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Stimulus from Social Media Influencers to the Portuguese Tourism and Travel industry in the COVID-19 era

Lara Batista Madureira

Master in World Internet Studies

Supervisor:
Doctor Bráulio Alexandre Barreira Alturas, Associate Professor,
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June, 2021

SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

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You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.

-Wayne Gretzky

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I have to thank my family for all the support throughout these last five years. Especially, to my parents, Marta and Manuel, for the continuous cheering and confidence in my abilities to achieve every goal I put my mind into it. To my brothers, Ivo, Ema and Sara for always be present and support my dreams and achievements. Furthermore, I like to thank my friends for all the good moments we passed in our academic journey and direct an individual thanks to Eduardo for the continuous encouragement to complete my dissertation.

In the same way, I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor Professor Bráulio Alturas for his useful instructions, support, and assistance throughout the writing process. In addition, I would also like to thank Emily Saturnino for all the guidance and vital advices throughout the whole process. In the same way, I like to express my gratitude to all the participants in this research for their generosity and their time.

Once more, I would like to thank everyone who contributed, in one way or another, for the conclusion of this dissertation and, consequently, my master's degree. This accomplishment is only possible because of you all!

Resumo

A forma como a sociedade comunica tem experienciado significativas mudanças nos últimos anos. Consequentemente, originou-se uma revolução no processo de recolha e troca de informação dos consumidores a respeito de marcas, produtos e serviços. Atualmente, qualquer pessoa pode expressar a sua opinião nas suas contas nas redes sociais e partilhá-la com quem quiser a uma escala global. É desta forma que aparecem os Influenciadores de Redes Sociais (IRSs), qualquer pessoa com uma audiência consideravelmente grande nas redes sociais pode influenciar outros utilizadores a agir da mesma forma que eles.

Atualmente, a indústria de Turismo e Viagens (T&V) está a enfrentar desafios sem precedentes devido à pandemia Covid-19. Sendo um dos maiores setores em todo o mundo, capaz de impulsionar o desenvolvimento socioeconómico e a criação de emprego, é vital que esta indústria recupere o mais rapidamente possível. Inúmeras ações estão a ser realizadas com a finalidade de estimular o turismo e uma ótima forma de o fazer pode ser através dos IRSs. Resumidamente, esta pesquisa tenciona entender se os IRSs podem estimular a indústria de T&V, mostrando que um destino e os seus serviços/produtos turísticos são seguros neste período de medo de viajar devido à pandemia.

Palavras-chave: Redes Sociais, Influenciadores das Redes Sociais, Turismo & Viagens, Planeamento de viagens, Covid-19.

Abstract

The way society communicates has gone through huge changes during the years. This has led to a revolution on the process of gather and exchange information by the consumers regarding brands, products and services. Nowadays, any person can express their opinion on their social media accounts and share it with whoever he/she wants on a global scale. It's here that Social Media Influencers (SMIs) appear, anyone with a considerably large audience on social media can influence many others to take an action.

Currently, the Tourism & Travel (T&T) industry is facing unprecedent challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, being one of the biggest sectors worldwide, driving socio-economic development and job creation is vital for this industry to recover as faster as possible. Many actions are being done to make that happen and one possible great tool are SMIs. Shortly, this research aims to understand if SMIs can boost the T&T industry by showing that a destination and its tourism services/products are safe in this time of fear of travelling due to the pandemic.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Media Influencers, Travel &Tourism, Travel planning, Covid-19.

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List of abbreviations

T&T-Travel & Tourism

WTTC - World Travel & Tourism Council

SMIs -Social Media Influencers

INE – Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Statistics Portugal

SPSS- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

EFA -Exploratory Factor Analysis

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. Topic context

In the last years, the way people communicate with each other has dramatically changed and "the same is true for how consumers gather and exchange information about products and how they obtain and consume them" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Nowadays, the internet and, more specifically, social media networks make it easier to express an opinion about something and share it with who you want on a global scale in a matter of seconds. People with a considerably large audience on social media can influence many others to take an action.

