product or service, this could fall behind customers' expectations, ultimately resulting in their dissatisfaction. This could lead to customers complaining, asking for a refund or an upgrade, or avoiding future purchases from the same provider. Dissatisfied customers may also spread negative word-of-mouth (WOM) or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) about their purchase experiences.

2.4 Travel Behaviour of Gen Yers and the Use of Social Media

Xiang et al., (2015) suggest that the use of the Internet and Social Media for travel-making decisions varies across different generations, such as Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y.

Although all age groups use the Internet to plan their travels, the youngest generation (Gen Y) primarily relies on Social Media platforms for this purpose (Xiang et al., 2015).

According to Delińska (2018), social media is used by Gen Y throughout the entire process of holiday decision-making (before, during, and after the trip), which can be divided into two main phases: travel planning (information seeking) and travel experience sharing.

2.4.1 Travel Planning (Information seeking)

Numerous studies have shown that Social Media networks are mainly used by travellers during the travel planning phase (Cox et al., 2009; Xiang et al., 2015; Öz, 2015).

At this stage, Gen Y consumers tend to do extensive online research in order to make sure they gather as much information as possible about every aspect of their trip (such as accommodations, leisure activities and tourist attractions) to avoid any potential risk and plan the perfect holiday (Cox et al., 2009; Fotis., 2012; Öz, 2015).

While planning their trip, Millennials also tend to read online reviews written by other travellers, where they can find tips and recommendations related to their travel experiences (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008)

Online reviews play an important role in the travel planning phase because they provide potential travellers with a better understanding of what they can expect from the selected destination (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

The advent of Web 2.0 and Social Media has facilitated the search for information, making it one of the main reasons consumers use Social Media networks for travel purposes (Parra-López et al., 2012).

2.4.1.1 The Role of user-generated content (UGC) in travel planning

According to Drews and Schemer (2010), Social Media enables users not only to gather different types of information but also to create and share their own content with others. This type of content-sharing is called user-generated content (UGC), and it can appear in many forms, such as images, reviews, recommendations or blogs. Over the years, its rise on Social Media platforms has changed the way consumers make purchase decisions online (Drews & Schemer, 2010).

In the tourism industry, due to the advent of UGC, travellers are becoming more independent in planning their trips and do not need the help of a travel agent or any intermediaries anymore (Werthner & Ricci, 2004).

According to Simms (2012), many tourists are likely to rely on user-generated content when planning trips to destinations they do not know and do not have much information about or when they have to travel internationally.

This type of online content is seen as similar to recommendations made by friends, family and those with similar interests (Bray et al., 2006; Yoo et al., 2009), making it an essential source of information for potential tourists (Chung & Buhalis, 2008). UGC is also considered to be more trustworthy and reliable than information provided by destination or tourism service providers and is therefore seen as a substitute for word-of-mouth recommendations (Fotis, 2012; Yoo et al., 2009).

2.4.1.2 Example of UGC: online reviews

According to Park et al. (2007), online reviews now play an important role for customers as they provide them with information regarding products and services as well as recommendations made by previous consumers. They have the potential to trigger the consumption of goods and services, such as hotels, restaurants and destinations since it is challenging for consumers to evaluate the quality of these before experiencing them. This is why it has become commonplace for modern customers to trust reviews and base their choices on what others suggest to do or to buy online (Yoo et al., 2009; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

As a matter of fact, a study conducted by Vlachos (2012) reveals that almost 87% of travellers worldwide plan their trips by using the Internet. Among those, 43% habitually read what others suggest or recommend online and write their own reviews after experiencing a service or product (Vlachos, 2012).

As a result, when they have to make travel-related decisions, consumers often rely on online reviews, which act as a form of electronic word-of-mouth. They gather as much information as they can in order to reduce their level of uncertainty regarding travel decision-making (Ye et al., 2011).

Due to the importance and usefulness of online reviews, there has been a development of several online communities (such as Virtualtour, Tripadvisor, Yelp, and Citysearch), which allow consumers to interact with each other and share their experiences and recommendations. As a result, they are now seen as one of the most important sources of information in the tourism and hospitality industries (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009).

2.4.1.3 The Role of Influencers in travel planning

Due to the widespread rise of online networking sites, there has been a significant increase in the number of famous online users who have gained great visibility and credibility among other consumers, the so-called Social Media Influencers (SMIs) (Cox et al., 2009).

Bakker (2018) defines them as people whose knowledge and expertise can influence the choices and decisions of their followers. Thus, they are considered specialists in their specific areas of interest (such as travel, food, or fashion) who tend to share (online) their knowledge and expertise regarding a product or service with their followers (Freberg et al., 2011; Jalilvand, 2016).

As noted by Bakker (2018) and De Veirman et al. (2017), there are different ways to define Social Media influencers, including *content creators*, *bloggers*, *Instagrammers* and *YouTubers*.

Over the past few years, influencers have had a global impact on consumer behaviours because, through social media, they have been able to build a strong relationship with their followers as well as gain their trust by sharing their personal stories and opening up to them (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Xiao et al., 2018).

In the tourism industry, Social Media influencers or bloggers are often called *travel influencers* or *travel bloggers* because they influence people's travel decisions and are able to influence their actions and choices (Kaur, 2018). Ay et al. (2019), Book and Tanford (2019) and Gretzel (2018) note that Social Media influencers play an important role in guiding their followers on various aspects of travel, including helping them discover unknown destinations and new cultures as well as assisting them in learning more about travel formalities such as passports, visas, transportation services and foreign exchange transactions. They also offer recommendations or advice on topics that are difficult to find in travel books or websites.

Furthermore, travel bloggers not only provide information about products from the consumer's point of view but also get to experience them first-hand (Ong & Ito, 2019), which makes them a reliable and effective source of information (Ay et al., 2019; Book & Tanford, 2019; Gretzel 2018). This is one of the reasons why, according to Litvin et al. (2008), many people nowadays follow travel influencers and rely on their reviews and experiences shared on Social Media when making travel decisions.

In addition, they also create online communities where travellers can connect with each other, share their experiences and provide recommendations or advice. Their role is to act as moderators or facilitators of these communities, encouraging engagement and interaction between members (Wang, 2012).

2.4.2 Motivational Factors to use Social Media networks in the travel planning phase (for information seeking)

In order to better understand how and why online consumers use Social Media networks when planning their trips, *the Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM) (Davis, 1989) was taken into consideration and used for the purpose of this research.

The above-mentioned theory identifies the main factors that play a pivotal role in the consumers' acceptance and use of various technologies, including how often and to what extent they use them (Ajzen, 2012).

The two dimensions defined by this theory and further used for the purpose of this research are the following: *usefulness* and *ease of use*.

2.4.2.1 Usefulness

This dimension was first conceptualised and defined by Davis (1989) as “*the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance*” (p.320). He also gave a definition of the word “useful”, which is “capable of being used advantageously” (Davis, 1989, p.320).

It is generally believed among marketers that customers decide to use a specific technology-based application only if they consider it useful in order for them to achieve a certain result (Xiao & Smith, 2007).

In the tourism industry, Social Media platforms are considered useful in terms of information seeking and travel planning because they allow users to access a wide range of information sources and help them plan their trips more efficiently. During the travel planning phase, travellers want to avoid any potential risk, which is the reason why they try to collect as much information as possible by consulting several online sources on Social Media networks (Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

Furthermore, the majority of people decide to use these web-based platforms in their travel planning because they see more benefits compared to traditional sources of travel information (travel guides, tour operators etc), such as access to a bigger number of information sources, real-time updates, and the possibility to get access to other travellers' recommendations (such as online reviews) (Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is designed:

H1: Usefulness positively influences the intention to use Social Media networks for information seeking.

2.4.2.2 Ease of Use

According to Davis (1989), ease of use is described as “*the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort*” (1989, p. 320).

In this study, ease of use refers to the fact that using Social Media networks for travel planning is perceived by users as effortless and easy. It is considered easy for people to find travel information on Social Media since they can rely on a wide range of sources (Ayeh, 2015).

Consumers also use Social Media networks to plan their trips because they are seen as easy to use, accessible, saving time (fast), user-friendly, and convenient. Furthermore, people also perceive that is easy to become skilled at using social media networks (Ayeh, 2015).

Overall, users are more willing to use sources that are straightforward and easy to navigate. If they believe a site is designed in a complicated way, they will avoid using it (Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Ease of use positively influences the intention to use Social Media networks for information seeking.

According to Fodness and Murray (1998), there is another aspect that must be taken into consideration in order to better understand the online consumer behaviour while planning a trip. The selection and the willingness to use specific online travel information sources among users is not a random process but is driven by several motivational factors. In relation to this, *the Source Credibility Theory* is an important tool that helps identify the motivations behind the use of a certain type of travel information source over others.

This theory was proposed by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1953) and analyses the level of credibility and trustworthiness of different media channels and content producers (such as travel influencers), and it contributes to understand how consumers perceive and evaluate different information sources related to travel destinations, accommodations, leisure activities etc. (Johnson & Kaye, 2009).

Several studies related to the *Source Credibility Theory* have focused on many different dimensions. For the purpose of this research, two dimensions were taken into consideration, which are the following: *trustworthiness and perceived expertise*.

2.4.2.3 Trustworthiness

The perceived credibility and trustworthiness of travel information sources found on Social Media is one of the important aspects that travellers must consider when planning their trips. The concept of *trustworthiness* plays a pivotal role in consumers' decision-making (Li et al., 2020). Trustworthiness is the result of several past actions and observations that lead an individual to trust others, institutions or organizations (Caldwell & Jeffries, 2001).

According to Filieri (2016) and Magno and Cassia (2018), the trustworthiness of online information sources (such as online reviews) has a positive influence on the perceived credibility of travellers and their travel intentions. If an online source is perceived as honest and a certain level of credibility characterises the information it provides, it is considered by the users as trustworthy (Mattson, 2005).

Nevertheless, sometimes it can be challenging to evaluate the reliability of travel information found on Social Media, especially if they are online reviews written by anonymous sources (Dellarocas, 2003; Park, et al., 2007; Litvin, et al., 2008; Ayeh, 2015). While reading online reviews, users are more willing to trust the ones that have personal information (such as name, travel interests and live location of the reviewer) (Xie et al., 2011). Furthermore, it is believed that consumers are more eager to trust and follow travel recommendations of a reviewer with whom they share common interests (Burger et al., 2004).

It is also important to take into account the role of travel influencers as information sources in consumer decision-making: the trustworthiness of influencers can be determined by their honesty, sincerity and accuracy of the information they provide (Han & Chen, 2021).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is driven:

H3: Trustworthiness positively influences the intention to use Social Media networks for information seeking.

2.4.2.4 Perceived Expertise

Perceived expertise indicates a certain level of knowledge and degree of experience that is required in order for the information source or individual to be considered reliable (Mattson, 2005). For example, travel influencers are considered to be trustworthy by their followers if they are perceived as experts in their area of interest (Colliander & Marder, 2018).

In order to be considered knowledgeable, travel influencers have to demonstrate to be adequately informed and be able to communicate that information clearly to their followers in order for them to easily understand it (Gass & Seiter, 2011).

Several studies have demonstrated that the level of expertise of influencers plays an important role in consumers' decision-making (Oliveira et al., 2020; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Chung & Koo, 2015; Asyraff et al., 2022; Ayeh, 2015). As a matter of fact, according to Wang et al., (2017), travel influencers who are seen as experts in their area of interest are usually considered to be very persuasive and are able to influence consumers' decisions, opinions, attitudes and behaviours.

Most people are willing to use Social Media to follow travel influencers' advice because they believe their expertise and their knowledge will help them plan trips more efficiently (Wang et al., 2017).

Based on the previous literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

H4: Perceived expertise positively influences the intention to use Social Media networks for information seeking.

2.4.3 Actual travel experience sharing

Tung and Ritchie (2011) have noted that many tourists share both their travel experiences as well as recommendations on Social Media. Travel experience refers to how an individual personally evaluates and engages with the events related to their trip, including planning and preparation, the destination itself, and the recollection of the trip afterwards.

