ISCTE ⊗ Business School
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AFFECTING PORTUGUESE CONSUMERS CONSIDERING THE HORECA BUSINESS SEGMENT

Beatriz Margarida Trindade Almiro de Menezes e Castro

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of

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Resumo

Este estudo aborda um tópico ainda recente do marketing em 2016: as redes sociais e o seu impacto na relação entre o canal HORECA (hotéis e semelhantes, restaurantes, cafés) com o consumidor português. Os conceitos mais importantes são noções como o *e-wom,* redes sociais, *web 2.0*, canal HORECA. É tida em consideração no estudo a evolução das redes sociais ao longo dos últimos anos, tal como é descrito o objetivo de certas redes sociais específicas para este segmento de mercado.

A dissertação teve como objetivo compreender qual o efeito no processo de tomada de decisão dos consumidores portugueses deste tipo de redes sociais, especificamente das críticas *online* no canal HORECA. Investigaram-se os hábitos dos consumidores a nível *online*, as suas opiniões face a críticas *online*, a probabilidade de visitarem um estabelecimento com críticas negativas e qual o tipo de estabelecimento do segmento HORECA para qual usavam em maior grau redes sociais.

Foi considerada uma metodologia quantitativa por questionário *online*, em que o *Facebook* foi o método de difusão do mesmo, dado ser uma importante rede social atualmente, angariando 417 respostas válidas, consideradas no decorrer da análise.

As principais conclusões obtidas através desta dissertação provaram que os indivíduos da amostra confiam em maior grau em críticas *online* positivas do que negativas, têm uma maior vontade de visitar um estabelecimento com crítica positiva, do que evitar um com crítica negativa. A maioria dos consumidores usa este género de redes sociais para obter informação sobre hotéis, usando em grande escala o *Booking.com*.

Palavras-chave: Redes Sociais; Marketing; HORECA; Processo de Tomada de Decisão

JEL Classification System: M31 (Marketing) e **C12** (Hypothesis Testing)

Abstract

This research approaches a still recent marketing topic in 2016: the impact that social networks have in the relationship between HORECA channel (hotels, restaurants, cafes) and the Portuguese consumer. Electronic word-of-mouth, social networks, web 2.0, HORECA channel can be considered as very important notions in this dissertation. The evolution of social networks along the years is taken in consideration as well as the aim of certain HORECA specific type social networks.

The dissertation had as a main goal to understand the role of social networks and online reviews in the decision making process of the Portuguese consumer, in the HORECA channel. Thus, online consumer habits were investigated, such as their opinions facing online reviews and the type of establishment in the HORECA segment that had the highest importance when considering information from social networks.

A quantitative approach was considered, through a Facebook diffused online questionnaire, taking in consideration Facebook importance nowadays. 417 valid responses were retrieved and considered during the data analysis.

The most important conclusions from the study proved that the sampled individuals rely in a higher degree in positive online reviews than negative ones, and they have a higher willingness of visiting an HORECA establishment with a positive review, than of avoiding an establishment with a negative review. The majority of consumers use social networks to obtain information regarding hotels and similar, especially Booking.com

Key Words: Online Social Networks; Marketing; HORECA; Decision Making Process

JEL Classification System: M31 (Marketing) **and C12** (Hypothesis Testing)

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1. Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the researcher will start with a brief introduction to the proposed theme for the investigation, followed by the definition of the research problem and its contextualization. Furthermore, a thesis overview structure will also be presented, before moving along to other chapters of the dissertation.

1.1 Introduction to the theme

This dissertation starts with the literature review chapter, taking in consideration that the usage of internet and social networks is increasing day by day, especially when it comes to millennials and younger generations, all over the globe.

Formerly, the World Wide Web was characterized by the first stage of the internet, Web 1.0, which was mostly informational and users of the web could only read and/or share information through web pages. This type of internet didn't present two-way communication between its users. Later on, web evolved into Web 2.0, which provided a characteristic of more interaction and participation online, besides reading the content, it gave its users the power to edit and update the online content (Nath *et al.,* 2014). This type of web was based on an idea of network participation, and had a great impact on marketing systems and communications.

Therefore, the impact that this type of web participation had on marketing communication forms went from the creation of several virtual communities to a higher degree of independence and control given to web 2.0 users (Mazurek, 2009).

Furthermore, when approaching the present, internet evolved until Web 3.0, but we may not be there yet at 100%. This is still a recent subject and the literature existent on the matter is not abundant. However, it is important to mention that web 3.0 is represented by a higher degree of personalization of the online content to each user. While web 2.0 is categorized by being community oriented and with high interlinked data, web 3.0 is mainly categorized by being individually oriented (higher degree of content customization), with user developed smart applications, and focusing on a worldwide database (Nath *et al*., 2014). Therefore, web 3.0 resembles to a type of evolution presenting a state of intelligence from computers and the internet.

Nowadays, one major topic marketers research is the online review subject. Social media nowadays presents a grid for consumers to give their opinion either on public forums, apps, blogs, social networks (Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter), revealing their personal experiences and opinions about certain products or services. According to Fay *et al*. (2011), there is a growing amount of evidence supporting that this type of online reviewing behaviour has a clear impact on purchase behaviour.

Furthermore, in this day and age, there are certain social networks that also contain the application format, with a main goal of providing a consumer the opportunity for sharing his or her experience in a certain purchasing place, in several different industries. There are social networks providing reviews on books, movies, cafes, restaurants, hotels, among others. Zomato and TripAdvisor are two of the most important channels for consumers to give their feedback to establishments in the HORECA channel. Zomato is a recent social network dedicated to reviewing and giving information on restaurants, cafes, nightclubs, while TripAdvisor is a social network dedicated to share reviews and opinions mainly to the hotel industry and its equals. With this study I will try to provide new information for marketers on how several social networks such as Zomato, TripAdvisor and Facebook will influence consumers' decision making process, and thus, their purchasing behaviour.

1.2 Definition of the research problem

The identified theme to approach was considered by also having in consideration the researcher's personal and professional interest. Therefore, a focus on the Management segment related with Marketing was measured. Additionally, the theme is an area that besides interesting, kindly relates to the researcher's generation and IT development in general, while at the same time a recent phenomenon in the entire world.

Social networks and online communication strategies are still a recent factor in the marketing business, and are continuing showing some kind of development, whether through the creation of new apps, new social networks, the alteration of online consumers' patterns. Therefore, there is a personal and professional interest in studying what is exactly the impact for the consumer decision making process of the information provided in social networks, while focusing specifically in the HORECA channel.

Thus, the research purpose will be to identify what is truly the effect of a specific area of digital marketing, social media marketing, in the decision making process in certain industries

of the HORECA channel in Portugal. Consequently, with this study, the researcher wants to help the organizations in the chosen industries to understand what is the motivation that drives consumers to enter the web and search for example for a particular food restaurant, or a specific hotel to stay in, and consequently what exactly leads them to choose which establishment as the ideal one. All of these problems to be researched and answered will ultimately provide new leads and perspectives for these considered industries on how to improve their marketing strategies regarding social media marketing and what is the appropriate and effective way to communicate with the targeted consumers. Therefore, the target with this dissertation is to understand what has really impact on the decision making process of the new web 2.0 consumer regarding social media, taking into consideration the HORECA channel in Portugal.

In order to generate the concept considered for this study, the researcher focused on certain tendencies and statistics as a certain background. Therefore, evidence was obtained from *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (INE) (2014), stating that, in 2014, 65% Portuguese citizens between 16 to 74 years old connect to the internet. 17% of these buy/order goods or services through the internet. Also according to INE, the majority proportion of internet users is among 16 to 24 years old, given that this amount of internet users decreases as the age increases. However, considering e-commerce, buying or selling products online, there is a proportion of 33% Portuguese citizens in 2014, with ages between 24 to 25 years old. Among these internet users in Portugal, in 2014, 57% of them connected to the internet while on the move, using mobile phones, smartphones, portable computers or other devices that provide access without being fixed with a computer at home.

When it comes to the tendencies regarding the decision making process of the targeted consumers, it's necessary to contemplate that decision making is not a moderate field, since it is dependent of the psychological, cultural, social, technological and quite a few other factors affecting the consumer and the consumer's background (Sadovykh *et al.*, 2015).

Another relevant fact is that organizations must take in consideration the irritation that certain advertising or visuals on websites or social networks may originate to the consumer. This usually happens because organizations still lack the ability to develop visual features able to generate revenue, through influencing the consumer (Sadovykh *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, organizations still present a shortage in the capability of trying to reach the targeted consumer without annoying consumers. Since the goal and strategy of the majority of organizations is to

guarantee the survival of the organization in the future, organizations have to work to succeed not only in the present day, but also in the long run. However, all organizations are dependent on their life cycle, just like a product being commercialized is dependent on its life cycle (Sequeira *et al.*, 2015). Nowadays, organizations have to be prepared for the new consumer web 2.0, and have to show a level of progression in order to satisfy its consumers in the present day.

Some authors have considered organizational reputation to be defined as considering both identity and image, considering all of the stakeholders maintaining a relationship with the organization (internal and external stakeholders) (Davies *et al.*, 2001; Sequeira *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, according with the mentioned authors, there are four main consequences originated from a positive organizational reputation: an impact on consumers' buying patterns, reputation based recommendations (word-of-mouth), social responsibility and at last, a favorable public opinion which can induce several benefits for a certain brand. Thus, a collective buzz will be created once a successful organization establishes its network of contacts and relationships, which will ultimately provide reputation based recommendation and word-of-mouth recommendations (Rogers, 2003; Sequeira *et al.*, 2015).

To conclude this topic, this dissertation will connect these mentioned main topics and tendencies and will try to provide new perspectives and theoretical frameworks to understand which social network has the higher impact in influencing the consumer of a certain segment in the HORECA channel in Portugal; how is the decision making process related with social networks in Portugal and which are the factors that influence the consumer to go online and to actually make a decision based on social networks information. Therefore, the main question in this study will be to determine what is it that drives consumers to take decisions and which factors determine this decision making process, when considering the impact of the information provided by social media.

Moreover, I will be trying to gather evidence and research in order to give answers to the mentioned questions and to understand, through the data analysis, which are the consumers most likely to create a relationship with a brand taken in consideration social networks. Therefore, with the data retrieved, it will be possible to gather information on the different types of consumers in the HORECA channel that exist in Portugal nowadays, to determine their differences and therefore the best way for an organization in this business sector to create or to better maintain and adapt a relationship with the referred consumer.

1.3 Thesis structure and overview

In this subchapter the researcher elaborates a brief overview of this entire dissertation. Therefore:

Chapter 1 – In this chapter the research guides the readers through a brief introduction to the investigation theme, as well as the aim of this research project, and the definition of the investigation. Therefore, the chapter focuses on defining the problem the researcher is going to investigate and its roots.

Chapter 2 – The second chapter of the study refers itself to the literature review. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the literary investigation to the theme, subdividing itself into five main subchapters: decision making process; internet evolution and web in 2016; social media; online purchasing decision: the new web 2.0 consumer and the HORECA channel in Portugal.

Chapter 3 – This chapter is entirely dedicated to the methodology adopted during this investigation. Along this chapter readers may find information regarding the model of analysis, the general hypotheses of the investigation, a brief justification of the model chosen and its hypotheses, and the data methodology to be applied in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 – The fourth chapter of the dissertation is one of the most important ones: the data analysis one. Therefore, this point of the study focuses itself on the previous statistical considerations to adopt; the sociodemographic sample characterization; tendencies regarding social networks and internet; social networks in the HORECA channel, online reviews trends and the hypotheses testing.

Chapter 5 – In this chapter, a main conclusion of the data analysis was elaborated by the researcher. This chapter also encompasses the limitations encountered during the study, and future investigations opportunities, as well as the more important contributions brought by the elaboration of the study.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher entails a further literary investigation, subdividing the dissertation into five main themes: the decision making process of the consumer, the process of internet evolution until the current day, social media, the web 2.0 consumer and its relation with the online purchasing decision, and a brief literary review regarding the HORECA channel and Portugal.

2.1 Decision Making Process

According to Sam and Chatwin (2015: 100), consumer decision making style can be defined as "*a mental orientation describing how a consumer makes choices*".

Decision making is a highly multidimensional field because it comprehends, in this case, several technologies at the disposal of the internet user, and the distinct features of each consumer: social, cultural, psychological, and demographic (Sadovykh *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, according with the mentioned author, it's correct to assume that there are different types of roles when considering social networks in the process of decision making: adviser, seeker and observer, as well as different types of styles: rational, dependent, intuitive and spontaneous. In this scientific article, the authors also mentioned that currently exist two dominant views of decision making: the first view supports rational decision making with structured decisions, while the second view supports an anarchical process with unstructured decisions. Additionally, there are two important factors besides consumers' experience and cultural factors influencing the decision making process: trust and risk (Gross, 2014). Information overload, especially when mentioning purchasing online, is said to be a factor that usually leads to a negative impact on the online purchasing decision making (Gross, 2014).

The process of decision making can also be divided into three steps: intelligence, design and choice (Simon, 1959). Intelligence is where the decision making begins, therefore where the decision maker gathers information and data regarding the situation, and identifies the origin of the problem. The second phase is focused on the understanding of potential alternatives and consequences of upcoming decisions or choices. Finally, the third phase happens when these alternatives are narrowed to the best possibility that leads to the choice itself (Sadovykh *et al.*, 2015).

Regarding the decision making styles also mentioned earlier in this subchapter, it's important to mention that according to Scott and Bruce (1995), there are already five styles identified: the first one is the rational decision making style and can be characterized as resulting in a thorough and logical search for alternatives for decisions, the second style is named intuitive decision making style, and characterized by searching for decisions or look for directions and help from others, the third style is named avoidant decision making style and characterized by an attempt to avoid the decision making process, the fourth style is named as the spontaneous decision making style and characterized by its users have a predisposition to implement decisions immediately. The last decision making style is the dependent and its individuals usually search for advice and are highly dependent on the direction and guidance from others. Moreover, considering these five decision making styles and the development of this theme over the years, eventually these characteristics of the decision making process evolved into the General Decision-Making Style (GDMS) (Scott and Bruce, 1995). GDMS is an instrument created in order to measure the participant's decision-making trends towards the decision-process.

When considering the relationship between online social networks and the process of decision making, one must try to understand whether the process of decision making can be benefited from the use of social networks. Additionally, according Sadovykh *et al*. (2015), given that social networks are online platforms, they will ultimately influence human behaviour and information processing and thus, they will affect decision making. According with the results provided by the study of these authors, it's possible to conclude that the majority of online social networks users consider themselves as the rational decision making style. The results obtained by the authors also proved that social networks provide support for intelligence, design and choice phases of decision making. Nevertheless, the results obtained and mentioned above did not prove that the decision making style has an effective influence on all the phases of the decision making process, however, given the rapidly technology development and internet evolution, users are constantly being affected an increasing amount of information without the understanding of the effects of this exposure. All of this research and study still states that there is little information on how social networks can contribute and be designed in order to influence or achieve the desired results in the decision making process.

According to Sam and Chatwin (2015), seven decision-making styles were identified in their model: high-quality and buying habit consciousness; brand consciousness; novelty-fashion consciousness; price consciousness; portability consciousness; website content consciousness; website interface consciousness. Therefore, it's possible to conclude that if brand presence in social networks increases brand consciousness will have a positive effect on the process of decision making of the consumer. Moreover, the website content consciousness and the website interface consciousness will be dependent factors of the social networks considering, therefore, social media will clearly play an important role in the process of decision making of the consumers. The authors also highlighted the fact that although the research took place in Macau, it is a methodology that can be useful to other markets and whereabouts.

Moreover, Tripathi (2015) stipulated that affect may be able to have emotional impact in the process of decision making, considering that affect comprehends integral affect, incidental affect and task related affect. The first type relates with the affect towards the object of decision making, while the second type relates to other emotions not related with the object in consideration. The last type of affect is approximately in the middle of the two affect types mentioned above. However, the authors stated that there is a high level of contradictory literature and results regarding this thematic, and commented that there is an opportunity for future research regarding the effect of affect in the process of decision making.

According to Heyler *et al*. (2016: 1), ethical decision making refers to *"the process recognizing a need, considering alternatives, identifying a morally acceptable option and implementing it"*.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that the process of decision making for the consumer may present certain obstacles, such as: a high number of alternatives; a high number of attributes; difficulty in processing attributes; high uncertainty regarding the attributes; a decreasing number of shared attributes (Gross, 2014).

Regarding online purchasing decisions and its relation with the decision making process, Karimi *et al*. (2015) analyzed the relationship between the decision making style and the knowledge of the products obtained by the consumer in order to develop 4 different types of online purchasing consumers: a satisficer that has low knowledge of the product for purchase (archetype 1), a satisficer that has high knowledge of the product for purchase (archetype 2), a maximizer with low knowledge of the product for purchase (archetype 3) and at last a

maximizer that has high knowledge of the product for purchase (archetype 4). According to this study and respective results, decision making style and product knowledge both have an important impact on the consumer behaviour in a purchasing and its decision making process. According with this study it is expected that the archetypes with low knowledge of the product to be involved in more searching for alternatives and more information regarding for the product purchasing, while the archetypes with more information regarding the product will not engage in that amount of search for information. The maximizing decision making style is translated in a higher feeling of uncertainty and fear of overlooking better opportunities for purchasing, therefore these individuals will engage in a longer process of decision making while purchasing (Karimi *et al.*, 2015).