To attend the consumers' needs, many sectors are diving into the online world, and, more specific, into social media networks, Travel & Tourism (T&T) industry is not an exception. T&T is considered one of the biggest sectors worldwide, driving socio-economic development and job creation. Currently, T&T is suffered a big decline with the emerge of the Covid-19 pandemic and it's facing unprecedent challenges, with the unprecedented projected losses for 2020 of $2.7 trillion and 100.8 million job losses. But even though it is a sector with the major losses, T&T will be an important sector in driving the recovery of the global economy post COVID-19 by generating new jobs and driving people back to destinations. The domestic tourism will likely be the key driver in the sector's initial recovery from COVID-19. The sector will have a positive economic domino effect on suppliers across the entire supply chain (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020).

Shortly, this study aims to understand in which degree Social Media Influencers can shape travellers' decisions by showing people through their social media accounts how and where is safe to travel in this uncertain pandemic times. Additionally, analyse if people trust them and follow their advices and suggestions, this regarding places, products, services, or activities related to travelling.

1.2. Motivation and topic relevance

Year after year, the number of internet users worldwide is significantly growing, in 2020, it sums up 59% of the total population (4.54 billion users, with a growth of 7% from the last year). Not only the number of users is growing but also the time these spend online, in 2020, the average amount of time that an internet user spends daily is 6 hours and 43 minutes. Alongside with the rise of internet users is the number of social media users with an even bigger increase in the last years. In 2020, 49% of the society has an active social media account (3.80 billion of active social media users, with a 9.2% increase versus 2019). The time in average that a user spend on social media networks is two hours and 24 minutes (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2021).

As people are more and more online, the rise of new media has provided consumers with extensive options for actively providing information on services and products: ‘‘The digital innovations of the last decade made it effortless, indeed second nature, for audiences to talk back and talk to each other’’ (Deighton, J., & Kornfeld, 2009).

Currently, the society is living in a time where fear doesn’t allow many people to travel and plan holidays away from their homes. As T&T sector accounts globally for 10.3% of the global GDP (totalling $8.9 trillion) and 330 million jobs in 2019, it’s a sector where the pandemic had a huge negative impact, its recovery is essential for the global economy to prosper (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020a). Thus, as this dissertation aims to analyse if Social Media Influencers can be a valuable tool for people to get inform about safe destinations and travel related services, it’s a very relevant topic for the society nowadays.

1.3. Questions and research goals

This section will disclose the object of study, which largely can be defined as to in which degree can Social Media Influencers (SMI) shape travel decisions, more in detail, the study aims to understand how can Social Media Influencers be used as a tool to influence travelers’ decisions in the Covid-19 pandemic times that the society is now living. Shortly, the study aims to comprehend if the consumer values SMI opinion about a tourist place, product, or a service.

Accordingly, the main research question expected to be answered by the end of the study is the following: **To which degree can Social Media Influencers stimulate Portuguese Tourism & Travel industry in a COVID-19 era**. With more detail, the study aims to comprehend the following aspects, divided by 4 objectives:

- Objective 1: Comprehend how frequent Portuguese people travel and understand their travel patterns pre-Covid-19 and now, in a Covid-19 era.
    a) Frequency of travelling and chosen company to travel.

   b) Preference regarding travel inside or outside the country.
   c) Apprehend their sense of secure while travelling.
- Objective 2: Understand the Portuguese tourists' planning process and information research behaviour.
   a) Recognize the value of different information sources in tourists travel planning.
   b) Perceive how the emerge of the pandemic affected tourists travelling planning.
   c) Comprehend if SMI are considered a valued source of travelling information research. More in detail, understand the relationship between tourists' characteristics (gender, age, level of education and income) and the importance given to SMI in travel planning process.
- Objective 3: Understand how much people use social media and if they use them for traveling planning.
   a) Which are the social media channels consumers mostly use.
   b) Which are the social media platforms tourists value the most for travelling planning process.
- Objective 4: Apprehend more in detail SMI and how they can be a valuable tool for tourism industry.
   a) Understand the reasons for users to follow SMI and if they think the information they share are relevant and trustworthy.
   b) Comprehend to which degree people are influenced by SMI in general and regarding travelling decisions.
   c) What type of content does the consumer valued the most to promote a product, service, or a place?