According to Baym (2010), each travel experience is subject to and influenced by each traveller's perceptions and reactions to specific places and products (such as destinations, tourist attractions and accommodations). When people post their travel experiences online, they not only tend to share important information regarding their trips, such as prices or weather conditions, but they also try to communicate their feelings and emotions using photos, emoticons and other language cues (Baym, 2010).

2.4.4 Motivational Factors to Use Social Media Networks for travel experience sharing

In order to better understand why consumers share their travel experiences online, the *Social Influence Theory* was used to explain this important aspect of online consumer behaviour.

This theory was first proposed by Kelman (1958) and states that consumers' decisions can be easily affected by other people (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Crano, 2000; Tanford & Penrod, 1984), which is why consumers rely on what others say or share their experiences online after their trips.

The determinants that encourage travellers to share their travel experiences on Social Media are the following: *perceived enjoyment, altruistic motivations and personal fulfilment and self-actualisation*.

2.4.4.5 Perceived Enjoyment

Among most of the researchers, the concept of *enjoyment* has been usually defined as a pleasant response to media use (Tamborini et al., 2010; Raney, 2003). However, others have also defined it as an emotion (Vorderer et al., 2004), an attitude (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004) or the satisfaction of hedonic needs (Tamborini et al., 2010).

Other researchers, such as Davis et al. (1992), define the concept of enjoyment as the extent to which someone who uses technology enjoys what he is doing. Thus, when consumers use technology-based applications and mobile devices (such as computers, smartphones, and tablets) and perceive the technology as enjoyable, they are more likely to use it in the long run (Davis et al., 1992).

Several studies have shown that enjoyment plays an important role in the usage intention of Social Media for travel purposes (Van der Heijden, 2004).

According to Sigala et al. (2012), sharing travel-related information on Social Media during and after trips is considered to be enjoyable and engaging and enables users to have fun by interacting and sharing content with each other.

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is designed:

H5: Perceived enjoyment positively influences the intention to use Social Media networks for travel experience sharing.

2.4.4.6 Altruistic Motivations

Social Media networks allow travellers to share online their travel experiences in order to help others organizing their trips (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

Some people want to provide their help by sharing their knowledge regarding the destination they visited and preventing people from using low-quality tourism products and services (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

Even though travellers who share travel information on Social Media do not know if someone ever follows their advice, they are still determined to make their contribution as helpful as possible (Chen, 2006). Since they have also benefited from other people's advice in the past, they feel the need to repay the favour (Cothrel & Williams, 1999).

This behaviour of helping others is constantly increasing among travellers, and according to Yoo et al. (2007) is one of the reasons that encourage people to write online reviews after their trips.

Furthermore, according to He and Wie (2009), another reason why people decide to share travel information online is because they enjoy helping others.

Moreover, another factor that motivates people to share travel information is the desire to keep in contact and strengthen their relationships with family and friends online (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is driven:

H6: Altruistic motivations positively influence the intention to use Social Media networks for travel experience sharing.

2.4.4.7 Personal Fulfilment and Self-Actualisation

Several studies on online consumer behaviours have demonstrated that consumers decide to share their travel experiences online because encouraged by self-centred motivations. By sharing their experiences online, users want to gain the respect and recognition of others and increase their self-esteem (Baym, 2010; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

Furthermore, people want to create a good impression of themselves, and they want to be recognized for their travel experiences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Their desire is also to increase the number of online followers and to build a reputation within their community (Kuznetsov, 2006; Rafaeli et al., 2005).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

H7: Personal fulfilment and self-actualisation positively influence the intention to use Social Media networks for travel experience sharing.

2.4.4.8 Information seeking and willingness to share

Many people nowadays use Social Media both for information seeking and information sharing. Individuals who acted as seeker (so were looking for travel information online) and found useful information online are more willing to share their experience to help others by offering their advice, but also to tell their stories, to connect to other people. People want to give their contribution and want future travellers to be able to find the right information that will help them organize their trip (Savolainen, 2019).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is developed:

H8: Travel information seeking on Social Media positively influences the intention to use Social Media networks for travel experience sharing

2.4.4.9 Italian and Portuguese Millennials

In their study, Amaro and Duarte (2017) emphasize the impact of culture on travel behaviour and decision-making. They believe that the cultural values and norms of a society can significantly shape the preferences, motivations and expectations of travellers. According to them, understanding how culture influence the choice of information seeking, content creation and engagement post-travel is a crucial step to understand the usage of social media among different travellers.

The cultural distance between Italian and Portuguese people is not very high, but there are some differences (such as language, geographical location, mindset) that can reflect on their travel behaviour in different ways (Ferrini, 2017). Italian and Portuguese tourists may have different mindsets when it comes to trip planning and content sharing after the trip.

Language is a significant factor that can influence the way people communicate and search for information online (Rabiah, 2012). Consequently, it can be reflected in their travel choices and preferences. Portuguese native-speakers may prefer to engage with online content in Portuguese, while Italians, may choose to use content written in Italian, resulting in two different information-seeking and content creation behaviours (Ferrini, 2017).

Culture can also impact the way tourists plan their trips (Amaro & Duarte, 2017). Italian tourists might prioritize historical landmarks and art museums, due to their country's rich cultural heritage. However, due to their country's history of maritime exploration, Portuguese tourists might look for destinations with maritime attractions or international environments. These preferences could also influence the different kinds of travel content they follow online (Ferrini, 2017).

Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is designed:

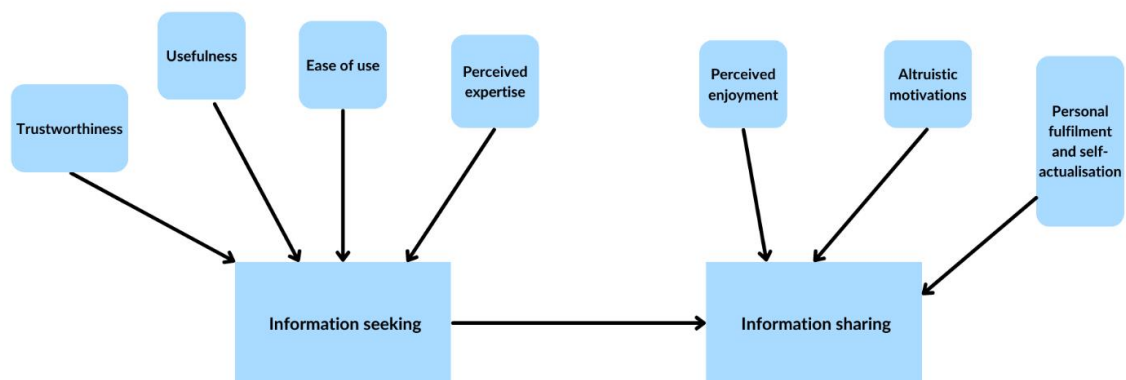
H9: The motivations to use Social Media networks for information seeking and information sharing among Italian and Portuguese Millennials are different and influenced by cultural identity.

2.5 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model proposes two dependent variables (Information seeking and Information sharing). Information seeking is influenced by four independent variables, which are the following: trustworthiness, usefulness, ease of use, perceived expertise. On the other hand, information sharing is influenced by three independent variables: perceived enjoyment, altruistic motivations, and personal fulfilment and self-actualisation. The dependent variable Information seeking also influences the other dependent variable, information sharing.

There is also a moderator variable, the tourist nationality, which assumes the value 1 for Italian respondents and the value 0 for the Portuguese respondents.

Figure 2: Conceptual Model



CHAPTER III

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

For the aim of this study, quantitative research has been conducted by distributing questionnaires to Italian and Portuguese people who respected the following conditions:

- having travelled at least once in the last 6-12 months before this survey;
- using social media networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TripAdvisor, etc);
- holding the Italian or Portuguese nationality;
- being born between 1981 and 1999 (Gen Y).

If the participants did not respect the criteria for eligibility, they were not allowed to complete the questionnaire.

The survey was distributed online on several social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as on messaging applications, such as WhatsApp. The survey was also distributed face-to-face at the ISCTE University in Lisbon and was done by asking people to scan a QR code. The data collection started on the 15th of May and ended on the 15th of June.

At the end of the survey, 500 answers were collected and used for the research.

3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire had 30 questions in total and was organised into several sections: (1) *Usage of social media* (Q6-Q9); (2) *Gen Y travel decision-making process* (Q10-Q26) and (3) *demographic information* (Q27-Q30).

The second section (*Gen Y travel decision-making process*) was subsequently divided into *travel planning* and its constructs (*trustworthiness, usefulness, ease of use, perceived expertise*) (Q13-Q21) and *actual experience sharing* and its constructs (*perceived enjoyment, altruistic motivations and personal fulfilment and self-actualisation*) (Q22-Q26).

Some of the questions had multiple choice answers; others presented a Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The whole questionnaire was quite long, and it required around 10 minutes to answer.

A pre-test was conducted on a small sample of 22 people before starting to collect the final sample in order to see if there were any problems related to the questionnaire.

The Cronbach's Alpha, also defined as internal consistency analysis, was performed for each of the items to measure their degree of correlation as a group.

The reliability scores for each item were between 0.751 and 0.962 (*Table 1*).

Table 1: Results of Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency of pre-test

Construct	Cronbach's alpha
Information seeking	0.751
Trustworthiness	0.849
Usefulness	0.947
Ease of use	0.962
Perceived expertise	0.753
Information sharing	0.905
Perceived enjoyment	0.943
Altruistic motivations	0.914
Personal fulfilment and self-actualisation	0.942

3.3 Variable Measurement

The constructs items were taken from other related studies and adapted for the purpose of this research.

All the items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponds to strongly disagree and 7 to strongly agree. Throughout the survey, respondents were asked to determine their level of agreement with the statements.

Table 2: Items measurement

Construct	Items	Reference
Information seeking	Before travelling, I read hotel reviews from other travellers; I look at activity/attractions' reviews of other travellers; I read other travellers' experiences and tips; I get recommendations from friends and family; I read user-generated sources (Tripadvisor etc.) for the destination I am visiting; I do research on 3rd party travel websites such as Expedia.com or Tripadvisor.com.	Amaro & Duarte (2017); Cahyanto et al., (2016);
Trustworthiness	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media	Liljander et al.

s	networks is reliable; In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media can be trusted at all times; In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media has high integrity (it's trustworthy and of good quality).	(2015); Faisal & Dhusia (2022) ; Morgan & Hunt (1994); Nusair et al. (2013).
Usefulness	Social Media networks help me plan trips more efficiently; Social media networks make my travel planning easier Social Media networks make it easier for me to reach travel-related decisions; I can benefit from Social Media networks when planning my trips.	Ayeh, (2015) ; Bauer et al., (2005); Nusair et al., (2013)
Ease of use	It's easy to learn how to use Social Media networks for travel-related purposes; It's easy to use Social Media networks to find the travel information needed; It's easy to use Social Media networks to plan my trips; It's easy for me to become skilful at using Social Media for travel-related purposes; Overall, I find it easy to use Social Media when planning a trip	Ayeh, (2015)
Perceived expertise	Travel bloggers/influencers are knowledgeable in travel; Travel bloggers/influencers are qualified to offer travel advice; Travel bloggers/influencers are expert in tourism services and products.	Ayeh, (2015) Asyraff et al. (2022)
Information sharing (eWOM)	During and after my trips, I write hotel reviews on Social Media websites; During and after my trips, I post photos on Social Media websites; During and after my trips, I write reviews of activities/tourist attractions' on Social Media websites; During and after my trips, I upload videos on Social Media websites; During and after my trips, I write reviews of the place/or monuments I visited on Social Media websites; During and after my trips, I share my travel experiences with my Social Media networks; During and after my trips, I share pictures, comments, and reviews with my Social Media networks; I always share my opinion at the request of my friends on Social Media networks	Amaro & Duarte (2017) Chow & Chan (2008)
Perceived enjoyment	I have fun sharing my travel experiences through Social Media; Travel information sharing through Social Media is a pleasant experience; Travel information sharing through Social Media is enjoyable; Travel information sharing through Social Media is interesting	Kang & Schuett (2013); Oliveira et al. (2020); Chung & Koo (2015)

Altruistic motivations	I want to help others by sharing my own positive experience on Social Media; I want to prevent people from having bad experiences or falling into tourist traps; I want to contribute to websites that were useful for me during my travel planning; I want to maintain social connections and friendships; I want to share my travel experiences with others	Munar & Jacobsen (2014); Oliveira et al. (2020); Yoo & Gretzel (2008)
Personal fulfilment and self-actualization	It is important to me that people know I travel; I feel good when I can tell others about my travel successes; I like to share my travel experiences to create a good impression about myself; I like to share my travel experiences to receive positive feedback from others; I like to share my travel experiences to tell others about myself; I like to be (more) recognized because of my travel experiences; I like to transmit what I want people think of me	Munar & Jacobsen (2014); Oliveira et al. (2020) ; Yoo & Gretzel (2008) ; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Pop et al., (2021)

3.4 Data Analysis Methods: Statistical Analysis

The data was analysed with the use of IBM SPSS 28 Software in three steps. The techniques used for the purpose of the research were the following: descriptive statistics, principal component analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

The first step was to analyse the sociodemographic information of the respondents in order to have a better overview of the data collected and to better understand the characteristics of the sample. The tools obtained were frequency tables and descriptive measures.