Interactivity, the generation of a dialog between the seller and the likely buyer, can be characterized by emails, chat rooms, providing communication with the potential consumer. Additionally, both information overload and interactivity online will have an impact on the process of decision making, when shopping online. This happens given the fact that if interactivity between the consumer and the seller increases, usually the personal experience of the consumer is positive, and therefore this will have an impact on the purchasing decision (Gross, 2014).

Therefore, it is essential for brands to have a clear position online and try to maximize their interactivity and communication with potential consumers online, in order to eventually have clear and positive impacts in financial and brand results.

2.2 Internet Evolution and Web in 2016

The world today is changing day by day, highly related with the new technological paradigm. This phenomenon had its start back in the sixties, with its focus on the information and communication technology systems. However, this event shows a high degree of contrast between different regions and countries all over the globe, and as a result, nowadays technology is shown as a necessary condition to a network society organization, spreading information through a global network, specifically considering digital communication networks (Castells and Cardoso, 2002).

According with the research of Miranda and Lima (2012), in these last four decades the internet has shown a large scale of evolution, moving from a restricted network of computer

science academics into a global network accessed by almost everyone in the entire world, leaving a large amount of information available for almost everyone in the globe.

In the present day, it is possible to look at the development of the web. Web has passed from its starting point, web 1.0, to web 2.0, and nowadays we are reaching the state of web 3.0 (Nath *et al.*, 2015). Every society worldwide is growing a digital network which connects the entire globe, taking into consideration globalization.

Digital technology networks allow for the creation of networks that completely overcome the limitations of networks of the past. Nowadays, digital communication networks represent the basis of the network society of the present day (Castells and Cardoso, 2002). Nevertheless, a network society will express itself differently according to each culture, each society and country characteristics', and will possibly reach the entire world, when considering the effect of globalization. Therefore, this study will be focused only in Portugal, in order to define a clear sample for the study.

A network society could be defined as a social structure based on a ground of communication and information technological networks founded on digital computer networks that produce, filter and allocate information, while a network economy represents a new and more efficient way of organizing production, distribution and management, and it generated the root for the increase in the productivity growth rate of the USA, for example, for the period 1996-2005, when this new phenomenon urged (Castells and Cardoso, 2002).

This type of network society happened through the development of the web, as mentioned earlier in this subchapter. Web 1.0 was mainly characterized by being static, with little or no communicative aspects. Web 2.0 was categorized by providing editing, modifying and communication factors, leading to the construction of a global network society through digital technology. Nowadays, web development is evolving into a state of communications between digital technologies itself, without the need of human help in the matter (Nath *et al.*, 2014).

Therefore, increasing sociability in a society could be an effect caused by new wireless forms of communication, such as texting, Wi-Fi and all the apps and social networks a person can use with Wi-Fi, all of them mainly developed by web 2.0, on their way to web 3.0. This shows us that a society functioning through a network will represent a hiper-social society, not an isolated society, due to the fact that nowadays people have already accepted technology and virtual reality as part of their lives (Castells and Cardoso, 2002).

According to Castells and Cardoso (2002), an important factor characterizing a network society is the evolution of the communication business, including social media into a more digitalized and interactive system. This new system of communication is characterized by information spreading all over the internet, and it doesn't have to pass through media channels or the government. Therefore, according with the previously mentioned author, communication through personal computers created a new channel of communication worldwide, and information doesn't have to be regulated anymore in order to pass through the official and usual channels of mass media or the government before reaching the entire planet.

Consequently, web 2.0 was later branded as "the social web", since it establishes links between people and between documents online. Thus, the phenomenon of the social web provides an opportunity for people to connect online to one another, to create emotional ties with communities, events, brands, and other types of entities or social groups (Newman *et al*., 2016).

Following the evolution of the web, it is important to define the new type of web that is developing nowadays. Web 3.0, or "the Internet of Things", has already started, being originated by the beginning of the smartphone period, thus, web 3.0 connects people with services and devices in a higher level, having a basis of Wi-Fi, sensors and mobile devices and social networks (Newman *et al*., 2016).

According with data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012), it is possible to state that Portugal has a high percentage of internet selling and purchasing activities when considering the industry of information and communication, followed by the industry of accommodation, food and beverage service activities. These data consider the information until June of 2012, and since then the internet has continued to develop itself, as mentioned previously. According to some other data from INE (2015), the tendencies for Portuguese people while performing online activities in the last three years (2013, 2014 and 2015), presents a clear evidence of a high proportion of individuals using the internet mainly with the goal of participating in social networks (70,3% in 2013, 72,4% in 2014 and 70% in 2015). This study considered individuals between 16 and 74 years old using internet in Portugal in the first three months of each year. Other activities showing a large proportion of individuals accessing the internet for the considered years above, are for example, sending or receiving e-mails, and uploading information onto websites.

Concluding all the evolution process of the internet until the present day, web 2.0 and social media have completely made a revolution in the news and information business of the current day. The increasing importance of social media and channels such as Facebook, Google, Snapchat, have grown into becoming the ultimate providers of information for a majority of the population. Nowadays, people are dependent of their smartphones, apps, social media networks, for mostly everything (Bell, 2016).

Therefore, there is an increasing competition to become one of these top apps, to make the consumer to spend the maximum amount of time using an app or social network. This phenomenon happens because the more a person uses a certain app or social network, a higher level of information about the consumer reaches the creator of the app (or social network), leading to a better way to communicate with the consumers in the future, hence, increasing the revenues of the creator of the app or social network (Bell, 2016).

2.3 Social Media

Before the evolution of the internet and social media, people usually communicated with face to face conversations, which in Marketing terms could be also called Word-of-Mouth strategy. Word-of-Mouth (WoM) relates to the communication from customer to customer according with the customer's image of the brand in question. However, nowadays, with the IT development the world is facing, people everywhere communicate in a high percentage through computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Sadovykh *et al*., 2015).

Observational learning is another concept that can also be applied to online communities. Observational learning can thus be defined by the public observation of purchasing decisions by other people (previous consumers) overshadowing the private information that generates a consumer belief (Chen *et al*., 2011). According with the same authors, firms would gain if they design or create their observational learning and word-of-mouth strategies together.

The main difference between these two forms of social interaction is the higher credibility demonstrated by word-of-mouth. While observational learning presents only a visualization of the actions took by previous consumers, word-of-mouth provides opinions, recommendations and personal experiences of purchases (Chen *et al*., 2011).

According to Sadovykh *et al*. (2015: 15), *"a social network is a social structure that consists of individuals who are interconnected with one another through common interests, beliefs*

and/or values." Blackshaw (2006) defined social media as *"internet oriented applications which posts customer generated content which can be described as media impressions shaped by customers' experiences with easy sharing between the other consumers and archiving them on the channels".* Therefore, as mentioned above in this document, organizations nowadays must consider the appropriate and most effective way to communicate with the targeted consumer, and this process will ultimately be dependent of social networks interactions online. The data retrieved from INE (2014) was able to sustain that when considering the year of 2014, and the ages between 16 to 74 years old, 72,4% of the internet users in Portugal in this age limit that used internet in the first three months of the year in question, participated in social networks websites. This is a high percentage of users participating in social networks when using the internet, which proves that social networks are an appropriate way of communicating with consumers, the next question to consider is which social networks are more appropriate for each business sector, more objectively, for each business sector inside of the HORECA channel.

Moreover, according to Sadovykh *et al.* (2015), the style of internet participation is what distinguishes uniquely each user in online communities. For example, some people post messages every day or several times per week, while others just gather information resulting from already developed dialogues in these websites.

However, it is important to remember that social media marketing is very important for organizations in order to generate possibilities to monitor its customers' improvements' ideas thus improve their performance based on this direct feedback. Therefore, this type of communication with the consumer and feedback provided would be able to increase brand awareness, to generate or increase a strong relationship with customers and supporters of the organization, to encourage the use of new communication channels, among others (Jucaite and Mascinskiene, 2014).

According to Rodrigues (2012), in the study performed by the author, which although was not a study able to being extrapolated to the general population, it was proved that in the sample approximately 75% of the respondents followed brands on Facebook, leading each respondent to follow 18 brands on Facebook, as a mean value. Moreover, one of the most important factors organizations should consider would be that participation in social media is a key entry for them to make an impact in the consumer decision making process (Jucaite and Mascinskiene, 2014).

Additionally, Rodrigues (2012) also came to the conclusion that the top action performed by respondents on Facebook was to click on "Like", translating into an action that took less time and effort for respondents, justifying its popularity.

Furthermore, Xie and Lee (2015) obtained evidence demonstrating that exposures to earned and owned social media activities for brands have significant and positive impact on consumers' likelihood of purchasing the brands' items. Another important discovery from the same authors is the fact that it demonstrates that increases in consumers' exposures to brand messages through brand pages or social media as for example social circles of friends on Facebook, will increase a predisposition to purchase the brands in question. These authors therefore advise organizations to initiate online communities such as Facebook pages in order to create direct relationships with its customers. Furthermore, Xie and Lee (2015) also gathered evidence stating that although a successful social media strategy is capable of generating positive effects for an organization and expand its consumer base for its brand, it cannot facilitate its existing customer base to buy more of the brand.

According with a study provided by Katona and Sarvary (2014) regarding the phenomenon of the Maersk Line on the web, a maritime logistics operator, 61,1% of the total of customers (followers on social media) and non-customers (non-followers on social media), representing the surveyed sample, answered by stating that Maersk's social media presence improved their perception of the company and its brand.

Regarding the type of online social networks (OSN), it's important to mention that these have progressed from overall friendship websites (as for example MySpace, Orkut, Facebook, hi5, among others) to more specific user orientated websites. Therefore, some of these social networks are focused and targeting the goal of growing globally, like Facebook, YouTube, Google+, targeting all niche groups of internet users, while the rest of them are focused on achieving a niche market of internet users, considering a certain theme (Sadovykh *et al*., 2015). These niche social networks can be for example MUBI, a social network for rating and reviewing cinema, Goodreads, a social network for rating and reviewing books and literature, Zomato, a social network dedicated to the rating and reviewing segments in the HORECA channel, among others.

To conclude this chapter of the literature review, it's important to mention that the internet and more specifically, online communications as for example social networks, provide a

starting point for organizations since they represent a low cost way to reach the intended audience and at the same time to access consumers aiming specific interests and gathering feedback from the consumers in question (Katona and Sarvary, 2014).

2.4 Online Purchasing Decision: The New Web 2.0 Consumer

Nowadays, consumers are online, on websites, social networks, exploiting online purchasing opportunities. Therefore, an interesting subject to study and provide understanding is that consumers all through the globe influence and are influenced by other consumers' opinion and personal experience with a given product or service. Once, this was called word-of-mouth or observational learning, as mentioned in previous chapters. However, nowadays, this type of influence happens mostly online.

The origin and development of the internet, online selling and purchasing activities and the development in information technology all through the globe produced opportunities for companies to reach their customers online, using several different techniques. This development allows firms to use Word-of-Mouth and observational learning to grasp a positive influence on the consumer purchasing decision (Chen *et al.*, 2011).

Relationship marketing is a response to the increasing demand of consumers wanting more information on the product, on the provider of the service/product, and a way of organizations themselves to be able to provide their responses, and to increase their quality in the offer of services and products (Lindon *et al.*, 2013). Thus, the majority of tools regarding relationship marketing destined to communicating with customers are usually magazines, personalized mail, web pages, points of sale, mass media, texting, or emails (Lindon *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, in the current day, it's possible to observe the role that online social networks currently provide in the process of communicating with clients of a certain brand, a certain establishment, a certain organization.

However, it is also very important to have a clear understanding of the changes happening all around the world and the alteration of the classical consumer to the new web 2.0 consumer. This type of understanding is highly benefic for firms to have a larger notion of how to efficiently communicate with its consumers and thus generate better financial results.

According to Kasriel-Alexander (2016) the main trends for consumers in 2016 are the following: agnostic shoppers, buying time, challenging ageing, change makers, gender

blurring, greener food, mental wellbeing, over-connected consumers, shopping for control, and spending singles. These trends translate in several different types of consumers, with a mostly common factor being the scarcity of time of the new consumer. Agnostic shoppers are characterized by not being concerned by labels and brands, being very informed and comparing prices. This type of consumer represents a challenge on how brands should connect with them. As mentioned previously, the trend of buying time is related with a necessity of maximizing consumers' time. This trend generates a higher use of online devices to purchase online, in order to save time and not waste time in going to a physical purchasing store. Saving time and the growing use of online purchasing also relates with a major use of social media in order to obtain response from a certain brand or store, therefore, there are more brands each day responding to queries by Twitter or Facebook, for example. The real time interaction between brands and consumers online also provides a higher necessity on putting a higher effort into investing in a social media team. Challenging ageing, another type of consumer trend for 2016 according to Kasriel-Alexander (2016), is directed to the consumer after middle age, therefore an older consumer, not exactly millennials. These older consumers are also characterized by using social networks in a large scale, since they are already fond of using it to keep in touch with their families. Change makers are mostly preoccupied in trying to have a positive impact in the world of today and are characterized by younger millennials, between 12 and 25. Additionally, these consumers also use social networks, as Facebook for example, in order to generate online fundraising for their social causes. Another important characteristic of this new younger millennial is the fact that the increasing need of owning smartphones has outdated the need for owning a car. Gender blurring is a new consumer trend for 2016 that is related with the fact that brands have started to create products not objectively directed to one specific gender, leaving the gender in a grey area in order for everyone, boy or girl, to be able to choose. Additionally, there are actually parents and families showing their unhappiness of overly genderly products and toys in social networks and blogs. Greener food is a trend that already exists and is highly related with a need of eating healthier, eating only healthier things and local groceries' products, a trend that has derived from the increasing industrialization in the production of food and in supermarkets. This consumer trend is also highly related with the next one, the trend of achieving a mental wellbeing, by exercising more, eating healthier, and trying to save time wherever possible. One of the most important trends presented by Kasriel-Alexander (2016), is possibly the trend of over-connected consumers. According with the evidence retrieved by Kasriel-Alexander (2016), internet users are expected to reach three billion in 2016.

Additionally, the increasing use of smartphones is generating a great addiction in online consumers and smartphone users, when considering that compulsive texting shows characteristics of compulsive gamblers. Children and teenagers also use their smartphones and internet at night, being called the "vampire kids". Shopping for control, another consumer trend in the year of 2016 is related with financial stress, loss of trust in government and public institutions, and the increasing terrorism in developed countries, and generates a higher use of smartphones, facilitating control of consumers' homes even at distance. At last, spending singles represent the creation of a new type of consumer. This type of consumers are usually millennials that have generally high disposable income and don't have children, therefore they spend their money on nephews, nieces, and their friends' kids. They are also called "yuccies", being categorized as creative consumers in their twenties or thirties. This type of consumer travels alone, without fear of being alone or fear of uncertainty (Kasriel-Alexander, 2016).

It is also very interesting to notice the trends around world travelers and their process of decision making based on online factors and information. In the decision making process of consumers worldwide, considering tourists and travelers, it is known that they are more inclined to base their decision on online travel agencies and TripAdvisor, rather than booking the trip on a physical travel agency (Gulbahar and Yildirim, 2015).

To conclude this subchapter and according with the information from the Ericcson ConsumerLab (2015), consumer trends for the year 2016 and forward will be highly related with social media and information technology devices and development. These tendencies will also be highly related with the development of artificial intelligence, virtual technology and automatic houses discovering and helping to fulfill the needs of consumers for their own house. Therefore, it is expected that online use of technologies will develop in an even more addiction and need for the consumer, for example, leading the consumer to use social networks as a mean to contact emergency services. Also accordingly with this source, buyers believe that their presence and sharing on social media will likely increase their influence on society.

2.5 HORECA Channel in Portugal

2.5.1 – Introduction to HORECA in Portugal and Economical and Social Context

Portugal is a country that experienced in the last few years a severe economic crisis. However, as the economy starts to improve and the world and economy goes global, day by day, different types of businesses will also have to adapt and evolve in order to face the changes in the economy, in the society, and the changes in the preferences and new ways of communicating of the targeted consumers. Nowadays, people are getting more and more IT dependent, especially when it comes to social networks and internet, as mentioned in the last chapters of the literature of this research project. Therefore, to proceed with the study, it's necessary to learn about the society in question, the generations considered, and the country's population.

Regarding population indicators and statistics, according with data from INE (2014), it's possible to affirm that the Portuguese population is decreasing and consequently facing an aging of its population.

While considering consuming levels and statistics, as mentioned in the report of Banco de Portugal (2015), due to the effects generated by the late recession, purchasing and consuming levels suffered a massive decrease since 2010-2011, and only started to recover between 2013 and 2014. However, one positive factor that stimulated purchasing levels back again is the fact that inflation levels started to stabilize in a relatively low level at the end of 2015.