1.4. Methodologic approach

The methodology adopted in this dissertation can be divide into two stages:

1. Collection of the data: It's used a quantitative approach, gathering the data through an online survey. The online survey has the propose to gather quantitative figures. The survey will be available online with free access.
2. Analysis of the data: Due to the fact that the data will be gathered by an online form, it will come already structed and sorted, the deeper analysis will be done

with the support of the program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Excel.

1.5. Structure and organization of dissertation

This thesis is structured in five chapters, these are the following:

1. Introduction: it gives an overview of the subject studied in this dissertation by highlighting its relevance. Enunciate the main topics and issues discussed by giving important statistics related to the subject.
2. Literature Review: The second chapter is the theorical framework that provides some fundamental theories and concepts given by researchers of the field in study.
3. Methodology: This chapter discloses the methodology used in this research in the process of collecting and analysing data.
4. Results: This chapter will display all the important findings and key observations retrieved from the questionnaire.
5. Conclusion: The fifth and last chapter presents the conclusions of this study. It points out what it was learned by doing this research and the limitations that occurred during the investigation. Suggestions for future studies on this topic purposes are also given.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1. Internet and Social Media

2.1.1. The role of Internet

The Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications worldwide like nothing before (Leiner et al., 1997). In the middle 90s it had already established as the focal point for communication, information, and business (Cohen-Almagor, 2011). Today, the Internet continues to grow day after day. In 1995, the number of users was 16 million, what accounted for only 0.4% of the population (Internet World States, n.d.), but 26 years later, in 2021, that number has exponentially grew to 4.66 billion internet users, accounting for 59.5% of the total population (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2021). Additionally, another fact to have in account it's the number of hours that a person spends online per day, in 2021, in average, a user spenders six hours and 54 minutes on the internet (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2021)

The Internet is at once a worldwide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location (Leiner et al., 1997). Therefore, Web 2.0, and the resulting digital revolution, provided the conditions for individuals to connect, communicate, and interact across social media platforms. Users have the power to co-create potentially engaging and therefore strongly influential content (Rinka & Pratt, 2018).

2.1.2. Defining and understanding Social Media

Before going into detail in how Social Media platforms changed the way people communicate and interact with other people, brands, and institutions, it is important to define what they are. Even though there isn't a consensus and formal definition of 'Social Media', there are some aspects that several scholars agree on. Berthon (2012) says Social media "is the product of Internet-based applications that build on the technological foundations of Web 2.0" (Berthon et al., 2012). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) highlighted the functionality of social media as an information tool, defining as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Mangold & Faulds (2009) added that social media have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behaviour including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behaviour, and post-purchase communication and evaluation. The development of social media has had a profound impact on the way client organizations communicate with their audiences.

Accordingly, 'Social Media' can be generally understood as Internet-based applications that carry consumer-generated content which encompasses ''media impressions created by consumers, typically informed by relevant experience, and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable consumers'' (Blackshaw, 2006).

2.1.3. Social media usage and relevant platforms

Following the same trend as the internet usage, the number of users on Social Media platforms is rising year after year. According with the Digital 2021 report, in 2021, there were 4.20 billion of active social media users (accounting for 53.6% of the total population). The number of social media users had an even bigger increase than the Internet users, it rose 13.2% compared to 2020, summing up 490 million active social media users (Annex A). The same report shows that the age group with more social media users is from 25-34, followed by the 18-24 years old age group, both groups account for 57,4% of the total of social media users (Figure 2.1). Moreover, the report states that an internet user spends daily, in average, two hours and 25 minutes on Social Media networks and in average one internet user has 8.4 social media account. It also adds that, in average, the female population from 16-24 years spends three hours and 14 minutes using Social Media platforms (Annex B) (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2021).