The mean and standard deviation of all the constructs (items) were also measured.

The second step was to conduct a principal component analysis (PCA) for each of the constructs separately in order to reduce the number of variables.

The third step was to conduct Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) to understand the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables. The aim is to know which independent variables better explain the dependent variable. Therefore, this technique was used in this thesis to explain the relationships between the variables in the conceptual model.

In order to test the conceptual model and hypotheses, two models were estimated, one for each dependent variable (information seeking and information sharing). Table 3 presents the model equation for information seeking and information sharing. B_i ($i=1,2,3,4$) is the

regression coefficient that allows us to know if a specific independent variable influence (or not) the dependent variable.

The variable Italian will be a dummy variable to allow to differentiate the behaviour of Italians (1) from Portuguese (0) Millennials.

Table 3: Model equations for each dependent variable

Model 1: Information seeking	Information seeking = $B_0 + B_1 \times \text{trustworthiness} + B_2 \times \text{perceived expertise} + B_3 \times \text{usefulness} + B_4 \times \text{ease of use} + B_5 \times \text{Italian} + \epsilon_1$
Model 2: Information sharing	Information sharing = $B_0 + B_1 \times \text{perceived enjoyment} + B_2 \times \text{altruistic motivations} + B_3 \times \text{personal fulfilment and self-actualisation} + B_4 \times \text{information seeking} + B_5 \times \text{Italian} + \epsilon_2$

CHAPTER IV

4. Results

4.1 Sample Characterization

The total number of answers collected was 500, of which only 300 respondents completed the whole survey. Among these, 167 are Italian, and 133 are Portuguese.

The Italian population is made up of 27.5% male respondents, and 71.3% female respondents. On the other hand, the Portuguese sample is composed of 36.1% male respondents and 62.4% female respondents. Additionally, 1.3% of the total sample, which includes 1.2% of Italians and 1.5% of Portuguese, preferred not to reveal their gender.

The majority of the respondents are between 24 and 33 years old, with a higher concentration in the “24-28” range (69.4% of Italians and 57.8% Portuguese).

In terms of education, the majority of the Italian and Portuguese population have a Bachelor’s Degree (respectively 37.7% of Italians and 36.8% of Portuguese) or a Master’s Degree (46.7% of Italians and 53.4% of Portuguese).

In terms of employment, 62% of the total respondents are employed full-time (56.9% of Italians, and 64.8% of Portuguese) and 18% of the total population are students (22.2% of Italians, and 12.8% of Portuguese).

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (30.3%) earn around 1001-1500€ monthly (25.7% of Italians, and 36.1% of Portuguese).

Table 4: Socio-demographic information

	Total N	Total %	Italian N	Italian %	Portuguese N	Portuguese %
Gender						
Male	94	31.3%	46	27.5%	48	36.1%
Female	202	67.3%	119	71.3%	83	62.4%
Prefer not to say	4	1.3%	2	1.2%	2	1.5%
Total	300	100.0 %	167	100.0%	133	100.0%
Age						
24-28	193	64.3%	116	69.4%	77	57.8%

29-33	52	17.3%	28	16.7%	24	18%
34-38	28	9.3%	14	8.4%	14	10.5%
39-42	27	9%	9	5.3%	18	13.5%
Total	300	100.0 %	167	100.0%	133	100.0%
Level of education						
Primary school						
Secondary school	1	.3%			1	.8%
High school	26	8.7%	23	13.8%	3	2.3%
Bachelor's Degree	112	37.3%	63	37.7%	49	36.8%
Master's Degree	149	49.7%	78	46.7%	71	53.4%
Doctorate Degree	4	1.3%			4	3.0%
Other	8	2.7%	3	1.8%	5	3.8%
Total	300	100.0 %	167	100.0%	133	100.0%
Employment						
Employed full-time	186	62.0%	95	56.9%	91	68.4%
Employed part-time	22	7.3%	17	10.2%	5	3.8%
Self-employed	24	8.0%	10	6.0%	14	10.5%
Unemployed	7	2.3%	3	1.8%	4	3.0%
Not looking for a job	3	1.0%	1	.6%	2	1.5%
Student	54	18.0%	37	22.2%	17	12.8%
Prefer not to answer	4	1.3%	4	2.4%	0	0%

Total	300	100.0 %	167	100.0%	133	100.0%
Monthly level of income						
No income	42	14.0%	28	16.8%	14	10.5%
Less than 500€	22	7.3%	15	9.0%	7	5.3%
500€-1000€	48	16.0%	20	12.0%	28	21.1%
1001€-1500€	91	30.3%	43	25.7%	48	36.1%
1501€-2000€	36	12.0%	25	15.0%	11	8.3%
2001€-2500€	21	7.0%	12	7.2%	9	6.8%
2500€+	19	6.3%	10	6.0%	9	6.8%
Prefer not to say	21	7.0%	14	8.4%	7	5.3%
Total	300	100.0 %	167	100.0%	133	100.0%

4.2 Global overview of constructs

In information seeking all the values are below the middle point of the Likert scale, so both Italian and Portuguese respondents do not agree in average with these statements.

Regarding trustworthiness, most of the values coincide with the middle point of the Likert scale. This means that both Italian and Portuguese Millennials partially agree that Social Media are reliable and trustworthy.

In terms of usefulness and ease of use all the values are above the middle point of the Likert scale, so both Italians and Portuguese agree with these statements and believe that using Social Media to plan their trips is useful and effortless.

Regarding perceived expertise, most of the values coincide with the middle point of the Likert scale. Thus, Italian and Portuguese respondents partially agree with these statements.

In terms of information sharing, most of the values are below the middle point of the Likert scale. This means that both Italian and Portuguese Millennials do not agree in average with these statements.

In perceived enjoyment, all the values are above the middle point of the Likert scale. Thus, Italian and Portuguese respondents consider using Social Media for travel experience sharing as a pleasant experience.

Regarding altruistic motivations, some of the values coincide with the middle point of the Likert scale and the others are above it. So, Italians and Portuguese partially agree with these statements.

In personal fulfilment and self-actualisation, most of the values are below the middle point of the Likert scale. Thus, Italian and Portuguese Millennials do not agree with these statements.

Table 5: Global overview of constructs

Construct	Items	Mean (total)	Std. Deviation (total)	Mean (IT)	Std. Deviation (IT)	Mean (PT)	Std. Deviation (PT)
Information seeking							
	Before travelling, I read hotel reviews from other travellers	3.86	1.044	3.88	1.101	3.83	0.964
	I look at activity/attractions reviews of other travellers	3.56	0.980	3.56	1.016	3.56	0.933
	I read other travellers' experiences and tips	3.68	0.962	3.67	1.010	3.56	0.924
	I get recommendations from friends and family	3.53	0.982	3.51	1.024	3.56	0.924
	I read user-generated sources (Tripadvisor etc.) for the destination I am visiting	3.34	1.063	3.26	1.094	3.45	1.011
	I do research on 3rd party travel websites such as Expedia.com or Tripadvisor.com	3.05	1.103	3.05	1.120	3.03	1.084
Trustworthiness							
	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media networks is reliable	4.98	1.045	5.04	0.978	4.91	1.130
	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media can be trusted at all times	3.62	1.526	3.74	1.439	3.45	1.629

	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media has high integrity (it's trustworthy and of good quality)	4.35	1.178	4.41	1.056	4.26	1.325
Usefulness							
	Social Media networks help me plan trips more efficiently	5.10	1.419	5.07	1.390	5.14	1.463
	Social Media networks make my travel planning easier	5.11	1.441	5.10	1.280	5.12	1.641
	Social Media networks make it easier for me to reach travel-related decisions	5.16	1.387	5.10	1.266	5.24	1.539
	I can benefit from Social Media networks when planning my trips	5.52	1.341	5.44	1.269	5.64	1.431
Ease of Use							
	Overall, I find it easy to use Social Media when planning a trip	5.43	1.118	5.48	1.036	5.37	1.223
	It's easy to use Social Media networks to find the travel information needed	5.23	1.255	5.18	1.264	5.28	1.245
	It's easy to use Social Media networks to plan my trips	5.13	1.224	5.16	1.177	5.09	1.290
	It's easy for me to become skilful at using Social Media for travel-related purposes	5.32	1.109	5.35	1.090	5.28	1.137
	It's easy to learn how to use Social Media networks for travel-related purposes	5.25	1.191	5.30	1.152	5.18	1.243
Perceived expertise							
	Travel bloggers/influencers are qualified to offer travel advice	4.18	1.315	4.17	1.256	4.18	1.396
	Travel bloggers/influencers are knowledgeable in travel	4.55	1.308	4.56	1.224	4.53	1.420

	Travel bloggers/influencers are expert in tourism services and products	3.67	1.411	3.74	1.365	3.57	1.471
Information sharing							
	During and after my trips, I share my travel experiences with my Social Media networks	3.60	2.168	3.69	2.263	3.49	2.039
	During and after my trips, I share pictures, comments, and reviews with my Social Media networks	4.04	2.141	4.15	2.161	3.88	2.114
	During and after my trips, I post photos on Social Media websites	4.80	2.233	4.88	2.230	4.69	2.244
	During and after my trips, I upload videos on Social Media websites	3.27	2.181	3.32	2.195	3.19	2.170
	I always share my opinion at the request of my friends on Social Media networks	3.96	2.354	3.90	2.380	4.03	2.328
	During and after my trips, I write reviews of activities/tourist attractions' on Social Media websites	2.39	1.578	2.43	1.550	2.33	1.620
	During and after my trips, I write reviews of the place/or monuments I visited on Social Media websites	2.35	1.602	2.31	1.521	2.40	1.711
	During and after my trips, I write hotel reviews on Social Media websites	2.96	1.949	3.03	1.993	2.88	1.896
Perceived enjoyment							
	Travel information sharing through Social Media is a pleasant experience	5.05	1.256	5.06	1.268	5.03	1.245
	Travel information sharing through Social Media is	5.09	1.259	5.11	1.283	5.06	1.232

	enjoyable						
	Travel information sharing through Social Media is interesting	5.24	1.229	5.18	1.291	5.32	1.142
	I have fun sharing my travel experiences through Social Media	5.10	1.387	5.07	1.359	5.14	1.429
Altruistic motivations							
	I want to prevent people from having bad experiences or falling into tourist traps	5.07	1.492	4.97	1.504	5.21	1.472
	I want to contribute to websites that were useful for me during my travel planning	4.75	1.386	4.64	1.457	4.91	1.275
	I want to help others by sharing my own positive experience on Social Media	4.60	1.523	4.59	1.534	4.61	1.518
	I want to share my travel experiences with others	5.26	1.372	5.24	1.408	5.28	1.329
	I want to maintain social connections and friendships	5.27	1.342	5.22	1.312	5.35	1.385
Personal fulfilment and self-actualisation							
	I like to share my travel experiences to create a good impression about myself	3.71	1.849	3.71	1.870	3.72	1.830
	I like to share my travel experiences to receive positive feedback from others	3.71	1.863	3.58	1.829	3.89	1.903
	It is important to me that people know I travel	3.72	1.777	3.76	1.729	3.66	1.848

	I like to share my travel experiences to tell others about myself	4.07	1.783	4.22	1.699	3.87	1.880
	I like to be (more) recognized because of my travel experiences	3.31	1.735	3.38	1.700	3.21	1.785
	I feel good when I can tell others about my travel successes	4.43	1.787	4.32	1.796	4.58	1.773
	I like to transmit what I want people think of me	3.54	1.730	3.62	1.704	3.43	1.767

4.3 Principal Components analysis

4.3.1 PCA of Information seeking

The PCA of the variable “information seeking” lead to a two dimensions solution which explains 71.5% of the total variance. The first principal component was called “information seeking in generic platforms” (three items), and the second one was named “information seeking in specific platforms” (two items).