However, according to Banco de Portugal (2016), an improvement in the Portuguese economic results is expected for the years between 2016 and 2018. Reasons that support this idea is the projection of a growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) both in 2016 and in 2017, with a slight decrease in 2018 to be expected. The recovery of the great recession Portugal went through had its beginning in the year of 2013, and it stills shows a reduced and slow rhythm of recovery, however it already is showing some signs of improvement.

The fact that there is still a lot of unemployed population and another part moving to other countries in order to find better professional opportunities is a factor that should be considered in order to understand the effects of the messages transmitted to the customer and the actual purchasing by the customer.

When considering all of these factors together, it's possible to conclude that the Portuguese society and generation in question is a population able to adapt to new circumstances and with a quick need to evolve, and due to the economic crisis and the growing globalization and virtualization of the world we live in, everyone will eventually adapt to the world. More recently, there has been an important social network intimately related to the HORECA channel that has been causing a buzz sensation between Portuguese youngsters. This social network or digital marketing technique mentioned is called Zomato, and it represents a social network dedicated to rate and review all type of establishments from bars, cafes, restaurants to night clubs. Another great feature of this also called application is the fact that it provides a whole new meaning of Word-of-Mouth strategy, by directly advising other users or potential users of a certain service or establishment, of a personal experience in that same establishment.

According to Teixeira (2010), in a non-representative marketing study, it's possible to understand that the sample in the study demonstrated that general anonymous online rating and reviewing was a highly important fact considered by consumers, which translated in a very important influence factor in future consumers.

Nowadays, it is also important to notice that the tourism industry presents some challenges establishing its marketing communication strategy regarding social media. For example, such barriers may be the issue of the lack of control regarding online reviews (every person can provide feedback or evaluations on establishments, whether it was a previous consumer or not), the number of employees an establishment has dedicated to respond to feedbacks, and the hierarchical system of international chains which cannot provide a quick response to feedback once it has to respond to international rules and procedures (Gulbahar and Yildirim, 2015). In addition, given that we are talking about the internet, organizations should take extra caution because one bad review could go viral or can even become a trend to other users who have never been on that same establishment, but who trust on certain reviews or on the opinion of certain users.

Zomato, the social network originated from India, focused its business in Lisbon as a European centre based on the importance of the capital according with the personality of the generation considered, the adherence to new social networks and IT features, and the willing to learn and adapt from Portuguese people. This social network has its presence on 23

countries (Zomato, 2016) and is becoming an increasingly important marketing strategy for all the sectors in the HORECA channel, especially those related with food supply.

It is interesting to notice the difference between business travellers and holiday travellers (tourists). While business travellers usually trust their company's recommendation for a certain hotel to stay in, and then maybe consult online travel agencies or search engines, common tourists usually trust in their friends and colleagues opinions and references (McCarthy *et al.*, 2010).

Other authors, such as Hsu *et al.* (2012), also concluded that social networks such as TripAdvisor, a social network dedicated to ratings and reviews of hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast establishments, in the hotel business sector, proved to be a highly important marketing strategy for organizations in this specific area to consider as a future path to follow. This study gathered evidence demonstrating that real bookings of hotels and similar establishments are more likely to happen after reading the reviews present in the social network. Hence, organizations should put some of their resources trying to increase the effect of their digital Word-of-Mouth through establishing an influence in their customer's minds through these websites.

2.5.2 – Hotels (HO)

Therefore, following what's been mentioned about social networks in the previous literature review chapters', it is important to conclude about the most important social media channels at the present day, considering the HORECA channel in Portugal, and globally.

Regarding the tourism industry sector and its online consumer reviews, there are several platforms online providing to the consumer an opportunity to gather information during the decision making process, and to provide his or hers feedback of the consumer personal experience with a hotel or bed and breakfast establishment, for example.

Regarding tendencies across hotel chains around the world and their marketing strategies, it is important to mention that nowadays half of the hotel industry uses traditional approaches to gather feedback (for example, e-mail, phone, front office staff feedback, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Hotels.com, Facebook, among others), while the other half mainly uses software tools like Revinate and Medelia, which represents software generating statistical reports with tendencies retrieved from online evaluations (Gulbahar and Yildirim, 2015).

The top online platforms in Portugal that provide booking, online review and rating, and the gathering of information, considering the hotel industry, are booking.com, Air BnB, and TripAdvisor. Booking.com is a website that provides the opportunity for consumers to register themselves, to gather information on the planning phase, to book an accommodation while planning holidays or any other trip, and to provide a rate between 1 to 10, a commentary or review about the chosen establishment, providing some kind of online review for future consumers. Booking.com also allows consumers to rate individual aspects of their accommodation from 1 to 10, as for example, cleaning, comfort, localization, employees, free Wi-Fi, price-quality relationship, among others. Air BnB represents a website providing local people to rent rooms in their house or even entire private houses for tourists. This type of renting service also provides some kind of information regarding the host of the room or house, and provides information and reviews by previous hosts on the people renting the house. TripAdvisor is one of the most recognized websites currently for collecting information while deciding which establishment to book, not only regarding hotels or places to stay in, but also restaurants, cafes, city guides, among others. TripAdvisor besides providing opportunity to book accommodation and providing information, it has great value in its online review system. This system is also based on a rate and review system for every establishment. Another positive point for this website is that it has the opportunity for future consumers to rate as "helpful" on reviews. Therefore, each reviewer has publicly presented in his or hers page the number of evaluations and reviews, and the number of helpful reviews. The evaluation from consumers who relied on the review of the first consumers present a way to fight against one of the main obstacles of using social media as a marketing tool, mentioned earlier: the lack of control on people making reviews on websites, which can be or cannot be actual consumers of the establishments. This way a consumer with higher scores of helpful reviews will have a legitimate credibility for future consumers.

According with data from INE (2011), 63% of the hotel and similar type of establishments utilized social networks in continental Portugal, which already shows a high percentage of participating in social networks five years ago. Regarding data from the Statistical Monthly Bulletin of May of INE (2016), it's possible to state that there was a homologue positive variation regarding staying in hotel and similar establishments of 6,2% for Portuguese residents, and of 6,8% for foreign residents, all over the world, therefore demonstrating a positive growth from the previous year and homologue season as for Portuguese and foreign tourists. According to Booking.com (2016), there are currently 15 422 Portuguese properties

registered as hotels or similar establishments in Portugal for anyone to book their trip online through the social network.

Furthermore, it's important to mention that current consumers don't just go to the nearest shop, instead, they use whatever digital means around them: personal computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. According to Nielsen (2016), there is a prediction that until 2019 online retail sales grow more than double.

Furthermore, the direct contribution of travel and tourism for the Portuguese Gross Development Product translates into an increase from year to year since 2011 until 2015, according with the World Travel & Tourism Council (2015). In 2014 this contribution represented, in nominal prices, an amount of 10,4 and in 2015 of 10,8.

During the online purchasing process, the gathering of information, offers or promotions are the most frequent actions. The more frequent activities of online purchasing identified by Nielsen (2016), for the last semester of 2015, are for example, to look for product information (63% regarding travel products or services), comparing prices (52% for travel products or services), and the search for deals, promotions or coupons (46% regarding travel products or services). Thus, the high importance social media have in the relation between hotels and similar tourism establishments and the consumer should highly be taken in consideration.

2.5.3 – Restaurants (RE) and Cafes (CA)

When talking about social networks targeting restaurants and cafes in Portugal, it is necessary to mention Zomato and TripAdvisor, not mentioning Facebook, which represents a more mainstream and not targeted social network like the other ones stated. We've mentioned mainly the importance of Zomato as a social network having a clear impact on consumers' decision making process. Moreover, as cited previously, TripAdvisor is mainly destined to provide information about travel destinations, but it also has reviews and information about establishments to eat or to drink. However, Zomato represents the top online platform in which millennials search and review establishments like restaurants and cafes. This social network provides information about the type of dinner which an establishment is destined to, the average price, localization, schedules, small peculiarities of the establishment (for example, if it has smokers areas, TV, Wi-Fi, among other aspects), contacts, and the most important aspect considering the thematic of this study: previous consumers' reviews about the establishments. Therefore, consumers can post reviews with or without a picture of the

food or place, and can give a rating between 1 and 5. These reviews, similar with what happens in TripAdvisor, can also be reviewed by following consumers, expressing their opinion regarding the first review. All of these factors represent highly positive factors that can lead to future consumers to take an action based on more solid information. Another curious Zomato fact, is that the social network in Portugal is divided through areas of Lisbon or Porto, and for each area it has described the number of total restaurant or cafes type of establishments.

Regarding the position of restaurants and cafes in the current Portuguese economy, according to data from Associação da Hotelaria, Restauração e Similares de Portugal (2016), it's possible to state that in 2016, 28.500 new employment places were created between march and June, and an expectancy of increasing this number in the following months, basically due to the increase of foreign tourism and the consequent growth of trust from Portuguese business men. Another motive for the improvement in this economic sector was the decreasing of the percentage of the VAT (Value Added Tax), also known as IVA (*Imposto sobre o Valor Acrescentado*), the Portuguese tax on consumption. Furthermore, the unemployment rate also has decreased especially in Algarve, one of the most famous regions of Portugal for tourists.

2015 was the year in which Portugal seemed to have managed to recover the restaurant business from the crisis in previous years. Full-service restaurants have been suffering from the negative impacts of the late recession, and in 2015 started to show signs of recovery, according to Euromonitor International (2016). This was translated into an increase of domestic demand and tourist purchasing in this business segment. Regarding cafés and bars in Portugal, the same source was also positive, stating that similar as the restaurant business, these segments also started to show symptoms of recovery in 2015.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The type of methodology considered for the gathering of the evidence for this research had its beginning in analysing the existent literature, considering: scientific papers, international journals' publications, books, among others, according with the matters in scope to analyse, therefore, a deep analysis of the literature at the date regarding social networks, digital marketing, decision making process between consumers, and the relation of online social networks with consumers around the globe and the business segments in the HORECA channel.

According to Sam and Chatwin (2015), it's highly important nowadays to understand consumers' style in the process of decision making because it will have an impact on the inclination to purchase products online, for example. Social network sites are also stated to affect consumers' purchasing decisions (Sam and Chatwin, 2015), taking also in consideration that products with reviews have a 20,4% lower return rate than those who don't (Siwicki, 2009). Furthermore, there are a number of social media currently online, and each one has a specific goal and can be differently applied in the marketing of an organization or a brand (Egan, 2016).

Thus, as evidently proved by the analysis of the existent literature on the matter, it is possible to state that social networks like Facebook, for example, have a clear impact on the decision process of the online consumer, and will define its relationship with its consumers. The goal of this investigation is therefore to understand what this impact means, and how can we measure it, considering the HORECA channel in Portugal.

Hence, in the next subchapters the model of analysis and the consequent hypothesis being tested will be presented, as well as the methodology considered for the retrieval of the data and its consequent analysis and interpretation. The following subchapters are therefore destined to present the model of analysis for the research dissertation, the investigation hypotheses, the variables definition, and the methodology considered for everything regarding the gathering of the data for the study and its characteristics.

3.2 Model of Analysis and Hypothesis Definition

In this subchapter the investigation's focus will be to determine the model which covers the goal of the dissertation, which represents how online social networks influence consumers' decision making in the HORECA channel in Portugal.

Therefore, according to Malhotra (2010: 83) *"an analytical model is a set of variables and their interrelationships designed to represent, in whole or in part, some real system or process"*. Also according to Malhotra (2010), there can be several types of models, but the author considers three as the most usual ones: graphical, verbal and mathematical. The model this study intends to present is a graphical model, a visual model destined to present the relationships between the main variables and the research problem, proving to be a basic step to define the hypotheses to the study.

Hence, taking in consideration the research work previously done in the literature review, it was possible to identify certain concepts that represent variables with impact in the general hypothesis (the impact of social networks in the consumers' decision process in the HORECA channel). These variables can be defined as the following:

- **Profile and style of the consumers** (sociodemographic and online profile of the consumers)
- **The type of social network used** (defining the social networks used more often in online reviews and recommendations in the HORECA channel, in general)
- **Online reviews by previous consumers** (defining how positive and negative online reviews in social networks by previous consumers influence future consumers in the HORECA channel)
- **Type of HORECA establishment** (defining the HORECA sub segment that is more influenced by social networks)

Therefore, following the definition of the variables that show some kind of influence to the impact that social networks provide in the decision making process of a consumer in the HORECA business segment, the next step is to measure the impact that each one of these variables provide on the general hypothesis, on the goal of the research.

The measurement of these variables will be mainly made through indicators, namely: consumer's age, gender, educational qualifications, current occupation, geographical location (all of these together describing the sociodemographic context of the consumer); in order to

measure the consumers' profile regarding social networks, the impact of the social media used, and the impact of the online reviews on social media, other indicators were used, such as knowledge and opinion regarding online social networks dedicated to the HORECA channel, attendance or frequency of the user in these type of social networks and his or hers frequency in providing or viewing online reviews of these type of establishments, and they are all described in the final questionnaire, in Attachment 1.

Thus, the Model of Analysis of this dissertation can be visualized in the next page, in Image 1:

Image 1 – Model of Analysis: The effect of social networks on the consumers' decision process in the HORECA channel in Portugal
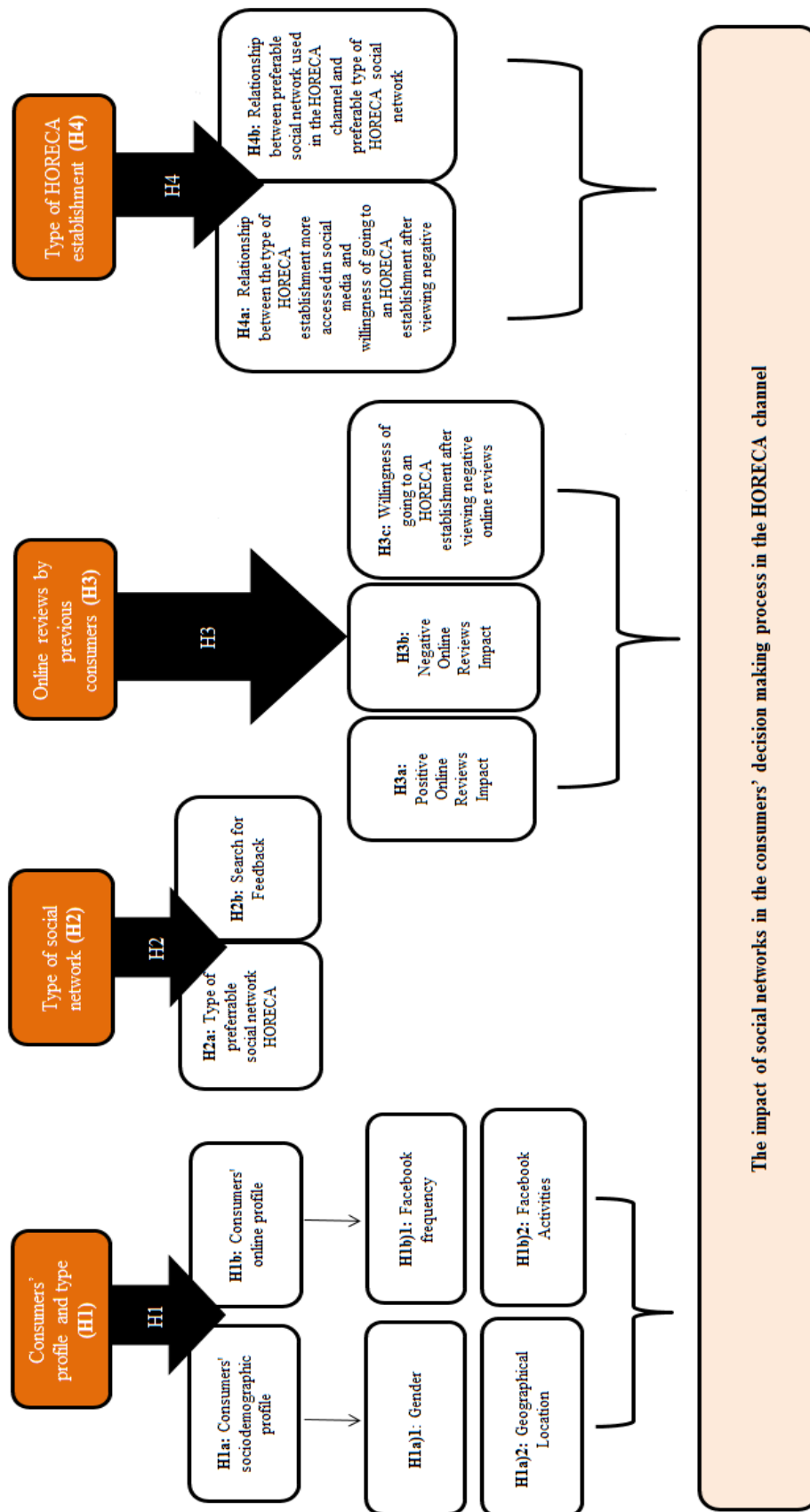
According to Malhotra (2010: 85), *"a hypothesis (H) is an unproven statement or proposition about a factor or phenomenon that is of interest to the researcher".*

Therefore, according with the model of analysis established in this subchapter of the Methodology, it is possible to define the following hypotheses to be tested in this dissertation:

H1 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by a consumer's profile (style and type).