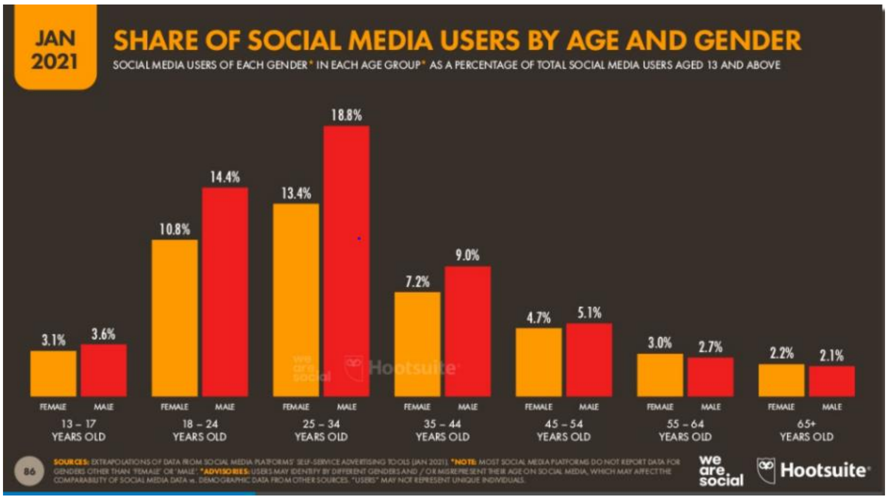

***Figure 2.1**: Share of Social Media users by age and Gender*
Source: Digital 2021 Report

Regarding the most use platforms worldwide, Facebook is the leading the social media platforms for years, with 2.740 million active users in 2021. In second place is YouTube, with 2.291 million active users and after are placed the chat social platforms WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger with 2000 million and 1300 million active users, respectively. In fifth place is Instagram with 1221 million active users (Annex C). Although Instagram is in fifth place relatively to the number of users, according to MediaKix, Instagram was ranked the most important influencer marketing channel (Annex D). Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app. People can upload photos or videos to the network and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends. They can also view, comment and like posts shared by their friends on Instagram (Instagram Help Center, 2021). YouTube ranks second as the most important influencer marketing channel.

2.2. Social Media Influencers

2.2.1. The journey to define Social Media Influencer

The popularity of Social Media networks led to the emerge of Social Media Influencers. Nevertheless, the term ‘influencer’ and ‘opinion leader’ are no phenomenon of nowadays, people have been influenced by others for many years now. For years, opinion leaders have been generally defined by different authors as individuals who influence other people in their immediate environment. These individuals can be found in different areas of interest such as beauty, sports, travel, or politics, between others. They are the individuals whom opinion followers perceive to be engaged and competent for discussed topic as well as honest and trustworthy (Turcotte et al., 2015). Nevertheless, Gnambs and Batinic state that an opinion leader doesn’t have to be always competent in the area of interest. He/she can influence others because of their knowledge; but they also can influence others because of their personality (Gnambs & Batinic, 2012). Opinion leaders can efficiently effect customers’ decision-making process, given that they are perceived to be more reliable than other kinds of brand-related advertising and, thusly, they are capable to reduce the reservations that consumers may have towards new products or services (Chan & Misra, 1990; Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., 1993; Rogers, E. M., & Cartano, 1962).

With the emerge of Social Media platforms these opinion leaders are more and more present on social media. Consequently, with this change of environment were born a new term for these key opinion leaders, Social Media Influencer (SMI). Through Social Media, SMIs engage in a personal relation with their followers displaying to them their personal and everyday lives. The illusion of a face-to-face relation reinforces the unbiased filter of "people like me" (Allsop et al., 2007). Due to this sharing of personal details and the constant interaction, SMI appear to be more accessible, believable, intimate, and easy to relate than mainstream celebrities (Costa, 2019). With this, SMI have the ability to affect attitudes and behaviours of others, such as help potential customers make a purchase decision (Liu et al., 2015). For the purpose of this dissertation, a SMI is defined as an individual with the ability of inspiring or guiding the actions of others, someone who can generate interest in something, e.g. a location, by posting about it on social media (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