One item “I get recommendations from family and friends” was not included because its communality was lower than 0.4, and therefore did not meet the criteria.

The KMO is 0.706 and the Bartlett’s test significance is <0.001.

Table 6: PCA of Information seeking

Principal Component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Information seeking in generic platforms	Before travelling, I read hotel reviews from other travellers	0.546	51.5%	0.715
	I look at activity/attractions reviews of other travellers	0.846		
	I read other travellers’ experiences and tips	0.887		
Information seeking in specific platforms	I read user-generated sources (Tripadvisor etc.) for the destination I am visiting	0.843	20%	0.751

	I do research on 3 rd party travel websites such as Expedia.com or Tripadvisor.com	0.886		
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4.3.2 PCA of Trustworthiness

A group of three variables was used to measure the level of trustworthiness of using social media networks by consumers when planning their trips. The PCA identified one component which explains 68.1% of the total variance. The variable communality is higher than 0.4 in all the three variables, with the lowest being 0.659 for the variable “In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media networks is reliable”.

The KMO is 0.691 and the Bartlett’s test significance is <0.001.

Table 7: PCA of Trustworthiness

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Trustworthiness	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media networks is reliable	0.812	68.1%	0.751
	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media can be trusted at all times	0.814		
	In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media has high integrity (it's trustworthy and of good quality)	0.851		

4.3.3 PCA of Usefulness

PCA estimated a solution with one component for the four items of the construct “usefulness” which explains 76.6% of the total variance. This component is good because all variables have a communality higher than 0.4 with the lowest one being “I can benefit from Social Media networks when planning my trips” with a communality of 0.699.

The KMO is 0.832 and Bartlett’s test significance is <0.001.

Table 8: PCA of Usefulness

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Usefulness	Social Media networks help me plan trips more efficiently	0.881	76.6%	0.898

	Social Media networks make my travel planning easier	0.899		
	Social Media networks make it easier for me to reach travel-related decisions	0.885		
	I can benefit from Social Media networks when planning my trips	0.836		

4.3.4 PCA of Ease of Use

PCA identified one solution for the five items of the construct “ease of use” which explains 72.7% of the total variance. The variable communality is higher than 0.4 in all the five variables, with the lowest being 0.646 for the variable “It’s easy to learn how to use Social Media networks for travel-related purposes”.

The KMO is 0.879 and the Bartlett’s test significance is <0.001.

Table 9: PCA of Ease of Use

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Ease of Use	Overall, I find it easy to use Social Media when planning a trip	0.901	72.7%	0.905
	It’s easy to use Social Media networks to find the travel information needed	0.870		
	It’s easy to use Social Media networks to plan my trips	0.844		
	It’s easy for me to become skilful at using Social Media for travel-related purposes	0.843		
	It’s easy to learn how to use Social Media networks for travel-related purposes	0.804		

4.3.5 PCA of Perceived expertise

A set of variables was used to measure the level of expertise of travel bloggers/influencers. The PCA extracted one component which explains 75.1% of the total variance.

The variable communality is higher than 0.4 in all the three variables, with the lowest being 0.697 for the variable “Travel bloggers/influencers are expert in tourism services and products”.

The KMO is 0.700 and the Bartlett’s Test is <0.001.

Table 10: PCA of Perceived expertise

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Perceived expertise	Travel bloggers/influencers are qualified to offer travel advice	0.903	75.1%	0.832
	Travel bloggers/influencers are knowledgeable in travel	0.862		
	Travel bloggers/influencers are expert in tourism services and products	0.835		

4.3.6 PCA of Information sharing

The PCA of the variable “information sharing” extracted two components which explain 68.2% of the total variance.

The first component was named “sharing visual media and travel information” and was composed of five items; the second one was called “sharing written travel reviews” and was composed of three items.

The KMO is 0.803 and the Bartlett’s test is <0.001.

Table 11: PCA of Information sharing

Principal Component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Sharing visual media and travel information	During and after my trips, I share my travel experiences with my Social Media networks	0.859	50.7%	0.858
	During and after my trips, I share pictures, comments, and reviews with my Social Media networks	0.838		

	During and after my trips, I post photos on Social Media websites	0.809		
	During and after my trips, I upload videos on Social Media websites	0.770		
	I always share my opinion at the request of my friends on Social Media networks	0.671		
Sharing written travel reviews	During and after my trips, I write reviews of activities/tourist attractions' on Social Media websites	0.876		
	During and after my trips, I write reviews of the place/or monuments I visited on Social Media websites	0.848		
	During and after my trips, I write hotel reviews on Social Media websites	0.713		

4.3.7 PCA of Perceived enjoyment

The PCA of the variable perceived enjoyment composed by four items identifies one component, which explains 86% of the total variance.

The lowest communality is 0.810 for the variable “I have fun sharing my travel experiences through Social Media”.

The KMO is 0.826 and the Bartlett's test is <0.001.

Table 12: PCA of Perceived Enjoyment

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach's alpha
Perceived Enjoyment	Travel information sharing through Social Media is a pleasant experience	0.945	86%	0.944
	Travel information sharing through Social Media is enjoyable	0.940		
	Travel information sharing through Social Media is interesting	0.925		
	I have fun sharing my travel experiences through Social Media	0.900		

4.3.8 PCA of Altruistic motivations

A group of variables were used to measure the altruistic motivations of consumers who share travel information on social media when travelling.

The PCA identified two components which explain 77.7% of the total variance. The first component was titled “helping people organize their trips” and it is composed of three items; the second one was called “sharing travel experiences and maintaining social connections” and it is composed of two items.

The KMO is 0.733 and the Bartlett’s test is <0.001.

Table 13: PCA of Altruistic Motivations

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach’s alpha
Helping people organize their trips	I want to prevent people from having bad experiences or falling into tourist traps	0.876	56.9%	0.835
	I want to contribute to websites that were useful for me during my travel planning	0.852		
	I want to help others by sharing my own positive experience on Social Media	0.832		
Sharing travel experiences and maintaining social connections	I want to share my travel experiences with others	0.866	20.8%	0.766
	I want to maintain social connections and friendships	0.858		

4.3.9 PCA of Personal fulfilment and self-actualisation

The PCA extracted from the seven variables of personal fulfilment and self-actualisation allowed to extract one dimension. The variable communality is higher than 0.4, with the lowest being 0.682 for the variable “I like to transmit what I want people think of me”.

The KMO is 0.916 and the Bartlett's test is <0.001.

Table 14: PCA of Personal Fulfilment and self-actualisation

Principal component	Variables	Loadings	Variance %	Cronbach's alpha
Personal fulfilment and self-actualisation	I like to share my travel experiences to create a good impression about myself	0.920	74.2%	0.942
	I like to share my travel experiences to received positive feedback from others	0.888		
	It is important to me that people know I travel	0.865		
	I like to share my travel experiences to tell others about myself	0.851		
	I like to be (more) recognized because of my travel experiences	0.844		
	I feel good when I can tell others about my travel successes	0.835		
	I like to transmit what I want people think of me	0.826		

4.4 Multiple Linear Regression Models

Regarding the assumptions of the MRL, they are all verified, except for the normality of the residuals. However, the deviation from normality is not very high, which is why the regression analyses were considered valid. However, extra care was taken in the analysis of the significance of the coefficients.

A total of four multiple linear regression models were tested.

The two models were estimated for each principal component of the two dependent variables:

Model 1: Information seeking (two components)

- Information seeking in generic platforms
- Information seeking in specific platforms

Model 2: Information sharing (two components)

- Information sharing: visual media and travel information
- Information sharing: written travel reviews

In Model 2, there are also two independent variables to measure *altruistic motivations* (*Helping people organize their trips and Sharing travel experiences and maintaining social connections*) and two independent variables to measure *information seeking* (*information seeking in generic platforms, and information seeking in specific platforms*). The moderator variable, Italian is a dummy variable that assumes the value 1 for Italian Millennials and the value 0 for Portuguese Millennials.

4.4.1 Information seeking in generic platforms model

Usefulness (B= 0.362) and also **Ease of Use** (B= 0.159) are the determinants of information seeking in generic platforms.

There is no difference between Italian and Portuguese Millennials.

Table 15: Model 1: Information seeking in generic platforms

Model	R2	Adjusted R Square	Durbin - Watson	Independent variables	Unstand. Coefficient	Stand. Coefficient	Sig
Model 1 Information seeking in generic platforms	0.236	0.222	2.118	1.Trustworthiness	0.055	0.055	0.404
				2.Perceived expertise	-0.089	-0.089	0.128
				3.Usefulness	0.362*	0.362	<0.001
				4.Ease of use	0.159*	0.159	0.024
				5.Italian	0.027	0.013	0.081

4.4.2 Information seeking in specific platforms model

The level of variability explanation of the dependent variable by the independent variables is very low.

The ANOVA analysis indicated that R square is significant at 5%. However, when we look at the table of coefficients, we observe that there is not a significant coefficient. This means that there is no variable that influences information seeking in specific platforms.

Table 16: Model 1: Information seeking in specific platforms

Model	R2	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson	Independent variables	Unstand. Coefficient	Stand. Coefficient	Sig
Model 1 Information seeking in specific platforms	0.051	0.033	2.051	1.Trustworthiness	0.117	0.117	0.111
				2.Perceived expertise	0.058	0.058	0.373
				3.Usefulness	0.078	0.078	0.339
				4.Ease of use	0.029	0.029	0.715
				5.Italian	-0.095	-0.047	0.426

4.4.3 Information sharing: visual media and travel information model

Perceived enjoyment (B= 0.443) and **Altruistic motivations - maintaining social connections** (B= 0.349) are the determinants of information sharing through visual media and travel information among Italian and Portuguese Millennials. These two variables are responsible for 55.1% of explained variance.

Table 17: Model 2: Information sharing through visual media and travel information

Model	R2	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson	Independent variables	Unstand. Coefficient	Stand. Coefficient	Sig
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Model 2 Information sharing through visual media and travel information	0.551	0.537	2.069	1.Perceived Enjoyment	0.452*	0.063	<0.001
				2.Altruistic motivations: Helping people organize their trips	0.047	0.053	0.376
				3.Altruistic motivations: Maintaining social connections	0.355*	0.060	<0.001
				4.Personal Fulfilment and self-actualization	0.029	0.029	0.601
				5.Information seeking in generic platforms	0.046	0.044	0.376
				6.Information seeking in specific platforms	0.019	0.018	0.695
				7.Italian	0.149	0.073	0.111

4.4.4 Information sharing: written travel reviews model

Altruistic motivations - Helping people to organize their trips (B=0.280) and **information seeking in generic platforms** (B= 0.186) are the determinants of information sharing through written travel reviews among Italian and Portuguese Millennials. Information seeking in specific platforms can also be considered a determinant if we consider a significance level of 6%.