With H1 the researcher intended to understand in what degree the sociodemographic and online habits of the consumers actually influence his or hers decision making process when it comes to social networks, in the HORECA channel. Therefore, H1 was divided in H1a, destined to identify only sociodemographic characteristics and its relationship with a consumer's trust in the information provided in social networks, and H1b, destined to identify information regarding a consumer's online habits, mainly in Facebook. These two sub hypotheses were also subdivided with an aim of better understanding these factors, as can be seen below:

H1a)1: Male and women have different levels of trust in the information provided in social networks.

H1a)2: Individuals from different geographical locations will have different level of trust in the information provided in social networks.

H1b)1 – Consumers' Facebook frequency will present a statistical significant relationship with their trust in the information provided in social networks

H1b)2 – Consumers' Facebook activities will present a statistical significant relationship with their perception on negative online reviews

H2, a hypothesis intended to measure what was the effect of choosing a certain social network in the HORECA channel, and for which types of HORECA establishments each social media was used, can be observed below:

H2 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by the type of social network.

Similar as the previous hypotheses, H2 was also divided into two sub hypotheses: H2a and H2b. H2a with an aim of providing information regarding the relationship between the most used social networks in the sample for the HORECA channel and the motivations that lead

consumers to access Facebook, and H2b providing information about the search for feedback in HORECA establishments and consumers' Facebook frequency. These sub hypotheses can be viewed below:

H2a – There is a relationship between the type of preferable social network used in the HORECA channel and the motivations and actions for accessing social networks in the HORECA channel

H2b – There are differences between consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers and the ones who don't according to their Facebook frequency

H3 tries to bring insights in the way online reviews affect the behaviour of the current web 2.0 consumers. This hypothesis can be analysed below:

H3 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by online reviews by previous consumers.

With H3, the researcher intended to understand how online reviews by previous consumers influence a future consumer in the HORECA channel, and thus, the researcher identifies other 3 sub hypotheses that made it possible to understand what is the impact of positive and negative online reviews for consumers, and to understand the relationship between consumers who usually search for feedback for HORECA establishments and their willingness on visiting an establishment with a negative online review. Hence, three sub-hypothesis showing the real impact of what the higher degree of influence has in the consumer decision making process were identified:

H3a - The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by positive online reviews by previous consumers.

H3b - The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by negative online reviews by previous consumers.

H3c - Consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers of an HORECA establishment will differ in a significant way according to their willingness of going to an HORECA establishment after viewing negative online reviews

H4 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by the type of HORECA establishment.

From H4, it was possible to define two sub-hypotheses, in order to try to understand effectively which is the type of HORECA establishment in which Portuguese consumers search for feedback and information on social networks, in a more important degree, as can be observed by H4a and H4b below:

H4a – The type of HORECA establishment considered by the consumer has a significant impact in the probability of not wanting to visit an establishment with a bad online review.

H4b – The type of HORECA establishment considered by the consumer presents a relationship with the preferable HORECA social networks used

The hypotheses defined tend to be an answer to the research problem of the study (Malhotra, 2010). Therefore, this dissertation will have the goal of trying to reach the general hypothesis by measuring the impact of these variables on the impact of social networks in the consumers' decision making process in the HORECA channel in Portugal. This dissertation and study will also try to provide a new perspective on the subject, with results that could maximize brands and organizations' ways to manage their digital marketing strategies.

3.3 Data Methodology

The methodology considered for this study had its basis by analysing the existent literature on the matter until the present day, and also a brief analysis on the country under scope, Portugal, and the business segment considered (HORECA), through an empirical research study. At that time, it was chosen a quantitative approach, using inquiry through online questionnaires, as will be deeper explained below. The option of using an online questionnaire is based on the need of reaching a high number of respondents (the researcher intended to obtain approximately 400 responses) in the time defined for the data retrieval (approximately one week), and to analyse the data in a quantitative approach. The total valid responses were 417 online questionnaire responses.

According with Malhotra (2010), marketing research data can be subdivided into secondary data or primary data. Primary data can also subdivide itself on descriptive or causal data. Descriptive data can be obtained through survey data or observational and other data.

Therefore, we consider the data retrieved to be quantitative and descriptive, taking into consideration that it was obtained through an online questionnaire, through Facebook.

Firstly, a pretesting of the questionnaire was done, including 10 respondents, one of which the researcher who developed the questionnaire, a statistics' counsellor (Joana Castilho), and eight other respondents, with similar background as the ones aimed for the actual questionnaire. This data was not analysed, it was meant to improve the questionnaire from potential errors. According to Malhotra (2010: 354), *"pretesting refers to the testing of the questionnaire on a small sample of respondents to identify and eliminate potential problems"*. After the pretesting, a question regarding the HORECA channel was added to the questionnaire in its last section, and the fact that the main social network for the HORECA channel, Zomato, is only available in Lisbon and Porto in Portugal, was constituted as a limitation of the study, since the respondents from other districts are not able to use Zomato very often, therefore biasing their responses regarding the use of social networks destined to the HORECA channel. This matter is furthered developed in the conclusions and limitations' chapter.

According to Malhotra (2010: 370), *"a population is the aggregate of all the elements that share some common set of characteristics and that comprise the universe for the purposes of the marketing research problem"* and *"a sample, on the other hand, is a subgroup of the population selection for participation in the study"*.

In order to generate a sample of the population wanted for the study, it was used the convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method is a nonprobability sampling technique (Malhotra, 2010) and it takes in consideration that achieving a representative sampling size was not possible and therefore the chosen samples are the ones easier to collect (Hill and Hill, 2012), given that the population or universe in question is every consumer with access to social networks in Portugal, namely Facebook. Convenience sampling is also the least monetary and time consuming sampling technique (Malhotra, 2010). Therefore, the aim of the sampling was trying to achieve the maximum amount of responses during the time destined to that goal, through Facebook. Although the convenience sampling method is not usually recommended for descriptive studies and are not representative in order to make inferences for the whole population (Malhotra, 2010), taking into consideration the lack of monetary and timing resources of the researcher, the selection of the respondents based on convenience is a more appropriate method, and the study can still be considered to

take conclusions regarding the operational hypothesis established above, providing information about consumers' opinion in social networks destined to the HORECA channel in Portugal.

The sampling process also took in consideration rules of thumb for different statistical analysis, simple and multivariate analysis, since that the highest the sample number, the highest the potency of the tests performed would be (Hill and Hill, 2012). A rule of thumb is a guide for sampling estimation based on previous researchers and scientists experiments and information, without a mathematical rational (Hill and Hill, 2012).

However, some restrictions were considered in the sampling process. In order for someone to take part in the sample, it had to possess a Facebook account. Therefore, the sample destined for the study would be Portuguese consumers possessing a Facebook account. Facebook was the vehicle used to diffuse the online questionnaire, because of its global expression and because it does not represent a niche segment of a social network, but encompasses different social network users.

The online questionnaire was published on Facebook on the 26th of August of 2016 with a goal to obtain the maximum participation and to reach people with a high attendance of social networks, also for people to share the online questionnaire amongst their friends in order to reach the maximum amount of respondents. It was an anonymous online survey, stating that it was purposed for a study with the academic institution ISCTE – IUL. The gathering of responses for the questionnaire took approximately one week, exactly from the 26th of August of 2016 until the 5th of September of 2016, and 428 responses were retrieved. After a brief analysis of the responses of the questionnaire, for reasons of validity, the researcher had to exclude in total 11 cases, leaving the final number of responses to be 417 valid responses. These cases were excluded mainly because the sample tried to represent Portuguese consumers, and therefore foreign respondents were excluded with the filter question regarding the geographic location. Also, respondents who answered invalid geographical locations were also excluded, since the respective question was an open ended interrogation.

Like it was previously mentioned in the introduction to the chapter of the methodology, the gathering of the statistical data needed for the testing of the hypotheses was by inquiry, using online questionnaires by Google Forms, through Facebook. Afterwards, the data was

introduced and analysed with the informatics and statistics' software SPSS, in order to draw real conclusions from the data obtained.

The questionnaire was subdivided into 4 different sections: Section I was destined to characterize the sociodemographic profile of the consumer, Section II was meant to characterize the consumer's profile regarding social networks and online behaviours, Section III was intended to characterize consumer's preference regarding the type of social media in the HORECA channel, and the last section, Section IV was destined to characterize the consumers' profile regarding online reviews in social media. The final version of the questionnaire can be visualized in Attachment 1.

The online questionnaire had some of the questions to be answered according with ordinal scales of 1 to 5 (in which 1 corresponds to the lowest point of agreeance, 3 corresponds to the neutral point, and 5 corresponds to the maximum of agreeance of the question, adapted to each of the respective question). Structured questions mainly in a multiple choice format were the most used questions in the questionnaire. Structured questions translate into several alternatives for the respondent to answer, and can be presented on multiple choice, dichotomous or on a scale (Malhotra, 2010). Also, the dissertation will not be focused on age limits, in order to understand trends according with consumer preferences in different generations, and characterize the respondents in a social context.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned in the methodology chapter, the gathering of the data was through an online questionnaire provided by Google Forms, diffused in Facebook. The data was analysed with the SPSS informatics software for data analysis, version 23, licensed by ISCTE Business School.

The following chapters provide an extensive analysis of the statistical tests used to characterize and study the data retrieved, in order to bring a conclusion to the investigation hypotheses.

Thus, several different statistical techniques were used to analyse the information. The researcher used simple statistical analysis tests, and multivariate statistical analysis tests, taking in consideration that every test had to be appropriate to analyse a variable being dependent on its scale in the questionnaire or question formulation.

Firstly, the researcher focused on descriptive statistics, such as frequency, tendencies, averages, in order to characterize the consumers who answered to the study, and bring conclusions about their main features and preferences. In the survey, a lot of the questions were measured as nominal scales, which mostly originated analysis in a non-parametric form of tests. Ordinal scales type 2 (also named evaluation scales, mostly in a Likert Scale until 5 format) were also used, however, in a lower incidence.

4.2 Statistical Previous Considerations

According to previous literature on statistical tests on social sciences, the researcher took some values as considerations by previous authors and investigators. These values are the following:

P-Value significance level was estimated as 0,05 as usual in previous literature and considered by former investigators.

Type 1 Error, also known as alfa (α), is the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis (H0) when this is in reality correct. This happens because when applying certain tests, if the statistics calculated is higher than a certain value, it is acceptable to reject the null hypothesis

(Hill and Hill, 2012). However, α may occur. Therefore, the value for α considered in the study will be the conventional one: $\alpha = 0,05$.

Type 2 Error is known as beta (β), and refers to the probability of accepting the null hypothesis when this one is in reality, incorrect. The potency of a statistical test is usually the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is incorrect (Hill and Hill, 2012). According to Cohen (1988), the considered level for potency levels is equal to 0,80 if applicable during the analysis. However, according to indications from Hill and Hill (2012), the researcher will consider a potency level of 0,70, if applicable. This is considered a better potency and more suited one when considering questionnaires.

Moreover, it was not considered that statistics distribution of the variables was normal, even though *n* was higher than 30 in most cases, according to Central Limit Theorem (Teixeira, 2010). It wasn't considered because in the majority of the cases normality tests were made using SPSS in order to guarantee normality (skewness and kurtosis, Shapiro-Wilk test, and normality histograms) and that factor wasn't secured. This means that it was preferable to perform non-parametric tests to the variables with these characteristics (Teixeira, 2010).

4.3 Sociodemographic sample characterization

As previously mentioned, the final sample was constituted by 417 valid responses. Furthermore, the sample was mainly characterized by a majority of individuals between 21 and 30 years old, representing approximately 73% (72,7%) of the total responses, which can be verified in Chart 1. The following category of ages is the category of respondents with less than 21 years old, representing 11,3% of the total sample. Between 31 and 40 years old there were only 29 respondents in the total of sample, and between 41 and 50 years old it was only possible to obtain 20 responses. As the age increases, the level of responses decreases, as the absolute responses for the category between 51 and 60 years old was only 16 in total. For the category of more than 60 years old it was only possible to obtain 2 responses, leaving this matter to be considered as a limitation to this research project, and furthered developed in the Conclusions & Limitations chapter.

Chart 1 - Sample Age Distribution
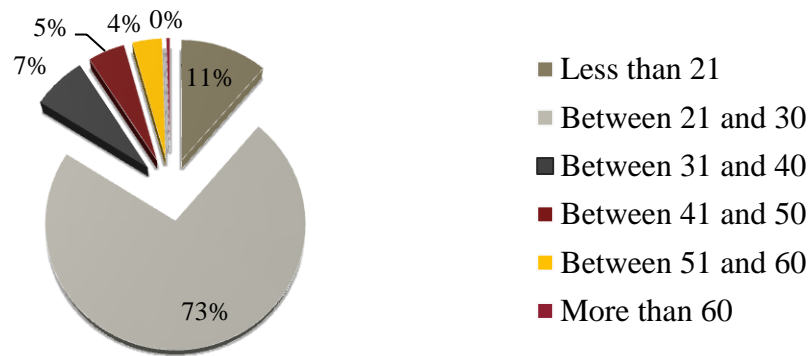
Regarding the gender of the sample, it's possible to state that the majority of the respondents were female, representing a total of 248 valid responses, approximately 60% of the total sample, which can be verified in the Chart 2.

Chart 2 - Sample Gender Distribution
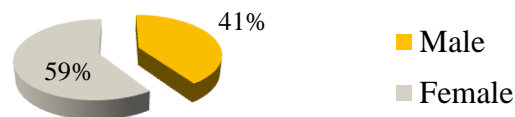
The male percentage sampled represents approximately 41% of the total sample, a total of 169 individuals. However, the gender distribution does not represent a high degree of contrast, something that's benefic for future analysis in this research project.

Table 1 – Sample Distribution by Age and Gender Simultaneously

AGE	GENDER			
	Male		Female	
	N	N %	N	N %
Less than 21	16	34,00%	31	66,00%
Between 21 and 30	130	42,90%	173	57,10%
Between 31 and 40	14	48,30%	15	51,70%
Between 41 and 50	4	20,00%	16	80,00%
Between 51 and 60	5	31,30%	11	68,80%
More than 60	0	0,00%	2	100,00%
Total	**169**	**40,50%**	**248**	**59,50%**

In Table 1, as previously mentioned in Charts 1 and 2, it's possible to conclude that the sample is mainly composed by females, especially between the ages of 21 and 30 years old. Males between the same age also correspond to a high percentage of the sample (a total of 42,9% of the category between 21 and 30 years old). All of the categories of ages represent a higher number of responses regarding females.

The majority of the individuals composing the sample currently live in Coimbra (168 individuals, approximately 40,3% of the sample). Individuals currently living in Lisbon also show a high level of presence, constituting around 35% of the sample (144 individuals). Individuals currently living in other Portuguese districts are more disperse, as for example 6,2% currently live in Viseu, while 21 individuals currently live in Porto. Another regions included in the sample in a lower scale are for example Aveiro, Setúbal, Viana do Castelo, Azores, Braga, Faro, Santarém, among others. The data regarding the geographical distribution of the sample can be verified in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Sample Geographic Location Distribution

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	N	N %
Terceira Island, Azores	1	0,20%
Aveiro	15	3,60%
Beja	1	0,20%
Braga	2	0,50%
Coimbra	168	40,30%
Faro	5	1,20%
Guarda	1	0,20%
Pico Island, Azores	1	0,20%
Leiria	8	1,90%
Lisbon	144	34,50%
Porto	21	5,00%
Santarém	4	1,00%
Setúbal	18	4,30%
Viana do Castelo	2	0,50%
Viseu	26	6,20%
Total	**417**	**100%**

The majority of the sample already has a master degree or is in the process of finishing that degree, representing approximately 42% of the total sample (174 individuals). Persons with a bachelor degree or also in the process of finishing that degree also represent a high percentage of the sample, respectively 34%, a total of 144 citizens. These data can be verified in Chart 3.

Chart 3 - Sample Educational Qualifications Distribution
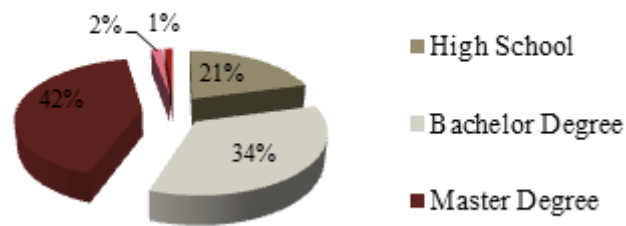
Furthermore, 21% of the sample has a high school degree or is currently in high school, a total of 87 persons. 2% of the sample has a doctorate degree, representing 7 individuals, while 5 people have no educational qualifications, representing 1% of the sample, as can be seen above in Chart 3.