There are many ways of categorising SMIs (Zulli, 2018). A popular way of doing it is based on the number of followers they have (Ruiz-Gomez, 2019). Accordingly, SMIs can be classified as micro influencers, macro influencers and mega influencers (Bullock, 2018). Mega influencers are SMIs with more than one million followers, macro influencers are the ones who have an audience between 100.000 and one million followers and micro influencers are the SMIs who have between 1.000 and 100.000 followers (Ouvrein et al., 2021). It's relevant to reference that the number of followers used to distinguish the different categories can differ depending on the country and the platform used. Micro-influencers are SMIs that form the largest group of content creators and have the smallest following. These smaller niche networks are valuable for brands seeking those specific demographics (Tilton, 2011). According to the influencer marketing platform Markerly (2015), micro-influencers generated the best ratio of reach and engagement. Micro-influencers are normally perceived to be more authentic than well-known SMIs with larger audience who tend to become less reachable as their popularity grows. It's the portrayal of authenticity and accessibility that micro-influencers offer that connects with an audience (Bernazzani, 2019; Hatton, 2018). Macro influencers are mostly those who have gained their fame through social media (Ismail, 2018). They have become very popular through the content they post on their social media profiles, and they usually have a digital presence on various platforms (Ruiz-Gomez, 2019). Mega influencers are usually famous celebrities as actors or sports stars that are known through other media (Ismail, 2018). They are usually not considered an expert in a particular product domain, and the relationship they have with their followers is more distant (Ismail, 2018).

2.2.2. Trust in Social Media Influencers

Trust is a complex and multidimensional concept (Mayer et al., 1995). In an online environment, trust is defined as the establishment between two parties, the trustor, and the trustee. In this case, a SMI, and a follower (Aljazzaf et al., 2010). Some authors even claim that "there is no other variable which so thoroughly influences interpersonal and intergroup behaviour" (Golembiewski, R. T., & McConkie, 1975). Moreover, trust has a positive impact on information credibility (Xiao et al., 2018) and, consequently, source credibility has a positive impact on persuasion and information appraisal (Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). In a marketing perspective, trust is considered a key factor to create and sustain a successful long-term relationship (Pennanen et al., 2007). Recommendations are built upon trust and credibility (Kim et al., 2018) and, therefore, a SMI must be trustworthy in order to influence its followers. Accordingly, a SMI is "an active and empowered social media user who is listened to and seen as a trusted source by other social media users" (Agostino et al., 2019).

To conclude, existent literature states that there is a positive correlation between attitude and trust (Macintosh & Lockshin, 1997) (Suh & Han, 2003). If a consumer trusts an influencer, then they trust the influencer's recommendation. This leads to that both attitudes towards the product and buying behaviour gets affected (Hsu, C., Chuan-Chuan Lin, J., & Chiang, 2013). Consequently, trust is a key concept for understanding consumers' intention to buy tourist products and accept the content generated by SMIs.

2.2.3. Word of Mouth and electronic WOM

Along time ago, in 1987, Westbrook defined Word-of-Mouth (WOM) as "an informal communication behaviour about the experiences with specific services, products or the characteristics of the providers that the consumers exchange among each other" (Robert Westbrook, 1987). The classical offline word-of-mouth describes a process when the information is transmitted orally from one person to another (Johan Arndt, 1967). Several studies have proved that consumers buying behaviour gets more affected by other consumers rather than traditional marketing (Kempe et al., 2003). Hence, WOM recommendation is more effective compared to other marketing strategies (Weiss, 2014), due to the high level of credibility (Kim et al., 2018). For 70% of customers, WOM is the most reliable and trustworthy type of advertising (Zheng & Wael Jabr, 2014) (Weiss, 2014).

This type of communication was been adapted with the emerge of internet and social media platforms where word of mouth can become visual and viral from one SMI to many followers. Along these lines, electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) emerges (Hussain et al., 2017). EWOM can be defined as communication directed to consumers via the Internet, along with product recommendations and reviews (Litvin et al., 2008). Online reviews are a type of product information created by users based on personal usage experience (Chen & Xie, 2008). Consumer reviews have two different roles, they provide information about products and services and they serve as recommendations (Park et al., 2007). Reading online reviews has become an essential part of the consumer purchase journey, even more in high-risk purchases (Park et al., 2007), as travel is a high involvement product, the use of online reviews for travel-related decisions is extensive. Consumer reviews and ratings are the most accessible and prevalent form of eWOM (Chatterjee, 2001).

The two big advantages of eWOM are that it excludes the limitations on time and location as it is online (Cheung et al., 2009) and also because it has the ability to express opinions and share experiences on social media reducing the anonymity and, therefore, people tend to see those expressions as more reliable (Chu & Choi, 2011). Furthermore, Aquino (2012) states that recommendations and reviews are a large contributor required for millennials to make a purchase and highlights the importance of visual and contextual presentation of information for millennials to process it intuitively (Aquino, 2012).