Table 18: Model 2: Information sharing through written travel reviews

Model	R2	Adjusted R Square	Durbin-Watson	Independent variables	Unstand. Coefficient	Stand. Coefficient	Sig
Model 2 Information sharing through written travel reviews	0.151	0.124	2.035	1.Perceived Enjoyment	-0.090	-0.091	0.287
				2.Altruistic motivations: Helping people organize their trips	0.278*	0.280	<0.001
				3.Altruistic motivations: Maintaining social connections	-0.044	-0.044	0.589
				4.Personal Fulfilment and self actualization	-0.025	-0.026	0.732
				5.Information seeking in generic platforms	0.190*	0.186	0.007
				6.Information seeking in specific platforms	0.125*	0.125	0.055
				7.Italian	0.045	0.022	0.722

CHAPTER V

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Discussion

The aim of this study was to understand the motivations behind the use of Social Media among Italian and Portuguese Millennials in two specific phases of the trip: at the beginning of the trip when people start gathering information (information seeking phase) and at the end of the trip when people are willing to share their travel experiences. Another purpose of this research was also to investigate the relationship between these two phases and understand if information seeking would influence the willingness to share travel content online. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the differences or similarities in the travel behaviour of Italian and Portuguese Millennials.

This study proposed nine hypotheses that were tested with correlation between the constructs, which are the following: information seeking, trustworthiness, usefulness, ease of use, perceived expertise, information sharing, perceived enjoyment, altruistic motivations and personal fulfilment and self-actualisation.

The results obtained from the questionnaire conducted on a sample of 300 respondents (167 were Italian and 133 were Portuguese Millennials) provide partial support for the majority of the hypotheses with similarities between the two cultural groups.

The first hypothesis (H1) was partially supported by Italians and Portuguese Millennials. From the results, we can understand that both Italian and Portuguese respondents consider Social Media useful to look for travel information in generic platforms or sources (such as online reviews). This result was consistent with other studies which explain that usefulness positively affects the use of Social Media in the travel planning phase (Ayeh, 2015; Bauer et al., 2005; Nusair et al., 2013).

The second hypothesis (H2) proposed that perceived ease of use positively influences the use of Social Media networks for information seeking. This hypothesis is supported by the Italian and Portuguese respondents, who consider ease of use one of the main motivations to use Social Media for information seeking in generic platforms or sources when planning a trip. This result is in line with the previous study conducted by Ayeh (2015), which shows that perceived ease of use plays an important role in the consumer's intention of using Social Media for travel planning.

The third hypothesis (H3) was not supported neither by the Italians nor by the Portuguese. The research results suggest that Italian and Portuguese Millennials consider Social Media and travel influencers not to be trustworthy and reliable, therefore not suitable to

provide the correct information to plan their trips efficiently. These results are in contrast with the findings of Faisal and Dhusia (2002) and Nusair et al. (2013). This might be due to culture-related factors: in fact, we can say that the Italian and Portuguese culture might be characterized by a certain level of scepticism related to social media content, and therefore they might not tend to trust social media influencers.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) was not supported by the Italian and Portuguese Millennials. Unlike previous studies, (Oliveira et al., 2020; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Chung & Koo; Asyraff et al., 2022; Ayeh, 2015), perceived expertise does not significantly influence the use of Social Media for travel behaviours. The existing literature argues that people consider travel influencers to be experts in their area of interest. However, this study shows that perceived expertise is not a significant motivation to use Social Media networks among Italian and Portuguese Millennials. They do not perceive social media influencers as experts in tourism services, and are, therefore, unwilling to use their advice.

The fifth hypothesis (H5) was partially supported by the Italian and Portuguese Millennials. Both cultural groups consider perceived enjoyment as an important motivation to use Social Media networks for visual media and travel information sharing (such as photos, videos etc). These results are in line with the findings by Kang and Schuett (2013) and Chung and Koo (2015).

The sixth hypothesis (H6) was partially supported by Italians and Portuguese Millennials. After their trips, they tend to share their travel experiences in order to help others and to maintain social connections. These results are confirmed by other studies (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Oliveira et al., 2020; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

The seventh hypothesis (H7) was not supported by the Portuguese nor the Italians. They are not so interested in sharing their travel experiences in order to create a good impression of themselves or receive recognition from others. This result is not in line with other studies (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Oliveira et al. 2020, Yoo & Gretzel, 2008) and this is might be due to the fact that culture might play a significant role in shaping individual behaviours and attitudes. Portuguese and Italian people's cultural backgrounds may be different from the ones that were analysed in the previous studies (such as Danish and Norwegian-speaking travellers, Canadians etc.). Hence, they might be less inclined to use social media for self-centred motivations.

The eighth hypothesis (H8) was partially supported by the Italians and by the Portuguese. The majority of them tend to gather travel information on social media when they plan their trips and are also willing to share their experiences online after their trips.

The ninth hypothesis (H9) is not supported. This means that even though these two cultural groups share some differences in language and mindset, their motivations to use Social Media are the same.

5.2 Conclusion

This research takes into account the consumer behaviour of Italian and Portuguese Millennials and its main objective is to understand the motivations to use Social Media for information seeking and information sharing, and if these motivations differ or are the same among these two groups. The results show that Italian and Portuguese Millennials use Social Media in a similar way.

When considering the usefulness of Social Media, results showed that both Italian and Portuguese respondents believe that using Social Media to seek information is useful for better planning their trips. They also believe that the user-friendliness of Social Media does play an important role in influencing their information-seeking behaviours. However, the lack of support for trustworthiness and perceived expertise suggests that these factors might have a less significant impact on their choices of information sources. Thus, they tend not to give credit to credibility of information sources on social media when seeking information.

Perceived enjoyment and altruistic motivations emerge as partial motivators, indicating that fun and enjoyment of using Social Media and the desire to help others contribute to their engagement online. On the other hand, from the results we can understand that personal fulfilment and self-actualisation does not influence their intention to use Social Media for information sharing, which means that the two groups are not interested in gaining visibility while using Social Media.

Lastly, the results show that the act of seeking information itself influences the willingness to share travel information among Italian and Portuguese Millennials.

The results obtained reveal that there are no differences in the motivations to use Social Media between the two groups. This might be due to the fact that there is not a strong distance between the two cultures: even though they share a different language and mindset, their online travel behaviour is the same.

Factors such as ease of use and trustworthiness shed light on how people consider and use technology. Based on the findings, we can understand that Italian and Portuguese Millennials mainly use Social Media networks because for them it has become easy and effortless to gather information and share content on these platforms. In addition, we assume that these two groups of Millennials do not consider trustworthiness as a motivation to use

Social Media, meaning that are cautious when they are looking for information online and tend not to trust everything they find on Social Media.

The partial support for perceived enjoyment and altruistic motivations in both groups indicates that both Italian and Portuguese Millennials have fun when they share their experiences on Social Media and are motivated by the desire to contribute positively to other people experiences and to maintain social connections with friends and family. On the other hand, the lack of support for personal fulfilment and self-actualisation in both groups, along with the lack of support for perceived expertise, suggests that the two groups are not interested in being recognized for their travels. Furthermore, when planning their trips, they do not rely on travel bloggers/influencers since they do not consider them as expert in their area of interest.

Lastly, the results show that information seeking among Italian and Portuguese Millennials positively influences their intention to share information.

The thesis contributes to understand the motivations to use Social Media for travel-related purposes among Italian and Portuguese Millennials, and sheds light on how Millennial consumers from these two different countries have similar online travel behaviours. It also contributes to understand the relationship between information seeking and the willingness to share travel experiences online.

The managerial contribution of this research is that understanding the similarities in motivations between the two groups can help organizations and marketers adapt their communication strategies when engaging with Italian and Portuguese Millennials, considering their unique preferences and priorities. For example, knowing that perceived enjoyment is one of the main motivations for them to use Social Media networks, marketers can focus on the creation of content that is not only based on providing useful information but that is also enjoyable and engaging to interact with. Furthermore, since altruistic motivations and maintaining social connections play an important role in the motivations to use Social Media among these two cultural groups, organizations can create online communities for Italian and Portuguese people in order for them to engage and interact online.

5.3 Limitations and future recommendations

This study has several limitations. One of them is that the questionnaire was too long and because of this, many people did not answer all the questions and decided not to finish it.

Another limitation is the fact that there is a difference in the number of Italian and Portuguese respondents. As above mentioned, Italian participants outline the Portuguese ones

for around 30 people. Therefore, if the number of the two groups had been equal, these results might have shown differences between the counterparts.

Another limitation is that the questionnaire was distributed only in English and was preventing people who do not know English to complete it.

Another limitation is the fact that the results of this research do not represent the online travel behaviour of all the Millennials in Italy and Portugal, but just a large number.

A recommendation for future research is to combine quantitative data with qualitative insights through interviews to provide a deeper understanding of the motivations and behaviours observed. One of the themes that could be explored in relation to the motivations to use Social Media could be FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) in the context of travel. Future research could explore the extent to which a fear of missing out drives Millennials' use of Social Media. Exploring their reactions when they see others engaging in activities they are not part of might provide useful insights. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore whether Millennials' travel experiences are line with their expectations created by Social Media during the travel planning phase.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Regression analysis- Dummy variable

		Italian			
		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Italian	449	89.8	100.0	100.0
Missin g	System	51	10.2		
Total		500	100.0		

Appendix B – Regression Analysis- Dummy Variable

		Italian			
		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Portuguese	207	41.4	46.1	46.1
	Italian	242	48.4	53.9	100.0
	Total	449	89.8	100.0	
Missin g	System	51	10.2		
Total		500	100.0		

Appendix C

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method

1	Italian, Perceived expertise, Ease of use, Trustworthiness, Usefulness ^b	.	Enter
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a. Dependent Variable: Information seeking in generic platforms

b. All requested variables entered.

Appendix D – Regression Model 1: Information seeking in generic platforms

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.840	5	13.368	17.193	<.001 ^b
	Residual	216.160	278	.778		
	Total	283.000	283			

a. Dependent Variable: Information seeking in generic platforms

b. Predictors: (Constant), Italian, Perceived expertise, Ease of use, Trustworthiness, Usefulness

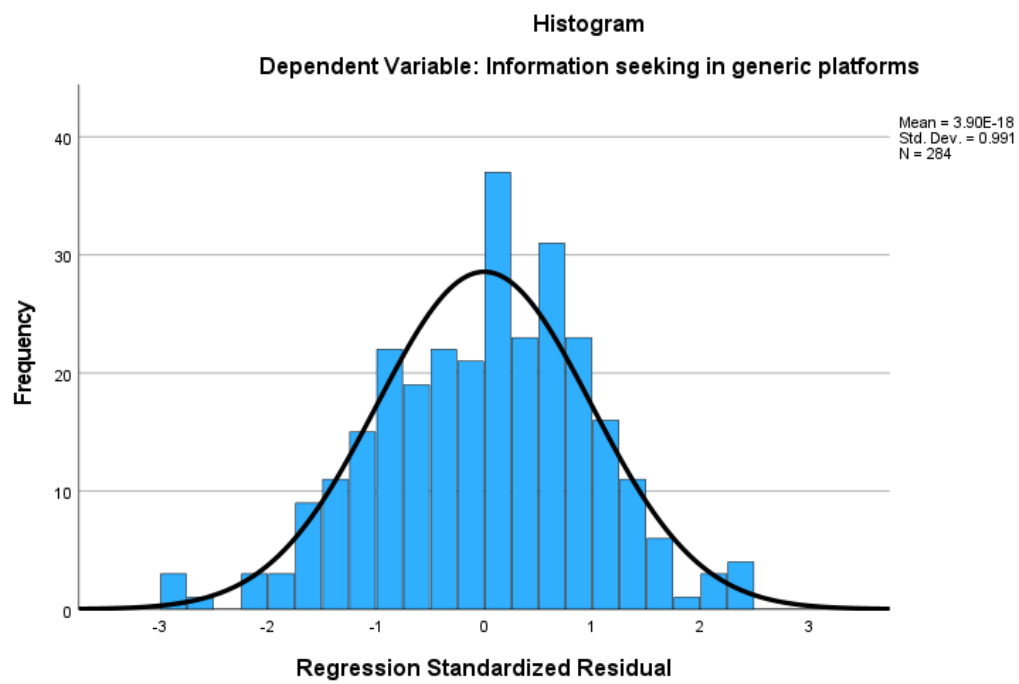
Appendix E – Collinearity Diagnostics

Collinearity Diagnostics ^a									
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	(Constant)	Trustworthiness	Variance Proportions			
						Perceived expertise	Usefulness	Ease of use	Italian
1	1	2.361	1.000	.00	.07	.06	.06	.06	.00
	2	1.761	1.158	.12	.00	.00	.00	.00	.12
	3	.774	1.746	.00	.00	.77	.05	.13	.00