Chart 4- Sample Current Occupation Distribution
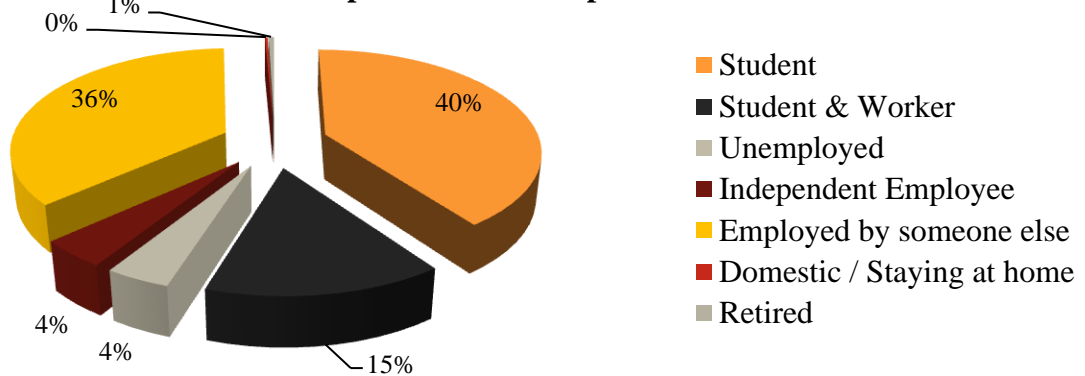
In Chart 4 above, it's possible to observe that the majority of the sample is still a student, working at the same time or just studying in the current day, 40% of the sample is still studying (a total of 167 individuals), and 15% of the sample is characterized as studying and working at the same time (representing 62 persons). However, 36% of the sample is characterized as only working, being employed by someone else, demonstrating a total of 150 individuals. There are 17 respondents who are characterized as currently unemployed, representing approximately 4% of the sample, while 18 persons are independent employees, also approximately 4% of the sample. 2 of the respondents are retired, representing only 0,5% of the sample.

4.4 Tendencies Regarding Online Social Networks and Internet Usage

4.4.1 Facebook Online Sample Habits

In this subchapter, the researcher focused in identifying the online profile of the consumers in the sample, therefore identifying the online profile of the sample. The first variable of this section of the survey (Section II), FBFrequency, was a variable that had as a goal to verify the frequency of consumers accessing to Facebook. These data can be verified below in Table 3.

Table 3 – Facebook Frequency of Access in the Sample

FACEBOOK FREQUENCY	N	N %
Less than once a week	4	1%
Once a week	3	1%
Several times per week	52	12%
Every day	123	29%
Every day and several times per day	235	56%
Total	**417**	**100%**

Hence, the sample collected usually accesses Facebook every day and several times per day (235 individuals, approximately 56% of the total sample). Following, 29% of the sample accesses Facebook every day (123 individuals), while only 12% accesses to Facebook only several times per week. Options revealing a low access to Facebook such as once a week or less than once a week only represent approximately 2% of the total sample, combined together. When considering Attachment 2, it's also possible to observe that between the individuals who access Facebook every day and several times per day, 88 are only students, 86 are characterized as employed by someone else, and 40 and student and workers simultaneously. Individuals accessing Facebook every day are mostly only students (58), students and workers simultaneously (17) or employed by someone else (36). The part of the sample who accesses Facebook several times per week is in its majority characterized by being employed by someone else (23), or by being only a student (20).

When observing the data collected regarding Facebook general activities of the sample, in Chart 5, it's important to notice that 53% of the individuals usually goes there to look the publications of their Facebook friends but don't really like of publishing personal things. However, 23% of the sample considers as their top activity to go there in order to post photos,

songs, videos, but not actually profile updates or opinions. 10% of the sample usually accesses Facebook in order to post comments on their Facebook friends' pages or posts.

In Attachment 3 it's possible to observe the relationship between the Facebook frequency of the sample and its geographical location. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the majority of the sample is from Coimbra, and accesses Facebook every day and several times per day. The individuals with these two characteristics represent 77 individuals. However, there are more individuals from Lisbon accessing Facebook every day and several times per day (98), which can be a result of a higher level of traffic in this district, leading consumers to spend more time online on their smartphones, for example.

Chart 5 - Sample Facebook Activities Distribution
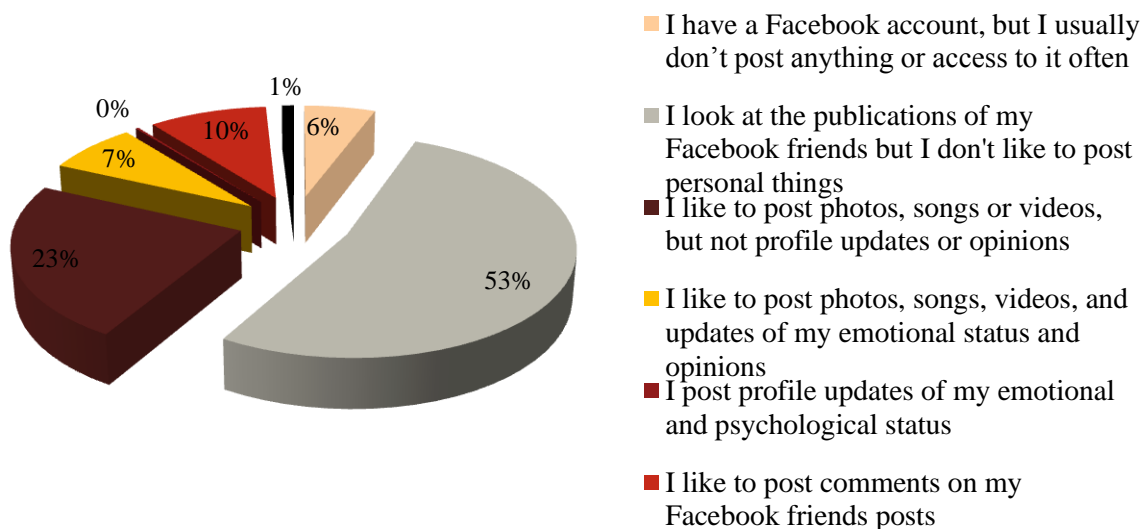
7,4% of the sample answered as to posting profile updates of their emotional and psychological status, representing in total 31 individuals. However, approximately 6% of the sample (24 individuals), responded as having a Facebook account, but not usually posting anything or access to it often. Moreover, 1% of the sample (4 persons), responded by Facebook to rate and review pages that sell products or services. From these data, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the sample uses Facebook mostly to check their friends' lives, or only to post pictures or videos/songs, not using this social network as a means to rating and reviewing companies selling products and services. Therefore, the majority of the sample uses Facebook through a personal use, representing a means of connecting with their friends and checking up on their Facebook friends' lives.

Another important tendency verified during the statistics' analysis and observed in Attachment 4 is the fact that when considering the category of individuals in the sample that don't usually access or post anything on Facebook, they tend to access only several times per week to Facebook. This means that these type of individuals don't give a high level of importance to this social network, this can be visualized in Attachment 4. However, regarding the category of individuals that like to go to Facebook looking to posts of their friends, but don't usually post personal things, these usually access Facebook every day and several times per day (120) or every day (70). Considering individuals who usually just access Facebook to publish photographs, videos, songs, but don't like to post their personal opinions, these usually access to Facebook every day and several days more often (63), or every day (24). Another type of interesting individuals is the one who access Facebook in order to comment their Facebook friends posts every day and several times per day (24).

4.4.2 Means of Access to Social Media Considered By the Sample

The third variable of Section II was related with the consumers' means of accessing social networks: whether by smartphones, tablets or iPads, personal computers, or others. Therefore, this variable is named MeansOfOSN, and presented more than one option for the sample individuals to choose, while answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed this way in order to verify the majority of combinations to access social networks. Therefore, in Attachment 28 it's possible to observe that 44% of the sample (184 individuals) accesses social networks through the following combination: personal computer; mobile phone or smartphone. 24% of the sample uses the combination of personal computer and a tablet or iPad to access social networks (99 persons), while approximately 15% accesses social networks through personal computer, tablet or iPad and mobile phone or smartphone, in a higher degree.

After the variable representing the combination of ways of accessing social networks, the researcher added another variable with the option of only choosing the way the consumer accesses in a higher degree social networks. This variable was named as MeansOfOSN2, and can be observed below in Chart 6.

**Chart 6 - Sample Social Media Access In A Higher
Degree Distribution**
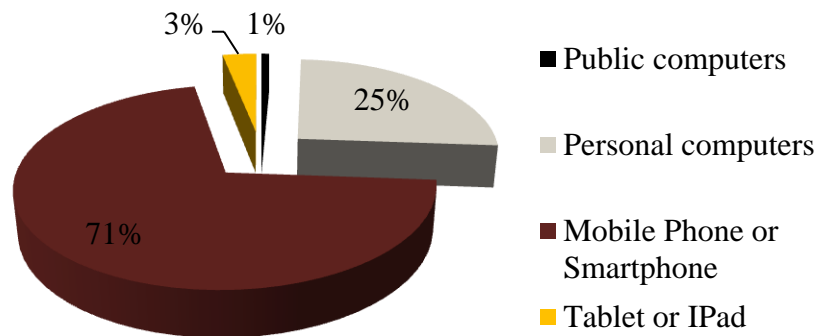
Therefore, it's possible to conclude that the majority of the sample (approximately 71%) accesses social media mainly through mobile phones or smartphones. However, 25% access in a higher scale to their social networks through their personal computers. While only 3% of the sample access to it more often through tablets or iPads. Only approximately 1% of the sample responded as accessing in a higher degree to their social media through public computers.

When considering the data from Attachment 5, it's possible to state that the preferable type of access to social networks in the sample collected is through mobile phones or smartphones (181 persons access Facebook in their smartphones every day several times per day while 79 access it also through smartphones every day). The second preferable type of access is through personal computers, mainly every day several times a day (46) or simply every day (38).

4.5 Social networks in the HORECA channel: Trends Observed

The sample was also characterized by a majority of consumers (120 individuals, approximately 31%) preferring to consult Facebook official pages of HORECA establishments, as observed in Table 4 below. However, the discrepancy regarding other social networks for the same destiny is not very high. Booking.com is the following preferable social networks, characterized by 21,4% of the valid responses for this question in the survey. TripAdvisor was characterized as the third preferable social network for the HORECA channel, with 81 individuals (approximately 21%).

Table 4 – Preferable HORECA Social Networks in the Sample

PREFERABLE HORECA SOCIAL NETWORKS	N	N %
Zomato	65	16,60%
TripAdvisor	81	20,70%
AirBnB	9	2,30%
Booking.com	84	21,40%
Instagram (official Instagram pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)	33	8,40%
Facebook (official Facebook pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)	120	30,60%

In Attachment 6, it's possible to observe the tendencies across the Facebook frequency of the sample and the type of social networks preferred when considering the HORECA channel. Hence, the majority of the individuals in the sample that accesses Facebook every day several times per day usually accesses Facebook pages of HORECA establishments in a higher degree when compared to other type of social networks for the same type of establishments (62 individuals). A few of the individuals access Instagram pages of restaurants, hotels, and similar, when considering the ones who access Facebook every day several times per day (19). The second highest category of individuals who access Facebook every day several times is the one with individuals who usually use TripAdvisor as an HORECA social network (49), which makes sense since this is a social network destined to provide information, reviews, and booking of trips including restaurants, hotels, among others. In addition, consumers who prefer Zomato as an HORECA social network and access Facebook every day and several times per day represent in total 47 individuals. The consumers represented in the sample also like to use booking.com when considering the HORECA channel, but mostly these type of consumers are represented by Facebook users accessing it every day several times per day (44) or only every day (29).

In Attachment 7 it was possible for the researcher to observe the relations between the type of social networks preferred for the HORECA channel and the main motivations for the usage of these type of social networks. Regarding the individuals who use Zomato in a higher degree taking in consideration the HORECA social networks and objectives, 40 of these individuals access these type of social networks mainly to look for previous opinions of the establishments, while 24 of these individuals use it mainly just to go there and check the establishment before going there in the first place. The majority of individuals in the sample

who chose TripAdvisor as their favorite social network for the HORECA channel access these type of networks mainly to look for previous opinions from previous consumers of the establishments (50). A lot of these consumers also show as a motivation to access these type of social media just to get an idea on the establishments before going there in the first place (22). There were relatively few consumers in the sample choosing to use AirBnB as a social network for the HORECA channel (6 responses in total). The individuals in the sample using booking.com as an HORECA social network mainly use it to book na establishment before a travel or an appointment (37) or to look for previous opinions from previous consumers of the establishments (36). The category of Instagram users regarding HORECA type of social networks are a bit reduced, and mainly just go there to obtain information on the establishments before going there (12) or to look from previous opinions (10). A high level of individuals in the sample collected usually prefer to check Facebook pages of official establishments as a preferable social network for the HORECA channel. These type of individuals have had a general motivation to use these type of social networks to obtain information and check on the establishment before going there in the first place (49 individuals), or to look for previous opinions from previous consumers (39).

Furthermore, in Attachment 8 it can be observed the trend of the sample when crossing the preferable type of previous information on an HORECA establishment and the preferable social network destined to the HORECA channel. Thus, The majority of people who usually prefer to go online and search for all types of opinions on social media or websites for the HORECA channel prefers to use Facebook pages (86 persons), followed by TripAdvisor (72), followed by Booking.com (68), later followed by Zomato (54). Another important statistic to retrieve from this information is the fact that individuals who consider Facebook as a preferable mean of accessing HORECA social networks besides going online on every social network to look at establishments' reviews, they also ask for opinions from friends or coworkers (22).

Table 5 – HORECA Type of Establishments: Trends Observed

HORECA TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENTS	N	N %
Hotels and similar establishments	202	48,40%
Restaurants	194	46,50%
Cafes	21	5,00%
Total	**417**	**100%**

Above in Table 5 it's possible to understand that the majority of individuals searches for feedback on social networks destined to hotels and similar establishments (48,4%), followed by restaurant type of businesses (194 individuals), and at last, cafes (5%).

Table 6 – Preferable HORECA Social Networks and HORECA Establishments

| PREFERABLE HORECA SOCIAL NETWORKS | HORECA TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENTS | | | | | |
| | Hotels and similar establishments | | Restaurants | | Cafes | |
	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
Zomato	8	4,20%	55	29,90%	2	12,50%
TripAdvisor	37	19,30%	43	23,40%	1	6,30%
AirBnB	6	3,10%	3	1,60%	0	0,00%
Booking.com	73	38,00%	10	5,40%	1	6,30%
Instagram (official Instagram pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)	14	7,30%	17	9,20%	2	12,50%
Facebook (official Facebook pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)	54	28,10%	56	30,40%	10	62,50%

Here, in Table 6 it's evident that the majority of the sampled individuals that prefers feedback information for hotels and similar prefers to use Booking.com (73 individuals), followed by Facebook official establishment pages (54 individuals), or TripAdvisor (37). However, when considering the individuals who usually search for information for the restaurant segment of the HORECA, 56 of these prefer to use Facebook official pages, 55 prefer to use Zomato, and 43 prefer to use TripAdvisor. The individuals who search for information on the cafes segment of the HORECA is a relatively low segment of citizens, however their majority prefers Facebook official pages (10 individuals).

In Attachment 9, it's possible to understand that the majority of the individuals in the sample have as a primary motivation to access these types of social networks to look for previous opinions from previous consumers of a given establishment (183 individuals). 116 individuals in the sample access these type of social networks as a means to obtain information on the establishment before going there, just to have a brief idea of the HORECA institution.

4.6 Online Reviews in Social Media: Trends' Analysis

When considering the relations between the respondents who actively search for feedback from previous consumers, and the preferable type of social network for the HORECA channel, in Attachment 10 it's possible to understand that the majority of the respondents to

this research project searches for feedback from previous consumers, and mainly these type of consumers prefer Facebook pages of official establishments (103), booking.com (82 individuals) and TripAdvisor (80 individuals) as their preferable social network destined to the HORECA channel.

In Attachment 11 it's possible to verify which the main opinions are regarding a positive online review and the type of preferable social networks to use, for the HORECA channel. Considering the effect of positive reviews on social media, it's important to understand that he majority of the sample who believes in the information received and actually goes there or books the establishment prefers official Facebook pages (56), Booking.com (52), TripAdvisor (50), or Zomato (51) as HORECA type of social networks. Secondly, consumers who believe in the information provided online but don't believe it is enough to visit it or book it also prefer Facebook pages in a larger scale (36), followed by Booking.com (27). Furthermore, there are also individuals who pass along the information that the establishment has very good reviews, and prefer to guide on Facebook pages considering the HORECA channel, and these type of individuals represent 28 interviewed. On the other hand, in Attachment 12 we can see what the opposite side is: the relations between a previous negative online review and the type of preferred social network in HORECA. 54 of the Individuals who prefer to use Facebook pages more frequently regarding HORECA establishments believe in the information provided by negative reviews online and don't intend to go there, however, 49 of the individuals from the same category of social network believe in the information online but don't believe it's enough to stop them from visiting the establishment. Regarding the individuals who prefer to use booking.com as an HORECA social network, it's possible to state that 48 of them also believe in the information online provided by negative reviews and don't intend to visit the establishment in the future. Taking in consideration the individuals who prefer the social network named as TripAdvisor, 45 of these also believe in the information received and don't want to visit the establishment in future times.