Altogether, existing research states that eWOM has greater effects on consumer decision-making compared to traditional advertising (James J. Zboja et al., 2018). EWOM has been argued to be a part of influencer marketing, in terms of how influencers use their voice to spread information about a product or a brand with the purpose of affecting consumers buying behaviour and attitudes (de Veirman et al., 2017). Even though there are clear similarities, there are also some differences, eWOM it's based on a non-paid opinion, while influencer marketing is sponsored advertising.

2.2.4. Influencer Marketing

Over the last two decades, the way of communicating and exchange information between people had been evolving, now consumers are connected 24/7. Due to the constant developing of communication, marketers need to continuously rethink its strategies, rethink the message they communicate, understand better to whom they communicate, as well as the communication methods (Brown & Hayes, 2008). Consumers have always valued other judgments higher than an advertiser and this is considered as one of the keys to influencer marketing (de Veirman et al., 2017). In this way, it’s possible to say that influencer marketing is built on the foundation of eWOM (Sudha M. & Sheena K., 2017).

In the last years, many researchers/institutions have come up with a definition for Influencer Marketing, they all complement each other. Sudha and Sheena (2017) describe influencer marketing as “ a process of identifying and activating individuals who have an influence over a specific target audience or medium, in order to be part of a brand's campaign towards increased reach, sales, or engagement” (Sudha M. & Sheena K., 2017). De Veirman et al. (2017) focus their definition on the endorsement, stating that Influence marketing consists of identifying influential users and stimulating them to endorse a brand or product through their social media channels (de Veirman et al., 2017). Sigala (2017) adds that Influencer marketing is about how an individual can influence other consumers through the diffusion of information, attitudes, and endorsement (Sigala, M., & Gretzel, 2017). The definition by Sudha and Sheena (2017) is the definition utilized in this study.

In 2021, 66% of brands are planning to increase their influencer marketing budgets (Neal Schaffer, 2021), this has led to the estimated grow of influencer marketing industry to approximately $13.8 billion, in 2021 (Influencer MarketingHub, 2021) (Annex E). It’s also relevant to mention that Instagram is the premiere platform when talking about Influencer Marketing, nearly 90% of all influencer campaigns include Instagram as part of the marketing mix (Influencer MarketingHub, 2020). Furthermore, this type of marketing is mostly exposed to millennials due to their frequent use of social media and the Internet (Jade, 2018).

2.3. Travel & Tourism Industry

2.3.1. Characterization of T&T industry

First, it’s vital to define Travel &Tourism (T&T), this can be well-defined as “the activity of travellers on trips outside their usual environment with a duration of less than one year”, involving all the economic activity related to such trips (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020a). T&T is now one of the biggest sectors worldwide, driving socio-economic development, prosperity, and job creation. (World Travel & Tourism

Council, 2020a). The 2019 World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Annual Research revealed that the T&T sector accounts for 10.3% of the global GDP (totalising $8.9 trillion) and 330 million jobs in 2019. Also, it asserts that over the past five years, one in four of all net jobs created worldwide has been in the Travel and Tourism industry. Furthermore, the report states that, in 2019, the Travel & Tourism sector had a GDP growth of 3.5%, a higher rate that the global economy (2.5%) for the ninth consecutive year (Figure 2.2.). It is also the third fastest growing sector in the world, before it is just Information & Communication (4.8%) and Financial Services (3.7%), it is ahead of Healthcare (3.0%) and Retail & Wholesale (2.4%). In terms of type of trip, in 2019, leisure takes a firm lead against business (78,6% vs 21.4%, respectively) (Anexo F).