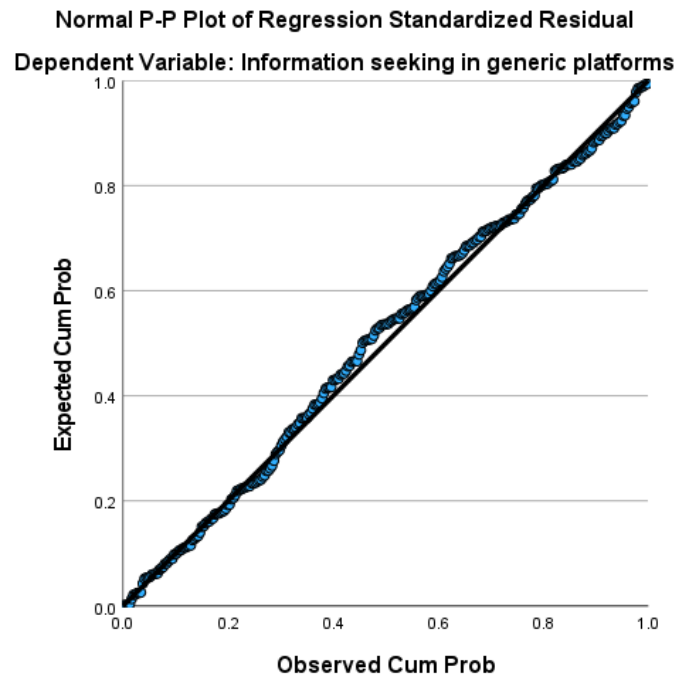
4	.516	2.138	.01	.89	.15	.06	.12	.00
5	.357	2.570	.03	.00	.02	.74	.66	.02
6	.230	3.204	.84	.04	.00	.08	.02	.86

a. Dependent Variable: Information seeking in generic platforms

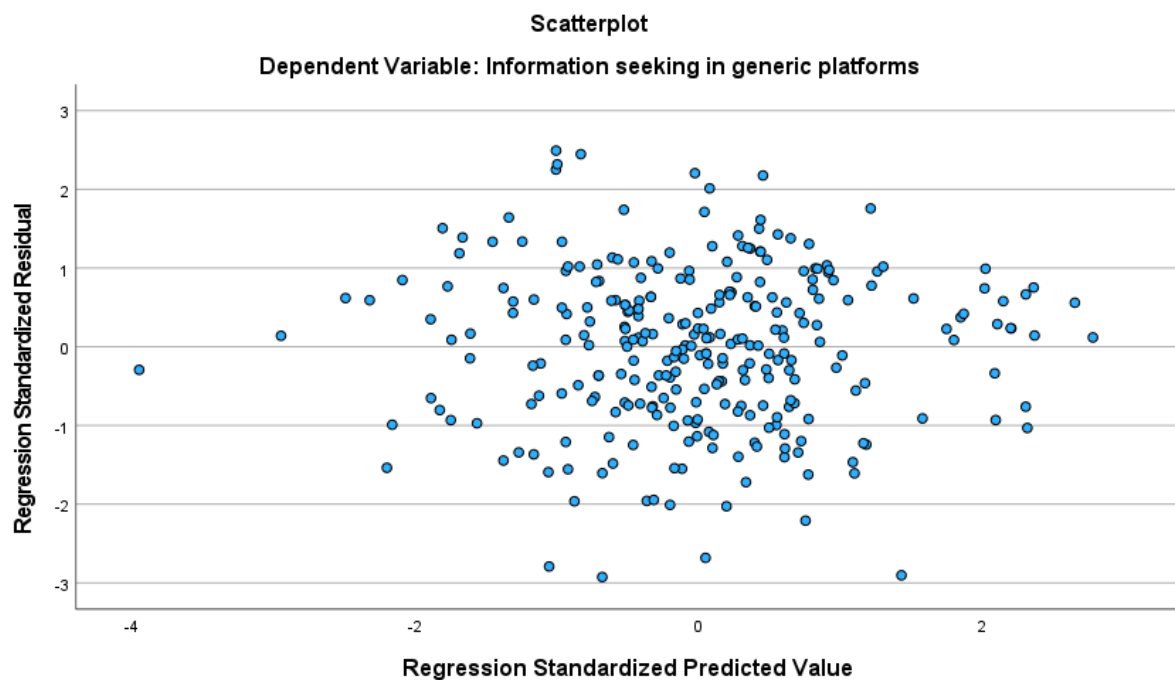
Appendix F - Histogram



Appendix G- Normal P-P Plot



Appendix H – Scatterplot



Appendix I – Regression model 1: Information seeking in specific platforms

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.296	5	2.859	2.958	.013 ^b
	Residual	268.704	278	.967		
	Total	283.000	283			

a. Dependent Variable: Information seeking in specific platforms

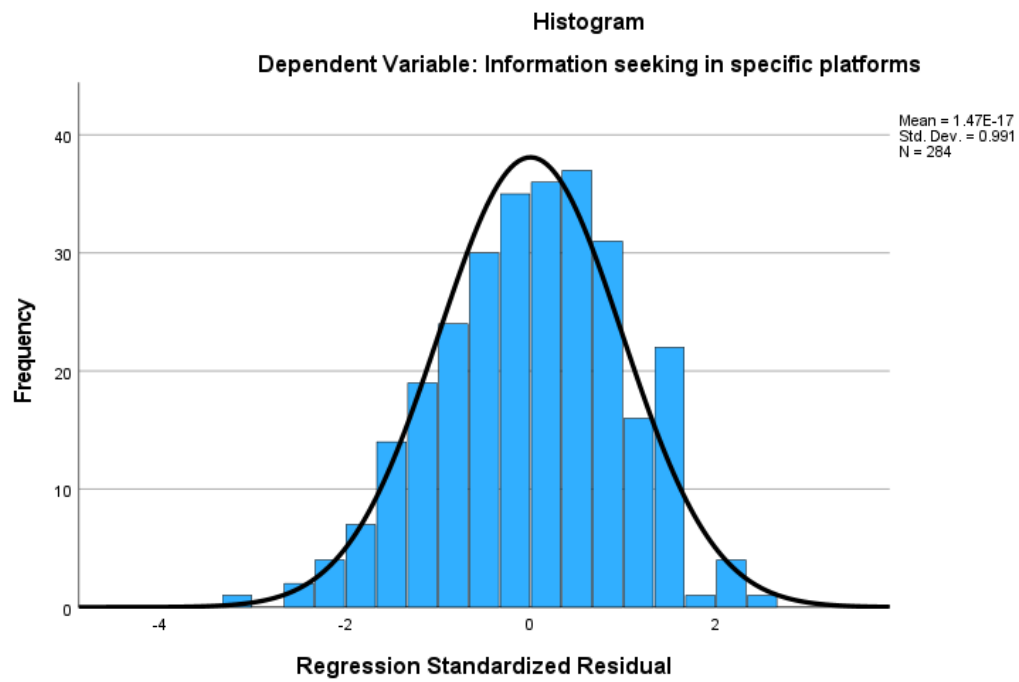
b. Predictors: (Constant), Italian, Perceived expertise, Ease of use, Trustworthiness, Usefulness

Appendix J – Collinearity Diagnostics

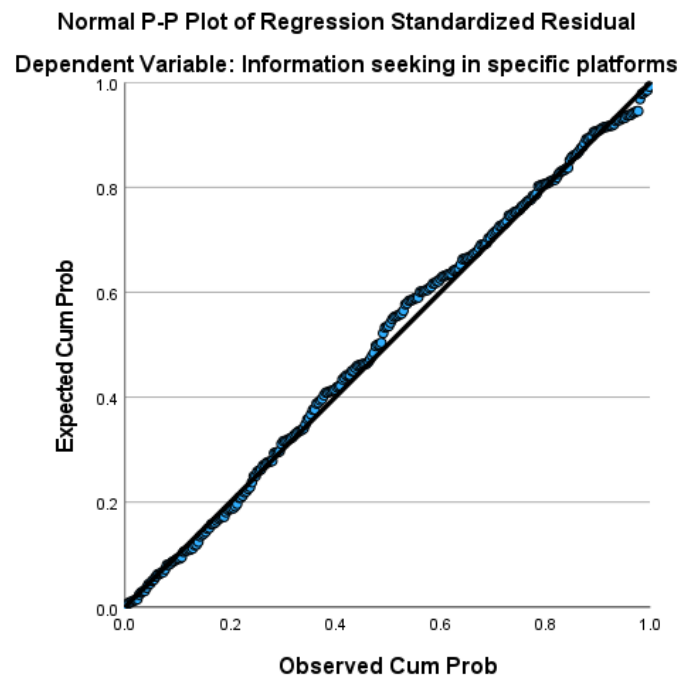
Collinearity Diagnostics ^a									
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	(Constant)	Trustworthiness	Variance Proportions			
						Perceived expertise	Usefulness	Ease of use	Italian
1	1	2.361	1.000	.00	.07	.06	.06	.06	.00
	2	1.761	1.158	.12	.00	.00	.00	.00	.12
	3	.774	1.746	.00	.00	.77	.05	.13	.00
	4	.516	2.138	.01	.89	.15	.06	.12	.00
	5	.357	2.570	.03	.00	.02	.74	.66	.02
	6	.230	3.204	.84	.04	.00	.08	.02	.86

a. Dependent Variable: Information seeking in specific platforms

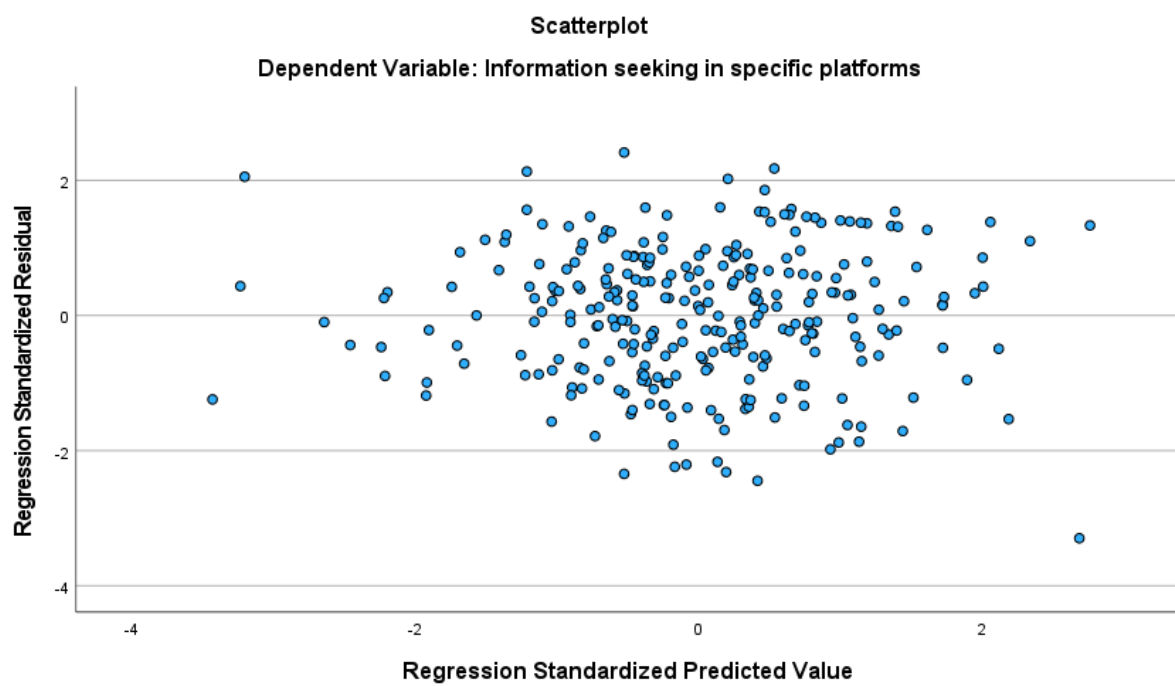
Appendix K - Histogram



Appendix L – Normal P-Plot



Appendix M - Scatterplot



Appendix N – Regression Model 2: Information sharing through visual media and travel information