Table 7 – Effect of Positive Online Reviews in HORECA

POSITIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT	N	N %
I believe in the information received and I go there / book the establishment	240	57,60%
I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to go there	109	26,10%
I pass along the information that the establishment has very good reviews to people I know	68	16,30%

Table 8 – Effect of Negative Online Reviews in HORECA

NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT	N	N %
I believe in the information received and I don't intend to go there	210	50,40%
I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to stop me to go there or book the establishment	163	39,10%
I pass along the information that the establishment has a lot of negative reviews	44	10,60%

After analyzing Tables 7 and 8 above, and considering the information regarding positive and negative online reviews regarding HORECA establishments, it seems that the sample population has a more positive view regarding the information considering the two situations. This means that for example, when a consumer from this sample finds a good establishment review, believes in the information and tries to go there or book the establishment (240 individuals). However, in the same situation but with a negative online review, fewer consumers believe in the information and don't want to go there in the future (210 individuals), which shows that consumers in this sample don't automatically reject an establishment with negative online reviews. The case is the same for the other options, as for example, 109 consumers believe in the information of a positive online review but don't believe it is enough to visit the place. However, in the case of a negative online review, 163

individuals believe in the information but don't think it's enough to stop them from visiting the establishment.

However, when comparing the two presented tables individually, it's possible to state that the majority of individuals in the sample actually rely on online reviews, whether positive or negative.

4.7 Hypotheses Testing

4.7.1 Testing H1

H1 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by a consumer's profile (sociodemographic and online profile).

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

4.7.1.1 Testing H1a and Operational Hypothesis

H1a investigation hypothesis is described below:

H1a – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by a consumer's sociodemographic profile.

However, this hypothesis was also subdivided into other two more specified investigational hypotheses, described below.

H1a)1: Male and women have different levels of trust in the information provided in social networks.

H1a)2: Individuals from different geographical locations will have different level of trust in the information provided in social networks.

In order to validate in a statistical manner the mentioned hypothesis, operational hypotheses were produced for H1a)1 and H1a)2:

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

While the null hypothesis of H1a)1 is represented by: "the means for both gender groups for the variable trust in information provided in social networks are equal".

Table 9 – Testing H1a)1: Mann Whitney U Testing

	TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS
Mann-Whitney U	17902
Wilcoxon W	48778
Z	-2,787
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,005

The results from the Mann Whitney U test translate into a significance level (Sig 2-tailed = 0,005) that is lower than 0,05 (α = 0,05). Consequently, there is a statistical significant difference between the two distributions; therefore we reject the null hypothesis, stating that the mean for both groups of gender considering trust in information in social networks is different. Therefore, H1a)1 is validated as a hypothesis, as can be observed in Table 9. The Mann Whitney U is a non-parametric test and it was used since the assumptions for parametric tests were not covered (Shapiro Wilk value was lower than 0,05 therefore not covering the variable normality).

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

ii)   **H1a)2** – *The ordered means for at least two groups for trust in the information provided in social networks is different according to the geographical location of the consumer*

H1a)2 was tested via a Kruskall Wallis test, considering as the null hypothesis that "the means for each group in the variable trust in the information provided in social networks are equal". However, considering the results below in Table 10 and in the attachments, the approximate significance level (p-value is approximately equal to 0,000) was below 0,05 leading the researcher to validate H1a)2, concluding that the means in the different geographical locations are different regarding the level of trust in the information provided in social networks. Therefore it is possible to conclude that geographical location has a clear impact on the positioning as a consumer in online social networks in this sample.

Table 10 – Testing H1a)2: Kruskall Wallis Results

	TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS
Chi-Square	39,801
df	14
Asymp. Sig.	0

4.7.1.2 Testing H1b and Operational Hypothesis

H1b – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by a consumer's online profile.

H1b, similar as H1a, was also divided into two more investigational hypotheses, described below:

H1b)1 – Consumers' Facebook frequency will present a statistical significant relationship with their trust in the information provided in social networks

H1b)2 – Consumers' Facebook activities will present a statistical significant relationship with their perception on negative online reviews

These hypotheses, in order to proceed with statistical testing and hypotheses validation, were transformed into operational hypotheses, which can be verified below:

H1b)1: The frequency of use of Facebook will have a statistical significant relationship with the level of trust in the information provided in social networks

The researcher tested H1b)1 through a Spearman Correlation Coefficient, in order to test two ordinal variables. The results, described in Attachment 14, proved that there is indeed a significant correlation among the two variables, taking in consideration that the significance level is lower than alpha (0,013). However, it is a weak to medium correlation (Spearman's correlation coefficient is approximately 0,121). Therefore, it's possible to conclude that in the represented sample, Facebook frequency will have a positive statistical and significant correlation to the level of trust in the information provided in social networks, although it represents a weak correlation.

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

H1b)2: Consumers' main Facebook activities have a statistical significant correlation to the probability of not wanting to visit an establishment with bad reviews

This hypothesis was tested via a Chi Square Independency Test, with a Cramer's V association coefficient, in order to read the relationship effect size, as one can observe below in Table 11 and in the attachments. However, the Chi Square test did not fulfill its main assumption, leading the researcher to take in consideration only the results of the association coefficient, in order to understand if there is indeed a correlation among the nominal variables. However, as the significance level of the test was higher than 0,05 and the value of the Cramer's V analysis was weak to moderate correlation (0,116), the researcher had to conclude that there was a weak correlation with no statistical significance in the sample. Hence, H1b)2 was rejected.

Table 11 – Association Coefficients' Results: Testing H1b)2

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0,164	0,512
	Cramer's V	0,116	0,512
N of Valid Cases		**417**	

4.7.2 Testing H2

H2 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by the type of social network

This hypothesis subdivided itself into two more hypotheses:

H2a – There is a relationship between the type of preferable social network used in the HORECA channel and the motivations and actions for accessing social networks in the HORECA channel

H2b – There are differences between consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers and the ones who don't according to their Facebook frequency

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

H2a: *There is statistical significant relation between the type of preferable social network used in the HORECA channel and the motivations and actions in HORECA social networks.*

Taking into consideration that in this case (H2a) a Chi Square test was performed, consequently the null hypothesis is the following: the type of preferable social networks used in the HORECA channel and the motivations and actions in HORECA social networks are independent/not related variables.

H2b: *The means for both feedback searching groups (the ones searching for feedback from previous consumers of the HORECA and the ones who don't) for the variable Facebook frequency are different*

While the null hypothesis of H2b, similar as the previous Mann Whitney test in 4.7.1 chapter, is the following: "the means for both feedback searching groups (the ones searching for feedback from previous consumers of the HORECA and the ones who don't) for the variable Facebook frequency are equal".

In order to test the first hypothesis, a Chi-Square test with V Cramer association coefficient analysis was used in order to understand the relationship between the two variables. The results of the hypothesis' testing can be viewed in Attachment 17 and below in Table 12 and 13. Firstly, it's important to mention that the assumptions of the Chi-Square have been violated (because approximately 61% of the cells in the table of the test had expected count less than 5). Therefore, an analysis of the Chi Square was not desirable. Consequently, the researcher focused on the V Cramer's association coefficient, in order to understand the level of dependence among the two variables, Thus, taking into consideration that the Likelihood Ratio of the test was 0,000 (a significance level lower than 0,05), we could conclude that exists indeed a dependence between the two variables being analysed and that its relationship presents a positive effect size of 0,255 (according with Cramer's V analysis in Table 13), validating H2a and rejecting the null hypothesis.

Table 12 – Testing H2a: Chi Square Test Results

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	122,822[a]	25	0
Likelihood Ratio	123,666	25	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,617	1	0,057
N of Valid Cases	**379**		

Table 13 – Testing H2a: Association Coefficients' Results

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0,569	0
	Cramer's V	0,255	0
N of Valid Cases		**379**	

H2b was tested via a Mann Whitney U test, comparing the statistical significance of the distribution between two categories of a nominal variable. The results can be observed in Table 14 below. Since the p-value is inferior to 0,05 we consider the hypothesis validated, therefore, existing statistical significant differences among consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers and their habits of Facebook frequency. This happens because the significance level from the test shows us that the null hypothesis is rejected, validating H2b.

Table 14 – Testing H2b: Mann Whitney U

	FACEBOOK FREQUENCY
Mann-Whitney U	5311,5
Wilcoxon W	6014,5
Z	-2,757
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,006

4.7.3 Testing H3

H3 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by online reviews by previous consumers.

From H3, we could define other two investigation sub-hypothesis showing the real impact of what has the higher degree of influence in the consumer decision making process, positive or negative online reviews:

H3a - The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by positive online reviews by previous consumers.

H3b - The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by negative online reviews by previous consumers.

H3c – Consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers of an HORECA establishment will differ in a significant way according to their willingness of going to an HORECA establishment after viewing negative online reviews

In order to test the sub hypotheses, the researcher had to create the operational hypotheses. Therefore, H3a, H3b and H3c can be redefined as the following operational hypotheses:

H3a: The order of the mean for at least two groups for positive online reviews and consumers' trust in the information provided in social networks is different

Therefore, the null hypothesis of the Kruskall Wallis test, similar as the ANOVA (when considering parametric tests), is the following: the order of the means for all the groups and for positive online reviews and consumers' trust in the information provided online are equal.

H3b: The ordered mean for at least two groups for negative online reviews and consumers' trust in the information provided in social networks is different

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

H3c: The means for both consumers who search for feedback from previous HORECA establishments consumers for the variable willingness of visiting an HORECA establishment after viewing an online negative review are different

Similar as before in Mann Whitney U tests, the null hypothesis for H3c will be that the means will be equal for both groups, considering the stated variable.

In order to test the first two sub hypotheses, we conducted two Kruskall-Wallis tests, intending to understand if different groups of the consumers trusting in the information provided in social networks had different ordered means (resulting in different means) according to their view on positive or negative online reviews. In H3a, since the p-value was lower than 0,05 (p-value was approximately 0,000) we validate the hypothesis that there is statistical significance, translating into different means for at least one pair of groups of the mentioned variables. Regarding H3b, the p-value was also approximately 0,000 representing a value inferior than 0,05 therefore validating the mentioned hypothesis. The results of H3a and H3b can be observed in Tables 15 and 16. When trying to understand which has the higher impact regarding consumers' decision making process and trust regarding social networks' information, the researcher concluded as important to look back at the results of Tables 7 and 8 in section 4.6 which describe the frequencies for both distributions. Taking in consideration those previous results, it's important to understand that when consumers find positive online reviews, they have a higher probability of trusting the information and wanting to visit the establishment, while on the other hand, in the case of a negative review, they believe the information and don't want to visit the establishment in a lower scale than in the reverse case.

Table 15 – Testing H3a: Kruskall Wallis Testing Results

	TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS
Chi-Square	40,128
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0

Table 16 – Testing H3b: Kruskall Wallis Testing Results

	TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS
Chi-Square	21,223
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0

In order to test H3c, a Mann Whitney U test was conducted, considering the grouping variable as the *FeedbackSearch*. The results prove that the hypothesis 3c was rejected, since the

significance level is higher than α (α = 0,05 and the significance level = 0,320). Therefore, according with the Mann Whitney U Test, consumers who search for feedback from previous consumers of an establishment will not differ in a statistical significant manner according to their willingness of going to an HORECA establishment with a negative online review, since the null hypotheses is not rejected. Therefore, the means for the both groups of the variable *FeedbackSearch* will be equal considering the variable trust in the information provided in social networks. The results of the test can be viewed below in Table 17.

Table 17 – Testing H3c: Mann Whitney U Test Results

	WILLINGNESS OF VISITING AN HORECA ESTABLISHMENT AFTER A NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW
Mann-Whitney U	6374,5
Wilcoxon W	78764,5
Z	-0,995
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,32

4.7.4 Testing H4

H4 – The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers in the HORECA channel in Portugal is influenced by the type of HORECA establishment.

For investigational purposes, the general hypothesis was divided into two more hypotheses and defined as the following:

H4a – The type of HORECA establishment considered by the consumer has a significant impact in the probability of not wanting to visit an establishment with a bad online review.

H4b – The type of HORECA establishment considered by the consumer presents a relationship with the preferable HORECA social networks used

Later, the different operational hypotheses were created in order to proceed with statistical testing for the hypotheses validation. These operational hypotheses can be viewed below:

H4a – The ordered means for types of HORECA establishments for the variable willingness of not wanting to visit an establishment with a bad online review are different

The null hypothesis of H4a will be the exact opposite: that the mentioned ordered means for each group of each variable will be equal.

H4b – The preferable social networks for the HORECA channel and the type of HORECA business segment are related variables

As similar as the previous Chi Square test in the subchapter 4.7.2, the null hypothesis for H4b will be that the two mentioned variables are independent from one another (not related).

H4a was tested through a Kruskall-Wallis test, since that it was intended to verify if the means in the different groups of the HORECA segments would be significantly different according to a consumer's willingness of visiting an establishment after reading a negative online review. Therefore, taking in consideration Table 18, as the significance level was higher than 0,05 (sig. level = 0,475), the researcher rejected H4a, concluding that there is no statistical significant difference among the means of different groups of the HORECA segments according to a consumer's willingness of visiting an establishment after a negative online review.

Table 18 – Testing H4a: Kruskall Wallis Test Results

	WILLINGNESS OF VISITINF NA ESTABLISHMENT AFTER A NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW
Chi-Square	1,487
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0,475

In order to test H4b, an association coefficient or independency test was used, the Chi Square Independency Test with Cramer's V analysis. However, the main assumption of the Chi-Square was not achieved, which didn't make it desirable to analyze the chi square test results. However, it was possible to conclude that there is indeed a significant statistical relationship between the two variables, since the significance level of the likelihood ratio of the Chi-Square test was approximately of 0,000 (inferior to $\alpha = 0,05$), leading the researcher to conclude H4b as validated, considering an association coefficient of 0,350 (Cramer's V analysis). The results of this test can be analyzed in Table 19 and 20.

Table 19 – Testing H4b: Chi Square Independency Test Results

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	96,213[a]	10	0
Likelihood Ratio	105,276	10	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,504	1	0,034
N of Valid Cases	392		

Note: 8 cells (44,4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,37.

Table 20 – Testing H4b: Association Coefficients' Results

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0,495	0
	Cramer's V	0,35	0
N of Valid Cases		392	

4.7.5 Hypotheses Conclusions Summary

In the Table 21 below, it's possible to analyse a summary of the conclusions to each tested hypothesis, and the statistical method used for each hypothesis. In chapter 5, Conclusions & Limitations, a furthered summary of the main conclusions to retrieve from this research project will be presented.

Table 21 – Hypotheses' Results Summary

HYPOTHESES			STATISTICAL TESTING METHOD
H1			
H1A		**Validated**	
	H1a) 1	Validated	Mann Whitney U Test
	H1a) 2	Validated	Kruskall Wallis Test
H1B		**Partially Validated**	
	H1b) 1	Validated	Spearman Correlation Coefficient
	H1b) 2	Rejected	Chi-Square Independency Test
H2			
H2A		**Validated**	Chi-Square Independency Test
H2B		**Validated**	Mann Whitney U Test
H3			
H3A		**Validated**	Kruskall Wallis Test
H3B		**Validated**	Kruskall Wallis Test
H3C		**Rejected**	Mann Whitney U Test
H4			
H4A		**Rejected**	Kruskall Wallis Test
H4B		**Validated**	Chi Square Independency Test

5. Conclusions & Limitations

This chapter aims to present the primary research conclusions to retrieve from the study, its main academic and professional contributes and the limitations found across the whole investigation. Consequently, the chapter is divided in subchapters 5.1 referring to the most important conclusions to gather from the statistical results, 5.2 describing what are the main contributions of this investigation project in an academic and professional view, and 5.3 analysing the most important limitations found during the investigation.

5.1 Main Research Conclusions

In this subchapter the researcher will proceed with a brief summary of the main conclusions of the investigation, reminding the reader of the hypotheses considered previously in former chapters.

Starting with a brief sample description, it is important to mention that the data retrieved from the studying of the sample in question, is the fact that the majority of the sample was categorized by individuals between 21 and 30 years old, and were mostly females (130 males and 173 females in this age category). The majority of the sample is currently residing in Coimbra (168 individuals) or Lisbon (144 individuals). The majority of the sampled population accesses their Facebook account every day and several times per day (56% of the sample, 235 individuals), or only every day (123 individuals).

Additionally, an interesting fact in this sample is the fact that 53% of individuals usually access Facebook and looks at the publications of their Facebook friends, not posting anything on their own profile. 23% of the individuals actually like to post photos, songs or videos, but don't like to expose themselves by posting personal opinions or emotional things on their pages, as one can see in Chart 5 in section 4.4. Furthermore, 71% of the sample accesses their Facebook account mostly through their mobile phone or smartphone.

An important conclusion to retrieve regarding Facebook consumer habits is the fact that this social network is mostly used for sharing photographs or checking up Facebook friends' publications, since only 1% of the sampled individuals responding as using Facebook mainly for rating and review pages selling products or services.