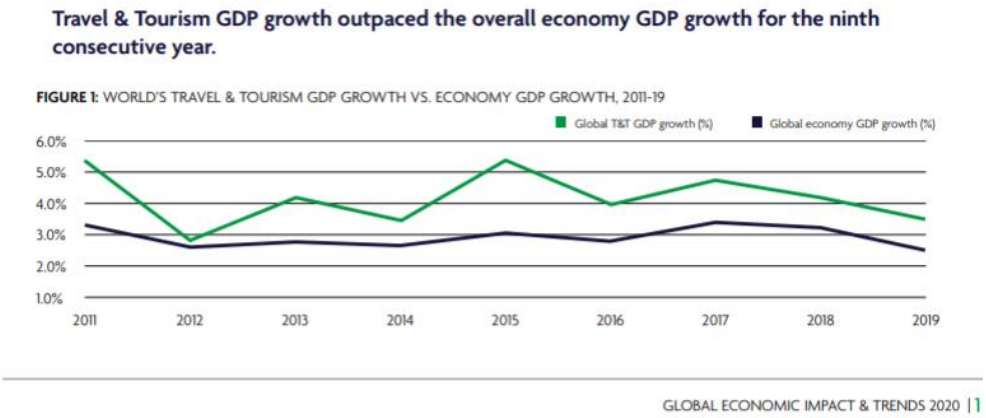

***Figure 2.2**: T&T GDP growth outpaced the overall economy GDP*

Source: Global Economic Impact &Trends 2020

As stated before, T&T has been growing year after year. In Figure 2.3. it can be observed the growth of International Tourism since the Second World War. In 1950, the number of international tourist arrivals were estimated to be 25 million, in 2018, they added up to 1.4 billion international arrivals per year (Our World in Data & United Nations World Tourism Organization, n.d.). However, even though countries usually focus on international tourism, in 2019, domestic travel still generated most of T&T expenses, accounting for 71.3% of total global spending (Anexo G). Thus, domestic tourism must be considered as much powerful as the international one, even more now with the outbreak of the pandemic. (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020a) states that "domestic tourism will likely be a key driver in the sector's initial recovery from Covid-19."

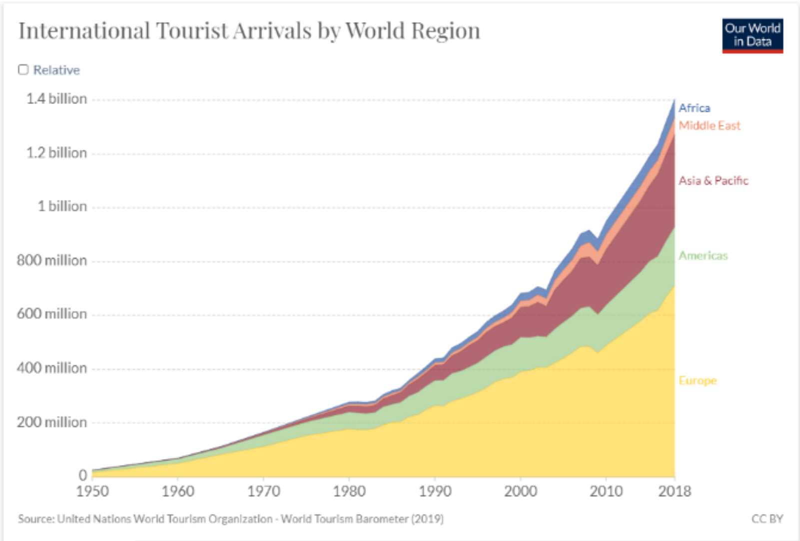

Figure 2.3*: International Tourist Arrivals by World Region*

Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization

2.3.2. T&T impacted by Covid-19

"Travel &Tourism is facing unprecedented challenges and an existential threat from the impact of Covid-19 virus globally. It is essential that governments recognise this and ensure that T&T is sustained through the crisis so that it can fulfil its vital role as a significant catalyst of global economic recovery and growth". Gloria Guevara Manzo, President & CEO World Travel & Tourism Council, in the report Travel and Tourism Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020 by WTTC.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has hit all countries around the world at different times, in different ways and in varying degrees. Globally, the response to control the pandemic was made through national lockdowns and a wide-ranging enforce of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders making T&T one of the hardest-hit sectors. According to UNWTO, international tourist arrivals have abruptly declined in the first quarter of 2020 (-22%), with possible scenarios for the year pointing to an annual decrease among 60% and 80% when compared with 2019 figures depending on the pace of easing travel restrictions (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020a). These numbers translate the greatest Tourism crisis on record (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020b).