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	129.383	7	18.483	38.397	<.001 ^b
	Residual	105.420	219	.481		
	Total	234.803	226			

a. Dependent Variable: Information Sharing: visual media and travel information

b. Predictors: (Constant), Italian, Altruistic motivations: Maintaining social connections, Altruistic motivations: Helping people organize their trips, Information seeking in specific platforms, Information seeking in generic platforms, Personal Fulfilment and Self Actualization, Perceived Enjoyment

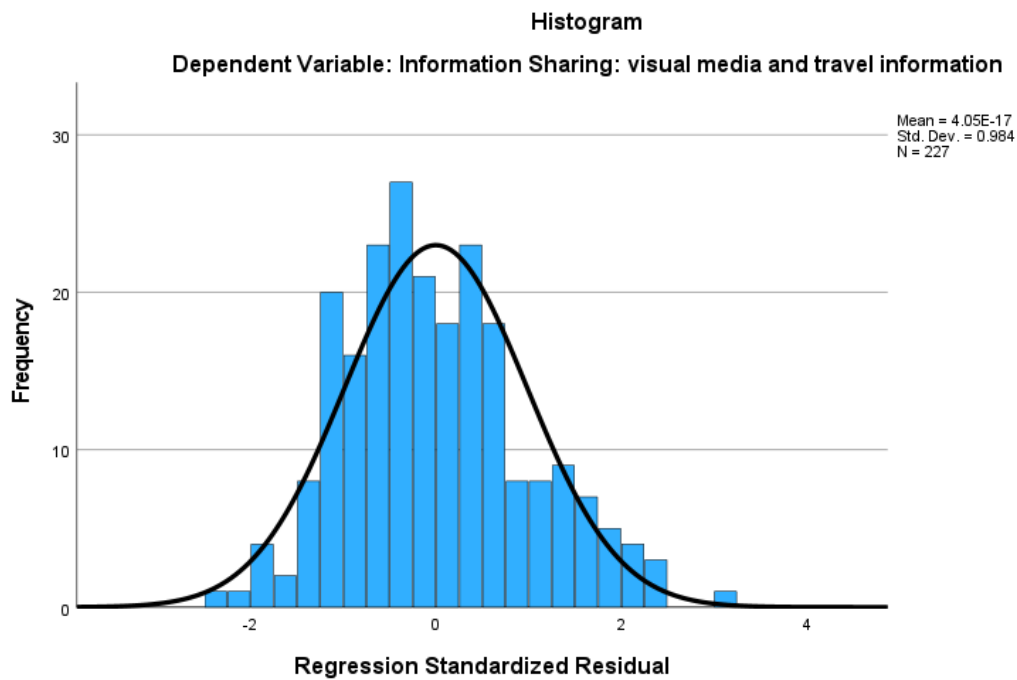
Appendix O – Collinearity Diagnostics

Collinearity Diagnostics ^a											
			Variance Proportions								
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	(Constant)	Perceived Enjoyment	Altruistic motivations: Helping people organize their trips	Altruistic motivations: Maintaining social connections	Personal Fulfilment and Self Actualization	Information seeking in generic platforms	Information seeking in specific platforms	Italian
1	1	2.204	1.000	.00	.08	.03	.07	.07	.03	.01	.00
	2	1.767	1.117	.12	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.12

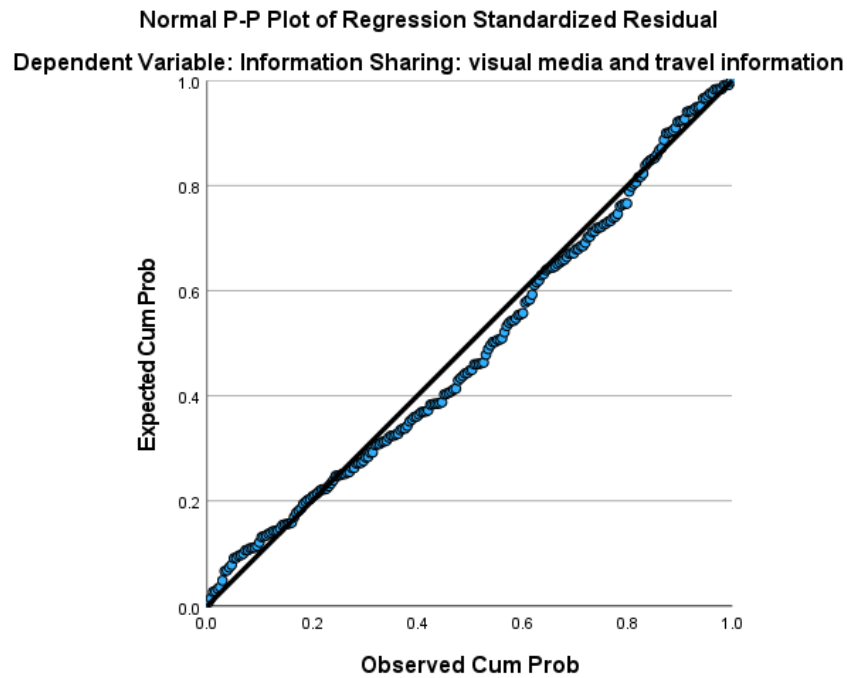
3	1.238	1.334	.00	.00	.26	.07	.08	.10	.09	.00
4	1.036	1.459	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.28	.57	.00
5	.680	1.800	.00	.00	.36	.09	.16	.34	.19	.00
6	.479	2.145	.00	.23	.03	.13	.68	.24	.13	.00
7	.355	2.492	.01	.69	.31	.63	.01	.00	.00	.00
8	.240	3.030	.87	.01	.01	.01	.00	.00	.01	.87

a. Dependent Variable: Information Sharing: visual media and travel information

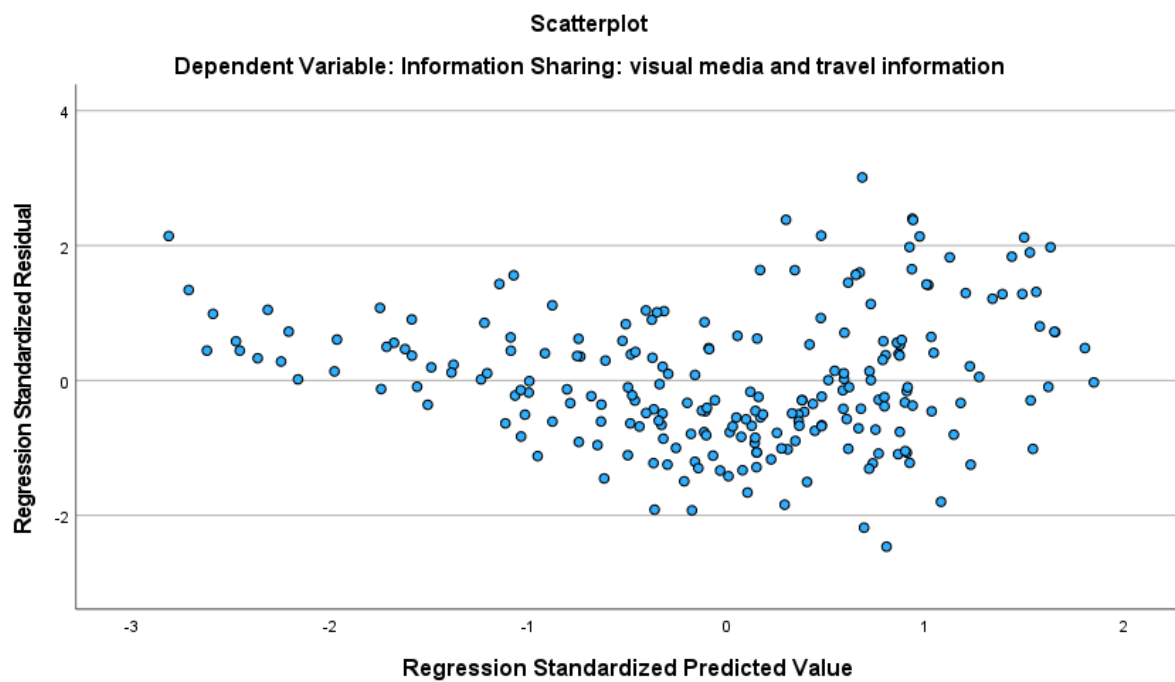
Appendix P – Histogram



Appendix Q – Normal P-Plot



Appendix R - Scatterplot



Appendix S – Regression model 2: Written travel reviews

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.708	7	4.815	5.571	<.001 ^b
	Residual	189.302	219	.864		
	Total	223.010	226			

a. Dependent Variable: Information sharing: written travel reviews

b. Predictors: (Constant), Italian, Altruistic motivations: Maintaining social connections, Altruistic motivations: Helping people organize their trips, Information seeking in specific platforms, Information seeking in generic platforms, Personal Fulfilment and Self Actualization, Perceived Enjoyment

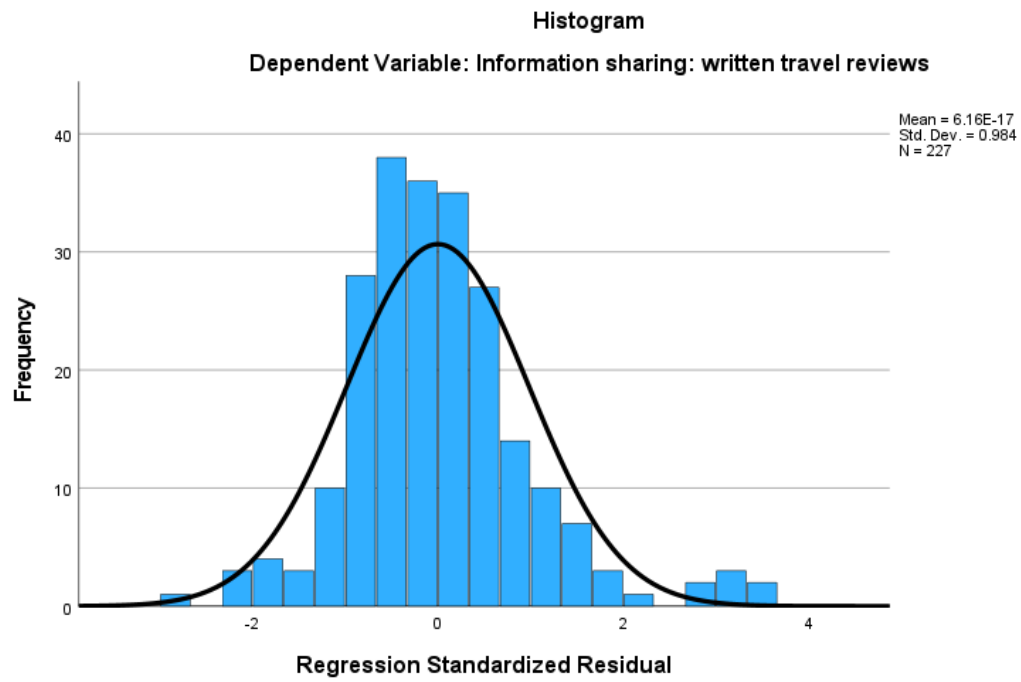
Appendix T – Collinearity Diagnostics

Collinearity Diagnostics ^a										
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions						
				(Constant)	Perceived Enjoyment	Altruistic motivations: Helping people organize their trips	Altruistic motivations: Maintaining social connections	Personal Fulfilment and Self Actualization	Information seeking in generic platforms	Information seeking in specific platforms
1	Italian									