The majority of individuals in the sample responded as preferring to use Facebook official establishments' pages as a preferable HORECA social network (120 individuals). However,

the following individuals are distributed mostly around Booking.com (84 individuals), TripAdvisor (81 individuals), or Zomato in a lower degree (65 individuals). A mainstream key trend across the sample is also the fact that the consumers who access Facebook every day several times per day usually access Facebook pages of HORECA establishments in a higher degree when compared to other type of social networks for the same type of establishments (62 individuals).

Considering the difference of distributions regarding the type of HORECA establishment, it's important to notice that the majority of the sample uses social networks in the HORECA channel mostly to consult information about hotels and similar establishments (202 individuals) or restaurants (194 individuals). Moreover, when relating the preferable HORECA social networks with its preferable type of establishments, the majority of the sample is concentrated in Booking.com and Facebook pages regarding hotel and similar type of establishments, followed by Facebook official pages for restaurants (56 individuals) and Zomato (55 individuals).

Regarding the behaviour of consumers when facing online reviews of an HORECA establishment, it's very helpful to understand that in this sample, when a consumer finds an optimistic review, believes in the information and tries to go there or book the establishment (240 individuals). However, in the same situation but with a bad online review, fewer consumers believe in the information and don't want to go there in the future (210 individuals).

H1 was subdivided into 2 different sections: section a), referring to some of the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, and section b), referring to Facebook online habits observed in the sampled individuals. In each section, 2 sub hypotheses were created as mentioned previously in the methodology chapter.

Regarding the testing of H1a), the first sub hypothesis (H1a1) was validated, concluding that there is a statistical significant difference between male and female trust regarding information provided in social networks. This means that males and females will have different trust levels according to the information provided in social networks, therefore, different reactions and will be differently impacted by how they perceive online information. However, H1a)2 was validated, leading the researcher to conclude that different geographical locations present different levels of trust in the information provided in social networks in

Portugal, therefore it's important to mention that the geographical location has a clear impact in the positioning as a consumer in online social networks, in the sample.

H1b was also segmented in other 2 sub hypotheses as mentioned previously in this dissertation (H1b1 and H1b2). Taking in consideration the results gathered from testing H1b)1 and H1b)2, it's very helpful to understand that Facebook frequency has a positive but weak statistical significance correlation to the level of trust in the information provided in social networks, in this sample. Hence, this means that in the sample, Facebook frequency of the consumers will have a weak positive significant impact in the way consumers trust the information provided in social networks. Moreover, according to H1b)2, the relationship between consumers' Facebook activities and their perception on negative online reviews doesn't present any kind of statistical significance association.

H2, which stated that the type of social network used had an effect in the decision making of a consumer in the HORECA channel, was also distributed into two different general hypotheses, as described previously in Methodology. The results of the investigation revealed that H2a was validated, which means that there is a dependency level between the type of preferable social network for the HORECA channel and consumers' motivations and actions for accessing these type of social networks. Additionally, H2b was validated, meaning that there are significant statistical differences among consumers who search for feedback on establishments from previous consumers and the ones who don't, according to different levels of Facebook frequency (therefore according to their Facebook habits).

From H3, which specified that online reviews had an impact on the decision making process of a consumer in the HORECA channel, we could define other two investigation sub-hypotheses in order to separate positive and negative online review effects, and a third hypothesis relating the feedback search with previous consumers of an establishment with a consumer's willingness of visiting an establishment after a bad online review. The study's main results retrieved from testing H3a and H3b in general, firstly, were the fact that the difference between the significance level of the different groups is statistically significant, translating into consumers that have different levels of trust in the information provided on social networks will have different opinions regarding positive and negative online reviews. However, referring to H3c, it's important to mention that consumers who search for feedback from previous establishments will not differ in a significant statistical manner according to

their willingness/probability of visiting an HORECA establishment after reading a negative online review.

H4, which was designed to bring conclusions regarding the effect of the type of social HORECA establishment in the decision making of a consumer, similar as the previous hypotheses, was also subdivided into two more specific hypotheses. The data gathered from testing H4a and H4b were also proven to be interesting information. H4a proved the researcher that in the stated sample there was no statistical significance between the type of HORECA establishment and a consumer's willingness to visit an establishment after a negative online review. This fact is translated into a nonexistent relationship between the preferable type of HORECA segment to use social networks (in the HORECA social networks world) and a consumer's willingness to visit an HORECA establishment after reading an online negative review. Regarding the data retrieved from testing H4b, it's possible to assume that there exists in fact a level of significant dependence between the variables of HORECA type of establishment and the type of preferable HORECA social network used, considering a weak to medium type of relationship. Hence, consumers use certain social networks in the HORECA channel according to the type of HORECA establishment they are considering, in Portugal.

5.2 Main Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The impact of social networks in the decision making process of consumers is still a recent marketing subject, still needing further studies and investigations. Both organizations and academic literature are still evolving the information available in this subject. Thus, this investigation aimed to bring insights on how consumers in Portugal react to social networks in the HORECA channel, trying to understand which are the most important social networks in 2016 in the HORECA channel, for which type of HORECA establishments do consumers use social networks in a higher degree, and what are their main motivations to access these social networks.

Taking in consideration the fact that social networks are gaining a lot of importance between consumers when searching for feedback in the HORECA channel, it's important for marketing departments in the academic point of view to start considering the opinion of previous consumers (e-wom) as a very important marketing channel.

Hence, the main professional contributions of this dissertation are the fact that this study has a clear impact on the HORECA channel in Portugal, leading companies and HORECA establishments to understand which are the social networks that the consumers in the sample give a higher rate of importance, what are their main motivations and actions in social networks, and for which type of establishments do they use social networks in a higher degree. The results, although not being able to extrapolate to the Portuguese population, due to the convenience sampling method, produced a lot of important results regarding the considered sample that should be considered in future marketing strategies by organizations.

The fact that the variables considered have different levels of significance regarding levels of trust in the information provided in social networks can be considered as an important theoretical contribution as well. Additionally, this study intended to organize an important and more recent group of necessary literature review on the matter.

5.3 Investigational Limitations & Future Investigations

5.3.1 Limitations of the dissertation

One of the primary limitations identified, was the fact that one of the social networks highly destined to the HORECA channel, Zomato, is only available in two cities in Portugal: Lisbon and Porto. This was a limitation that biased our respondents' behaviour, because there were a high number of respondents from other districts besides Lisbon or Porto. The problem was mainly due to the fact that respondents may even wish to highly use the app and social network, and even to use it frequently when they are in Lisbon or Porto, however, they cannot state it as the most commonly used by them. However, it was verified that a high level of respondents still responded by using Zomato very often.

Another limitation was the fact that the question destined to understand the geographical location of the respondents was an open ended question, leaving the respondent to commit typing mistakes, or identifying regions that weren't exactly districts, as the aim of the question intended. Other limitations were the fact that there were less ordinal type variables than nominal type variables, which did not made possible certain type of statistical tests that could possibly bring interesting results and conclusions.

The researcher gathered a high level of responses from Coimbra and Lisbon when comparing to other Portuguese districts, unable to characterize in a conclusive scale other regions from

Portugal, given that the questionnaire was diffused by Facebook and through Facebook friends.

The most important limitations are related with the academic part of the study, being that online social networks impact in the life of the everyday consumer is still a recent subject in the current day, which made it sometimes a little bit uneasy to search for reference journals or articles in the matter. Furthermore, the fulfilling of deadlines was also considered a limitation since it obliged the researcher to establish some objectives to fulfil, regarding the outcomes.

Another important limitation to refer is the fact that this study only considered certain social networks as options for the HORECA channel, it didn't consider all of the social networks existent in the area, therefore biasing in a certain level the results regarding the preferable social network used for the HORECA channel.

Other limitations are associated with the sampling process in general. The questionnaire was entirely designed by the researcher, taking in consideration and direction the hypotheses intended to measure with the data to retrieve from the survey. Later along the research project, it was verified that not all the questions or variables were needed in order to test the planned hypotheses. However, this did not represent a previously measured and validated questionnaire. Additionally, although a pre-test was made to the questionnaire, the respondents still found some improvements that could be made in order to reduce the biasing of some responses. Moreover, the sampling process did not represent a random sample, it did however represent a convenience sample, which does not provide the opportunity to do statistical inferences to the general population, it only provides information regarding the obtained sample.

5.3.2 Future Investigation Opportunities

Regarding future investigational opportunities, it would be interesting to understand exactly which type of effect exists between each social network in the HORECA channel and trust from the information provided in social networks, and if these effects represent positive or negative ones. This would be a positive factor even for organizations to understand which online reviews (from each social network) would have the higher impact in influencing the intended consumer. Another hypothesis to the same subject would be to create a similar study but focused on only one HORECA social network, in order to specify the real impact of one social network in the decision making process of the consumer. Similar to this hypothesis,

would be to perform a study in the same conditions but dedicated only to one of the segments of the HORECA channel: hotels and similar, restaurants, or cafes.

Other possible contributions for future investigations would be the correction of few of the limitations specified above, such as specifying for which type of HORECA channel are the questions regarding the type of HORECA social networks, since this was one of the flaws pointed out by online respondents to the survey.

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7. Attachments

Attachment 1 – Online Questionnaire

The role of social media marketing in the decision making process affecting portuguese consumers in the HORECA business segment

This online questionnaire is an important part of a study provided for a master thesis in Management, developed in ISCTE-IBS. The goal of this questionnarie is mainly to understand which variables in the social networks world have an impact on the decision making process of a consumer in the current day. This questionnaire will only take approximately 10 minutes to answer, and is divided into 4 main sections. Thank you for your participation in the study!

*Obrigatório

Section I - Sociodemographic profile of the consumer
In this first section it'll be possible to characterize the sociodemographic profile of the consumers.

1. **Question 1.1 - Age** *
   Marcar apenas uma oval.

   ◯ Less than 21

   ◯ Between 21 and 30

   ◯ Between 31 and 40

   ◯ Betweenn 41 and 50

   ◯ Between 51 and 60

   ◯ More than 60

2. **Question 1.2 - Gender** *
   Marcar apenas uma oval.

   ◯ Male

   ◯ Female

3. **Question 1.3 - Geographic location (type the district where you currently live)** *

4. **Question 1.4 - Educational Qualifications** *
   Marcar apenas uma oval.

   ◯ High School

   ◯ Bachelor Degree

   ◯ Master Degree

   ◯ Doctorate Degree

   ◯ None

5. **Question 1.5 - Current Occupation** *
Marcar apenas uma oval.

- ⭘ Student
- ⭘ Student & Worker
- ⭘ Unemployed
- ⭘ Independent Employee
- ⭘ Employed by someone else
- ⭘ Domestic / Staying at home
- ⭘ Retired

Section II - Consumers' profile regarding social networks
In this second section the study will be focused in characterizing the online profile of the consumers, regarding social networks.

6. **Question 2.1 - How many times per week do you access Facebook?** *
Marcar apenas uma oval.

- ⭘ Less than once a week
- ⭘ Once a week
- ⭘ Several times per week
- ⭘ Every day
- ⭘ Every day and several times per day

7. **Question 2.2 - What type of activities do you do when you access your Facebook account? In this question, you can only choose one option, the one you think it identifies with yourself in a higher degree.** *
Marcar apenas uma oval.

- ⭘ I have a Facebook account, but I usually don't post anything or access to it often
- ⭘ I look at the publications of my Facebook friends but I don't like to post personal things
- ⭘ I like to post photos, songs or videos, but not profile updates or opinions
- ⭘ I like to post photos, songs, videos, and updates of my emotional status and opinions
- ⭘ I post profile updates of my emotional and psychological status
- ⭘ I like to post comments on my Facebook friends posts
- ⭘ I like to rate and review Facebook pages that sell a product or service

8. **Question 2.3 - How do you usually access your social media accounts? You can choose more than one option.** *
Marcar tudo o que for aplicável.

- ☐ Public computers
- ☐ Personal computer
- ☐ Mobile Phone or Smartphone
- ☐ Tablet or IPad

9. **Question 2.4 – Can you choose the means that you usually use more to access social networks, in a higher degree and higher time spent? You can only choose one option.** *
Marcar apenas uma oval.

- ⬭ Public computers
- ⬭ Personal computers
- ⬭ Mobile Phone or Smartphone
- ⬭ Tablet or IPad

10. **Question 2.5 – Besides Facebook, which other social media do you use, taking in consideration the ones listed below? You can choose several options.** *
Marcar tudo o que for aplicável.

- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ LinkedIN
- ☐ TripAdvisor
- ☐ Zomato
- ☐ Goodreads
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Google+

Section III - Type of social media: HORECA Channel

In this group of the questionnaire, the focus will be on the different types of social media existent regarding the HORECA (hotels, restaurants and cafes) business segment. Therefore, please take in consideration your actions regarding hotels, hostels, cafes, restaurants, and similar establishments in the following questions.

11. **Question 3.1 – Taking in consideration the last question on section 2, which social media destined to the HORECA channel do you access? You can choose several options.** *
Marcar tudo o que for aplicável.

- ☐ Zomato
- ☐ TripAdvisor
- ☐ AirBnB
- ☐ Booking.com
- ☐ Instagram (official Instagram pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)
- ☐ Facebook (official Facebook pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)
- ☐ None

12. **Question 3.2 – Taking in consideration the previous question (3.1), which of the social media mentioned do you access more or give a higher degree of importance? You can only choose one option.** *

Marcar apenas uma oval.

- ◯ Zomato
- ◯ TripAdvisor
- ◯ AirBnB
- ◯ Booking.com
- ◯ Instagram (official Instagram pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)
- ◯ Facebook (official Facebook pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)
- ◯ None

13. **Question 3.3 – When you access these type of social networks, what are your main motivations and actions? You can only choose one option.** *

Marcar apenas uma oval.

- ◯ Only to book an establishment when I travel or have an appointment
- ◯ To look for previous opinions from previous consumers of the establishments
- ◯ To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online review or comment
- ◯ To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating
- ◯ To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating AND review
- ◯ I usually just go there to check the establishments before going there in the first place
- ◯ Not applicable

Section IV - Online reviews in social media

In this section it will be possible to gather information regarding behaviors in online reviewing and rating provided by consumers, in social media.

14. **Question 4.1 – Do you usually search for feedback from previous consumers of an establishment? ***

Marcar apenas uma oval.

⬭ Yes

⬭ No

15. **Question 4.2 - Describe, in a scale between 1 and 5, in which way do you trust and follow the information provided in social networks ***

Marcar apenas uma oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
I don't trust at all the information provided online	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	I highly trust the information given by previous consumers in social networks

16. **Question 4.3 – Considering the HORECA channel, by which means do you usually try to search for information on the establishments? ***

Marcar apenas uma oval.

⬭ I ask for information in travel agencies

⬭ I search for information on travel magazines and journals

⬭ I ask for opinions from my friends or coworkers only

⬭ I go online and I search for all types of opinions (ratings and reviews on websites, social media, or on Facebook pages)

17. **Question 4.4 – When you see a lot of POSITIVE reviews on social media regarding an establishment you were thinking of going, what are your main thoughts? You can only choose one option. ***

Marcar apenas uma oval.

⬭ I believe in the information received and I go there / book the establishment

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

⬭ I pass along the information that the establishment has very good reviews to people I know

18. **Question 4.5 - When you see a lot of NEGATIVE reviews on social media regarding an establishment you were thinking of going, what are your main thoughts? You can only choose one option.** *

Marcar apenas uma oval.

○ I believe in the information received and I don't intend to go there

○ I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to stop me to go there or book the establishment

○ I pass along the information that the establishment has a lot of negative reviews

19. **Question 4.6 – Choose a number that would characterize the way that you believe an establishment in the HORECA channel with negative reviews is still worth being visited, considering the description below.** *

Marcar apenas uma oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
No I wouldn't go there., I don't like going to places with bad reviews	○	○	○	○	○	Yes, I would still visit it. I would like to have my own personal experience to give feedback to future consumers

20. **Question 4.7 – For which type of establishments do you usually search for information on social networks, in a higher degree? You can only choose one option.** *

Marcar apenas uma oval.

○ Hotels and similar establishments

○ Restaurants

○ Cafes

You've reached the end of this questionnaire. Thank you for your collaboration!