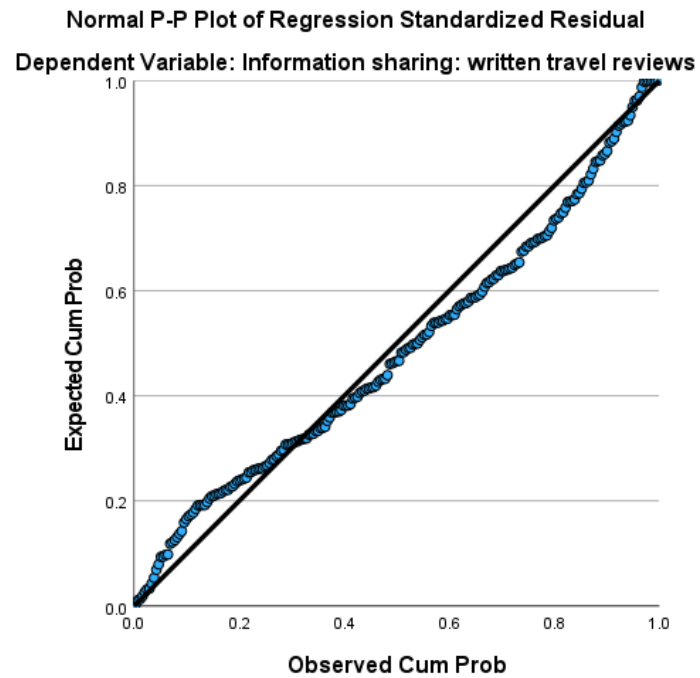
1	1	2.204	1.000	.00	.08	.03	.07	.07	.03	.01	.00
	2	1.767	1.117	.12	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.12
	3	1.238	1.334	.00	.00	.26	.07	.08	.10	.09	.00
	4	1.036	1.459	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.28	.57	.00
	5	.680	1.800	.00	.00	.36	.09	.16	.34	.19	.00
	6	.479	2.145	.00	.23	.03	.13	.68	.24	.13	.00
	7	.355	2.492	.01	.69	.31	.63	.01	.00	.00	.00
	8	.240	3.030	.87	.01	.01	.01	.00	.00	.01	.87

a. Dependent Variable: Information sharing: written travel reviews

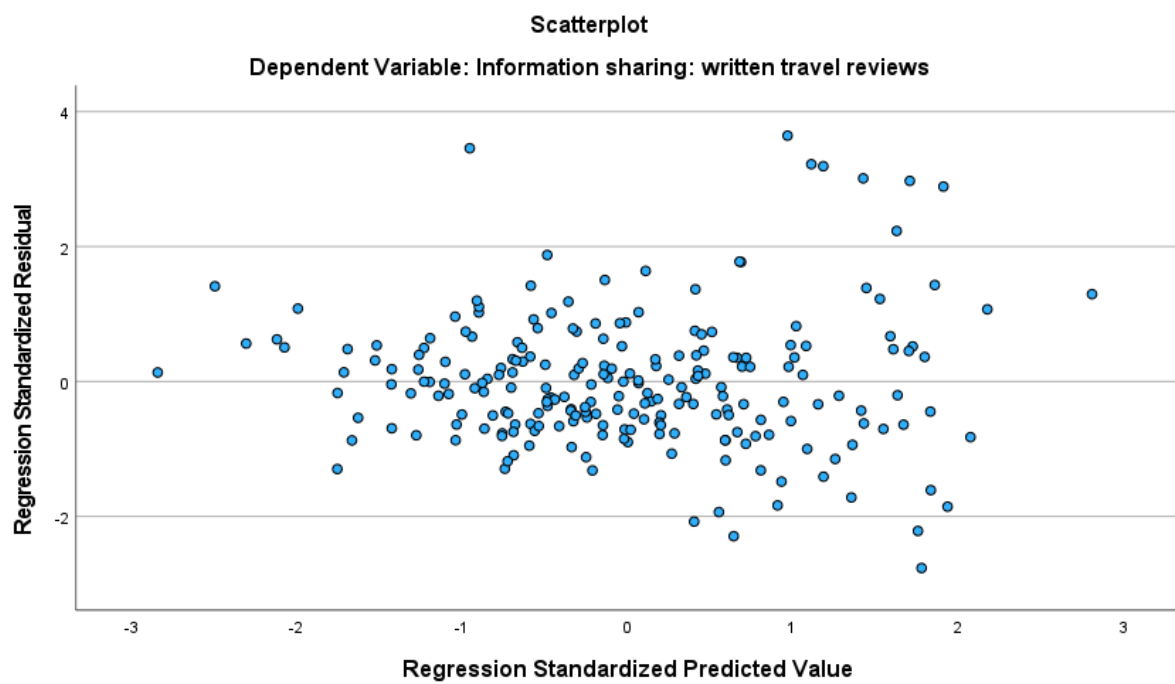
Appendix U - Histogram



Appendix V – Normal P-Plot



Appendix W – Scatterplot



Appendix X – Research Questionnaire

This survey is being conducted as part of a Master's Dissertation in Tourism at Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL). The goal is to understand the motivations behind the use of Social Media networks for travel purposes by Italian and Portuguese Gen Y travellers and to analyse the differences between these two cultural groups. The completion of the survey will take around 8-10 minutes. All the collected data will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. This survey will be used only for academic purposes. Please answer the survey with honesty to ensure the data quality. Thank you for your attention and collaboration.

Criteria for eligibility: 1) You have travelled at least once in the last 6-12 months before this survey 2) You use Social Media networks (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tripadvisor etc.) 3) You hold the Italian or Portuguese nationality 4) You were born between 1981 and 1999 (Gen Y)

Do you meet all the eligibility criteria mentioned above?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you..

- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Portuguese

How old are you?

- ☐ 24-28
- ☐ 29-33
- ☐ 34-38
- ☐ 39-42

Part 1. Usage of Social Media

1.1 How often do you use Social Media? (for example networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, social review sites such as Tripadvisor, image-sharing sites such as Instagram, video-hosting sites such as TripAdvisor and sharing economy platforms like Airbnb)

Mark only one option.

- ☐ Every Day
- ☐ 2-3 times per week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times per month
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ Never

1.2 If you use Social Media on a daily basis, how many hours do you spend on it?

- ☐ Less than 1 hour
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☐ 3-6 hours
- ☐ 7 or more

1.3 Which Social Media channels do you use the most?

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Tiktok
- ☐ Tripadvisor
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ YouTube

1.4 How often do you use any of these Social Media channels to search for information when planning a trip?

Mark only one option.

- ☐ Never

- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Part 2. Gen Y travel decision-making process

2.1 Please indicate the average number of your annual domestic and/or international trips

- 1
- 2-3
- 3-5
- More than 5

2.1.2 How do you usually travel?

Tick all that apply.

- Alone
- With your partner
- With friends
- With family
- With work colleagues
- Other

2.3 How long do you usually stay at the destination?

Tick all that apply.

- A weekend
- 3 to 5 days
- A week
- More than a week
- A month
- More than a month
- Other

Travel Planning

2.2 What type of information do you look for on Social Media when planning a trip?

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Destinations
- ☐ Travel transportations
- ☐ Accommodations
- ☐ Tourist attractions
- ☐ Excursions
- ☐ Other

2.3 Information seeking

What do you do when you want to collect travel information on Social Media before and during your trips?

Mark only one option per row.

- 1) Never
 - 2) Rarely
 - 3) Sometimes
 - 4) Often
 - 5) Always
-
- ☐ Before travelling, I read hotel reviews from other travellers
 - ☐ I look at activity/attraction's reviews of other travellers
 - ☐ I read other travellers' experiences and tips
 - ☐ I get recommendations from friends and family
 - ☐ I read user-generated sources (Tripadvisor etc.) for the destination I am visiting
 - ☐ I do research on 3rd party travel websites such as Expedia.com or Tripadvisor.com

2.4 Trustworthiness

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

- 1) Strongly disagree
- 2) Disagree
- 3) Partially disagree
- 4) Neither agree nor disagree
- 5) Partially agree
- 6) Agree
- 7) Strongly agree

- In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media networks is reliable
- In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media can be trusted at all times
- In my opinion, travel information that can be found on Social Media has high integrity (it's trustworthy and of good quality)

2.5 Usefulness

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

- 1) Strongly disagree
- 2) Disagree
- 3) Partially disagree
- 4) Neither agree nor disagree
- 5) Partially agree
- 6) Agree
- 7) Strongly agree

- Social Media networks help me plan trips more efficiently
- Social Media networks make my travel planning easier
- Social Media networks make it easier for me to reach travel-related decisions
- I can benefit from Social Media networks when planning my trips

2.6 Ease of use

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

1) Strongly disagree

2) Disagree

3) Partially disagree

4) Neither agree nor disagree

5) Partially agree

6) Agree

7) Strongly agree

- It's easy to learn how to use Social Media networks for travel-related purposes
- It's easy to use Social Media networks to find the travel information needed
- It's easy to use Social Media networks to plan my trips
- It's easy for me to become skilful at using Social Media for travel-related purpose
- Overall, I find it easy to use Social Media when planning a trip

2.7 How likely are you to follow user-generated content (UGC) recommendations (such as text, videos, images, online reviews created by other people) when planning a trip?

- Extremely unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Likely
- Extremely likely

2.7.1 Do you follow any travel bloggers/influencers?

- Yes
- No

2.7.2 If your answer is yes, how likely are you to follow travel bloggers'/influencers' recommendations when planning a trip?

- Extremely likely
- Unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely

- Likely
- Extremely likely

2.8 Perceived expertise of travel bloggers/influencers

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

- 1) Strongly disagree
- 2) Disagree
- 3) Partially disagree
- 4) Neither agree nor disagree
- 5) Partially agree
- 6) Agree
- 7) Strongly agree

- Travel bloggers/influencers are knowledgeable in travel
- Travel bloggers/influencers are qualified to offer travel advice
- Travel bloggers/influencers are expert in tourism services and products

Actual travel experience sharing

2.9 How often do you use Social Media networks (such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Tripadvisor) to share your travel experiences?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

2.10 Information sharing (eWOM)

How often do you share travel information during and after your trips?

- 1) Never
- 2) Rarely

3) Sometimes

4) Often

5) Always

- During and after my trips, I write hotel reviews on Social Media websites
- During and after my trips, I post photos on Social Media websites
- During and after my trips, I write reviews of activities/tourist attractions' on Social Media websites
- During and after my trips, I upload videos on Social Media websites
- During and after my trips, I write reviews of the place/or monuments I visited on Social Media websites
- During and after my trips, I share my travel experiences with my Social Media networks
- During and after my trips, I share pictures, comments, and reviews with my Social Media networks I always share my opinion at the request of my friends on Social Media networks

2.11 Perceived Enjoyment

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to strongly agree.

1) Strongly disagree

2) Disagree

3) Partially disagree

4) Neither agree nor disagree

5) Partially agree

6) Agree

7) Strongly agree

- I have fun sharing my travel experiences through Social Media
- Travel information sharing through Social Media is a pleasant experience
- Travel information sharing through Social Media is enjoyable

- Travel information sharing through Social Media is interesting

2.12 Altruistic motivations

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

- 1) Strongly disagree
- 2) Disagree
- 3) Partially disagree
- 4) Neither agree nor disagree
- 5) Partially agree
- 6) Agree
- 7) Strongly agree

- I want to help others by sharing my own positive experience on Social Media
- I want to prevent people from having bad experiences or falling into tourist traps
- I want to contribute to websites that were useful for me during my travel planning
- I want to maintain social connections and friendships
- I want to share my travel experiences with others

2.13 Personal fulfilment and self-actualization

Demonstrate your level of agreement with the following statements, being that 1 corresponds to Strongly disagree and 7 to Strongly agree.

- 1) Strongly disagree
- 2) Disagree
- 3) Partially disagree
- 4) Neither agree nor disagree
- 5) Partially agree
- 6) Agree
- 7) Strongly agree

- It is important to me that people know I travel
- I feel good when I can tell others about my travel successes

- I like to share my travel experiences to create a good impression about myself
- I like to share my travel experiences to receive positive feedback from others
- I like to share my travel experiences to tell others about myself I like to be (more) recognized because of my travel experiences
- I like to transmit what I want people think of me

Part 3. Demographic information

3.1 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3.2 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- High school
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate Degree
- Other

3.3 What is your employment status?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Not looking for a job
- Student
- Prefer not to answer

3.4 What is your monthly level of income?

- No income

- Less than 500€
- 500€-1000€
- 1001€-1500€
- 1501€-2000€
- 2001€-2500€
- 2500€+
- Prefer not to say