Attachment 2 - Custom Table of Facebook Frequency and Current Occupation

		FACEBOOK FREQUENCY								
		LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK		ONCE A WEEK		SEVERAL TIMES PER WEEK		EVERY DAY		EVERY DAY AND SEVERAL TIMES PER DAY	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N %	N %
CURRENT OCCUPATION	STUDENT	1	0,60%	0	0,00%	20	12,00%	58	34,70%	88	52,70%
	STUDENT & WORKER	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	5	8,10%	17	27,40%	40	64,50%
	UNEMPLOYED	0	0,00%	1	5,90%	1	5,90%	6	35,30%	9	52,90%
	INDEPENDENT EMPLOYEE	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	11,10%	6	33,30%	10	55,60%
	EMPLOYED BY SOMEONE ELSE	3	2,00%	2	1,30%	23	15,30%	36	24,00%	86	57,30%
	DOMESTIC / STAYING AT HOME	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	100,00%
	RETIRED	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	50,00%	0	0,00%	1	50,00%

Attachment 3 - Relationship between Geographical Location and Facebook Frequency of the Sample

		FACEBOOK FREQUENCY								
		LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK		ONCE A WEEK		SEVERAL TIMES PER WEEK		EVERY DAY		EVERY DAY AND SEVERAL TIMES PER DAY	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	TERCEIRA ISLAND, AZORES	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	100,00%	0	0,00%
	AVEIRO	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	13,30%	4	26,70%	9	60,00%
	BEJA	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	100,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
	BRAGA	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	100,00%
	COIMBRA	3	1,80%	2	1,20%	21	12,50%	65	38,70%	77	45,80%
	FARO	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	20,00%	0	0,00%	4	80,00%
	GUARDA	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	100,00%	0	0,00%
	PICO ISLAND, AZORES	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	100,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
	LEIRIA	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	12,50%	2	25,00%	5	62,50%
	LISBON	1	0,70%	1	0,70%	17	11,80%	27	18,80%	98	68,10%
	PORTO	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	3	14,30%	6	28,60%	12	57,10%
	SANTARÉM	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	4	100,00%	0	0,00%
	SETÚBAL	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	4	22,20%	14	77,80%
	VIANA DO CASTELO	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	100,00%
	VISEU	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	5	19,20%	9	34,60%	12	46,20%

Attachment 4 – Relationship between Facebook Frequency and Main Facebook Activities of the Sample

		FACEBOOK FREQUENCY								
		LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK		ONCE A WEEK		SEVERAL TIMES PER WEEK		EVERY DAY		EVERY DAY AND SEVERAL TIMES PER DAY	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
MAIN FACEBOOK ACTIVITIES	I have a Facebook account, but I usually don't post anything or access to it often	1	4,20%	1	4,20%	11	45,80%	5	20,80%	6	25,00%
	I look at the publications of my Facebook friends but I don't like to post personal things	0	0,00%	2	0,90%	28	12,70%	70	31,80%	120	54,50%
	I like to post photos, songs or videos, but not profile updates or opinions	1	1,00%	0	0,00%	9	9,30%	24	24,70%	63	64,90%
	I like to post photos, songs, videos, and updates of my emotional status and opinions	1	3,20%	0	0,00%	1	3,20%	9	29,00%	20	64,50%
	I post profile updates of my emotional and psychological status	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	100,00%
	I like to post comments on my Facebook friends posts	1	2,50%	0	0,00%	2	5,00%	13	32,50%	24	60,00%
	I like to rate and review Facebook pages that sell a product or service	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	25,00%	2	50,00%	1	25,00%

Attachment 5 – Relationship between Facebook Frequency and Means of Access to Social Media

		FACEBOOK FREQUENCY								
		LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK		ONCE A WEEK		SEVERAL TIMES PER WEEK		EVERY DAY		EVERY DAY AND SEVERAL TIMES PER DAY	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
MEANS OF ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA	PUBLIC COMPUTERS	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	1	33,30%	2	66,70%
	PERSONAL COMPUTERS	3	2,80%	3	2,80%	16	15,10%	38	35,80%	46	43,40%
	MOBILE PHONE OR SMARTPHONE	1	0,30%	0	0,00%	34	11,50%	79	26,80%	181	61,40%
	TABLET OR IPAD	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	15,40%	5	38,50%	6	46,20%

Attachment 6 – Relationship between Facebook Frequency and Preferable Social Networks for the HORECA channel

		FACEBOOK FREQUENCY									
		LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK		ONCE A WEEK		SEVERAL TIMES PER WEEK		EVERY DAY		EVERY DAY AND SEVERAL TIMES PER DAY	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
PREFERABLE SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL	ZOMATO	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	7	10,80%	11	16,90%	47	72,30%
	TRIPADVISOR	2	2,50%	1	1,20%	10	12,30%	19	23,50%	49	60,50%
	AIRBNB	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	22,20%	3	33,30%	4	44,40%
	BOOKING.COM	0	0,00%	1	1,20%	10	11,90%	29	34,50%	44	52,40%
	INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	4	12,10%	10	30,30%	19	57,60%
	FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages of restaurants, hotels, cafes, etc)	1	0,80%	0	0,00%	14	11,70%	43	35,80%	62	51,70%

Attachment 7 – Relationship between Preferable Social Networks for the HORECA channel and Main Motivations of Usage of HORECA Social Networks

		SOCIAL NETWORKS PREFERED FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL											
		ZOMATO		TRIPADVISOR		AIRBNB		BOOKING.COM		INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)		FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
MOTIVATIONS OF USAGE OF HORECA SOCIAL NETWORKS	Only to book an establishment when I travel or have an appointment	0	0,00%	7	11,90%	2	3,40%	37	62,70%	4	6,80%	9	15,30%
	To look for previous opinions from previous consumers of the establishments	40	22,30%	**50**	27,90%	4	2,20%	36	20,10%	10	5,60%	39	21,80%
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online review or comment	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	2	16,70%	2	16,70%	1	8,30%	7	58,30%
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating	0	0,00%	1	14,30%	0	0,00%	1	14,30%	1	14,30%	4	57,10%
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating AND review	1	12,50%	1	12,50%	0	0,00%	1	12,50%	1	12,50%	4	50,00%
	I usually just go there to check the establishments before going there in the first place	24	21,10%	22	19,30%	1	0,90%	6	5,30%	12	10,50%	49	43,00%

Attachment 8 – Relationship between preferable Social Networks in the HORECA channel and Preferable Means of Obtaining Information Regarding an HORECA establishment

		PREFERABLE SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE HORECA CHANNEL											
		ZOMATO		TRIPADVISOR		AIRBNB		BOOKING.COM		INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)		FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
PREFERABLE MEANS OF OBTAINING INFORMATION REGARDING AN HORECA ESTABLISHMENT	I ask for information in travel agencies	0	0,00%	3	18,80%	0	0,00%	4	25,00%	1	6,30%	8	50,00%
	I search for information on travel magazines and journals	1	10,00%	1	10,00%	1	10,00%	3	30,00%	0	0,00%	4	40,00%
	I ask for opinions from my friends or coworkers only	10	17,90%	5	8,90%	1	1,80%	9	16,10%	9	16,10%	22	39,30%
	I go online and I search for all types of opinions (ratings and reviews on websites, social media, or on Facebook pages)	54	17,40%	72	23,20%	7	2,30%	68	21,90%	23	7,40%	86	27,70%

Attachment 9 – Frequency Table of Main Motivations of Accessing Facebook in the Sample

	MAIN MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIONS WHEN ACCESSING HORECA SOCIAL NETWORKS	N	N %
MAIN MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIONS FOR ACCESSING HORECA SOCIAL NETWORKS	Only to book an establishment when I travel or have an appointment	60	15,50%
	To look for previous opinions from previous consumers of the establishments	183	47,30%
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online review or comment	12	3,10%
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating	7	1,80%
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating AND review	9	2,30%
	I usually just go there to check the establishments before going there in the first place	116	30,00%

Attachment 10 – Relationship between consumers that search for feedback on establishments and the preferred social networks used for the HORECA channel

		PREFERABLE SOCIAL NETWORKS USED FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL											
		ZOMATO		TRIPADVISOR		AIRBNB		BOOKING.COM		INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)		FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
SEARCH FOR FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS CONSUMERS OF AN ESTABLISHMENT	No	5	17,20%	1	3,40%	0	0,00%	2	6,90%	4	13,80%	17	58,60%
	Yes	60	16,50%	80	22,00%	9	2,50%	82	22,60%	29	8,00%	103	28,40%

Attachment 11 – Relationship between Positive Online Reviews' Effects and Preferable Social Networks Used for the HORECA channel

		PREFERRABLE SOCIAL NETWORKS USED FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL											
		ZOMATO		TRIPADVISOR		AIRBNB		BOOKING.COM		INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)		FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
POSITIVE ONLINE REVIEW EFFECT	I believe in the information received and I go there / book the establishment	51	22,10%	50	21,60%	6	2,60%	52	22,50%	16	6,90%	56	24,20%
	I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to go there	8	7,90%	18	17,80%	2	2,00%	27	26,70%	10	9,90%	36	35,60%
	I pass along the information that the establishment has very good reviews to people I know	6	10,00%	13	21,70%	1	1,70%	5	8,30%	7	11,70%	28	46,70%

Attachment 12 – Relationship between Negative Online Reviews' Effects Preferable Social Networks Used for the HORECA Channel

		PREFERRABLE SOCIAL NETWORKS USED FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL											
		ZOMATO		TRIPADVISOR		AIRBNB		BOOKING.COM		INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)		FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	
		N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %	N	N %
NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW EFFECT	I believe in the information received and I don't intend to go there	36	18,00%	45	22,50%	4	2,00%	48	24,00%	13	6,50%	54	27,00%
	I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to stop me to go there or book the establishment	25	16,30%	30	19,60%	4	2,60%	32	20,90%	13	8,50%	49	32,00%
	I pass along the information that the establishment has a lot of negative reviews	4	10,30%	6	15,40%	1	2,60%	4	10,30%	7	17,90%	17	43,60%

Attachment 13 – Mean Ranks for Kruskall Wallis Test: Testing of H1a)2

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION		N	Mean Rank
TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	Terceira Island, Azores	1	108,5
	Aveiro	15	175,8
	Beja	1	108,5
	Braga	2	349
	Coimbra	168	201,29
	Faro	5	163,6
	Guarda	1	108,5
	Pico Island, Azores	1	17
	Leiria	8	260,38
	Lisbon	144	239,94
	Porto	21	205,69
	Santarém	4	108,63
	Setúbal	18	190,56
	Viana do Castelo	2	200,25
	Viseu	26	139,27
	Total	**417**	

Attachment 14 – Spearman Correlation Coefficient: Testing of H1b)1

			TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	FACEBOOK FREQUENCY
Spearman's rho	**TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS**	Correlation Coefficient	1	,121[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0,013
		N	417	417
	FACEBOOK FREQUENCY	Correlation Coefficient	,121[*]	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0,013	
		N	417	417

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

Attachment 15 – Chi Square Independency Expected Counts: Testing H1b)2

			NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT			Total
			I believe in the information received and I don't intend to go there	I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to stop me to go there or book the establishment	I pass along the information that the establishment has a lot of negative reviews	
MAIN FACEBOOK ACTIVITIES	I have a Facebook account, but I usually don't post anything or access to it often	Count	12	10	2	24
		Expected Count	12,1	9,4	2,5	24
	I look at the publications of my Facebook friends but I don't like to post personal things	Count	120	84	16	220
		Expected Count	110,8	86	23,2	220
	I like to post photos, songs or videos, but not profile updates or opinions	Count	42	40	15	97
		Expected Count	48,8	37,9	10,2	97
	I like to post photos, songs, videos, and updates of my emotional status and opinions	Count	15	11	5	31
		Expected Count	15,6	12,1	3,3	31
	I post profile updates of my emotional and psychological status	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	0,5	0,4	0,1	1
	I like to post comments on my Facebook friends posts	Count	18	16	6	40
		Expected Count	20,1	15,6	4,2	40
	I like to rate and review Facebook pages that sell a product or service	Count	3	1	0	4
		Expected Count	2	1,6	0,4	4
Total		Count	210	163	44	417
		Expected Count	210	163	44	417

Attachment 16 – Chi Square Test Results: Testing of H1b)2

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11,193[a]	12	0,512
Likelihood Ratio	11,728	12	0,468
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,083	1	0,149
N of Valid Cases	**417**		

a. 9 cells (42,9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,11.

Attachment 17 – Chi-Square Testing of H2)a

			PREFERRED SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL						Total
			ZOMATO	TRIPADVISOR	AIRBNB	BOOKING.COM	INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)	FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	
MAIN MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIONS IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	Only to book an establishment when I travel or have an appointment	Count	0	7	2	37	4	9	59
		Expected Count	10,1	12,6	1,4	12,9	4,5	17,4	59
	To look for previous opinions from previous consumers of the establishments	Count	40	50	4	36	10	39	179
		Expected Count	30,7	38,3	4,3	39,2	13,7	52,9	179
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online review or comment	Count	0	0	2	2	1	7	12
		Expected Count	2,1	2,6	0,3	2,6	0,9	3,5	12
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating	Count	0	1	0	1	1	4	7
		Expected Count	1,2	1,5	0,2	1,5	0,5	2,1	7
	To give my personal opinion regarding the establishment through an online rating AND review	Count	1	1	0	1	1	4	8
		Expected Count	1,4	1,7	0,2	1,8	0,6	2,4	8
	I usually just go there to check the establishments before going there in the first place	Count	24	22	1	6	12	49	114
		Expected Count	19,6	24,4	2,7	25	8,7	33,7	114
Total		Count	65	81	9	83	29	112	379
		Expected Count	65	81	9	83	29	112	379

Attachment 18 – Descriptive Statistics' for the Mann Whitney U Testing of H2b

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
FACEBOOK FREQUENCY	417	4,4	0,805	1	5
FEEDBACK SEARCH FROM PREVIOUS CONSUMERS	417	0,91	0,285	0	1

Attachment 19 – Mann Whitney U Outputs of Testing H2b

FEEDBACK SEARCH FROM PREVIOUS CONSUMERS		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
FACEBOOK FREQUENCY	No	37	162,55	6014,5
	Yes	380	213,52	81138,5
	Total	**417**		

Attachment 20 – Descriptive Statistics: Testing of H3a

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	417	3,52	0,74	1	5
POSITIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT	417	1,59	0,755	1	3

Attachment 21 – Mean Ranks for the Kruskall Wallis test: Testing of H3a

	POSITIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT	N	Mean Rank
TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	I believe in the information received and I go there / book the establishment	240	238,04
	I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to go there	109	166,68
	I pass along the information that the establishment has very good reviews to people I know	68	174,35
	Total	**417**	

Attachment 22 – Descriptive Statistics for the Kruskall Wallis Test: Testing of H3b

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	417	3,52	0,74	1	5
NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT	417	1,6	0,672	1	3

Attachment 23 – Mean Ranks for the Kruskall Wallis test: Testing of H3b

	NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS EFFECT	N	Mean Rank
TRUST IN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS	I believe in the information received and I don't intend to go there	210	233,39
	I believe in the information online but I don't believe it's enough to stop me to go there or book the establishment	163	185,8
	I pass along the information that the establishment has a lot of negative reviews	44	178,55
	Total	417	

Attachment 24 – Descriptive Statistics for the Mann Whitney U Test: Testing of H3c

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
WILLINGNESS OF VISITING NA HORECA ESTABLISHMENT AFTER A NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW	417	2,74	0,882	1	5
SEARCH FOR FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS CONSUMERS	417	0,91	0,285	0	1

Attachment 25 – Mean Ranks of the Mann Whitney U Test: Testing H3c

	SEARCH FOR FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS CONSUMERS	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
WILLINGNESS OF VISITING AN HORECA ESTABLISHMENT AFTER A NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW	No	37	226,72	8388,5
	Yes	380	207,28	78764,5
	Total	417		

Attachment 26 – Mean Ranks for the Kruskall Wallis Test Results: Testing H4a

TYPE OF HORECA ESTABLISHMENT		N	Mean Rank
WILLINGNESS OF VISITING NA ESTABLISHMENT AFTER A NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW	Hotels and similar establishments	202	203,27
	Restaurants	194	212,61
	Cafes	21	230,79
	Total	**417**	

Attachment 27 – Chi-Square Independency Test: Crosstabulation: Testing of H4b

			TYPE OF HORECA ESTABLISHMENTS			Total
			Hotels and similar establishments	Restaurants	Cafes	
TYPE OF PREFERABLE SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR THE HORECA CHANNEL	ZOMATO	Count	8	55	2	65
		Expected Count	31,8	30,5	2,7	65
	TRIPADVISOR	Count	37	43	1	81
		Expected Count	39,7	38	3,3	81
	AIRBNB	Count	6	3	0	9
		Expected Count	4,4	4,2	0,4	9
	BOOKING.COM	Count	73	10	1	84
		Expected Count	41,1	39,4	3,4	84
	INSTAGRAM (official Instagram pages)	Count	14	17	2	33
		Expected Count	16,2	15,5	1,3	33
	FACEBOOK (official Facebook pages)	Count	54	56	10	120
		Expected Count	58,8	56,3	4,9	120
Total		Count	192	184	16	392
		Expected Count	192	184	16	392

Attachment 28 - Social Media Combinations of Ways of Access

Category	Value
Public computers, Personal computer, Tablet or IPad	0%
Public computers, Personal computer	0%
Public computers, Mobile Phone or Smartphone, Tablet or IPad	0%
Public computers, Personal computer, Mobile Phone or Smartphone	0%
Tablet or IPad	1%
Personal computer, Tablet or IPad	1%
Mobile Phone or Smartphone, Tablet or IPad	4%
Personal computers	9%
Personal computer, Mobile Phone or Smartphone, Tablet or IPad	15%
Mobile Phone or Smartphone	24%
Personal computer, Mobile Phone or Smartphone	44%