The emerge of COVID-19 has disrupted lives in a global scale and consequently the T&T sector, and the global economy in an unprecedented way, putting things in perspective and challenging the world to think about the future. The T&T sector is currently facing unprecedent challenges due to this worldwide pandemic, with the unprecedented projected losses for 2020 up to 23% (2.1.trillion USD) and also up to 75 million jobs at risk, with an rise of 2.1% on unemployment rate directly from T&T job losses (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020b) (Annex 2.7.). Even though T&T is suffering these massive losses with the outbreak of the pandemic, the sector will be the key sector in driving the recovery of the global economy post COVID-19 by generating new jobs and driving back to destinations. The sector will have a positive economic domino effect on suppliers across the entire supply chain (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020a).

The first step to boost T&T sector is managing the fear and stigma, associated with the infomedic. The key response of T&T is by rebuilding confidence of the public that they can travel safely once the restrictions are lifted and it's allowed to. With still many travel restrictions in place around the world, consumers are considering destinations closer to home in the early stages of travel normalisation. Thus, destinations worldwide are prioritising domestic travel in order to "boost the restart and recovery of the sector in times of the COVID-19 pandemic" (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020c). To meet this goal, countries are adopting different types of measures and policies to promote travel within their countries. For people to feel safe when travelling, it is important to have the necessary health and sanitary protocols in action. This is been put in practise by the countries through services having certifications and labels for clean and safe practices.

Many governments around the world are developing and implementing initiatives to restart tourism and promote domestic demand, despite the diversity of initiatives they can be grouped into financial incentives, marketing and promotion, product development, partnerships, marketing intelligence and capacity building and training (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020c) (Annex H). The two initiatives that stand out are the financial incentives and marketing and promotion. The first type consists in offering vouchers, fiscal incentives (e.g. reduction of VAT on domestic tourism services) or long weekends. The second initiative related to marketing and promotion entails the launch of new communication campaigns and digital promotion efforts with a strong use of social media channels. In many countries domestic campaigns are the first step to restore confidence in T&T and reactivate T&T economy.

2.3.3. T&T in Portugal

In Portugal, the importance of Travel & Tourism sector is even bigger that in the global scale. It represents 16.5% of total economy (34.6 billion EUR), a GDP growth of 4.2% (vs. 1.6% of real economy GDP growth). It also contributes for the employment; it accounts for 18.6% of total employment with 902 400 jobs and it also embodies 23.4% of total exports, with 21.6 billion euros in visitor spend. Contrary to the global trend, Portugal, in 2019, has only 30% of domestic spending and the remaining 70% with international spending. The continuous grow of T&T in Portugal is the result of the government ambitious tourism strategy, embodying initiatives to overcome seasonality and focusing on local communities (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020a).

This trend in the growth of Tourism in Portugal was still visible in the first two months of 2020, with growth rates compared to the same months in the previous year of 8% and 15%, respectively (IPDT-Turismo e Consultoria, 2020). Then, the Covid-19 emerged, and the picture changed with the lockdowns and travel restrictions. In 2020, tourism establishments registered a decrease of 61.3% in guests compared to 2019 (10.5 million guests). Since 1993, that a number as low as this wasn’t registered. A similar tendency was registered at national airports, 8 800 passengers disembarked in Portugal in 2020, resulting in a drop of 70% compared with 2019 (Turismo de Portugal, 2021b). Also, in 2020, the tourism revenues reached 7 7753 million euros, a break of 57.6% compared to 2019, where the number was 18 291 million euros (Turismo de Portugal, 2021a).

The recovery for the Portuguese T&T sector to the pandemic will be gradual, focusing first on the Portuguese’s tourists and closer markets (IPDT-Turismo e Consultoria, 2020). Additionally, COVID-19 also impacted Portuguese families’ budges, together with the travel restrictions, they will make Portuguese people to plan their holidays inside the country. Thus, it’s expected an increase of domestic tourism (IPDT-Turismo e Consultoria, 2020). In order to get travellers to feel safe travelling and reinforce their confidence on tourism, Turismo de Portugal created the ‘Clean and Safe’ label. This label means that a service is following hygiene and sanitation measures according to the indications of the Directorate-General for Health. The big aim is for consumers to have greater security and confidence in the use of accommodation establishments, in the various tourist services and tourist attractions (Visit Portugal, n.d.).

2.3.4. Travel planning and destination choice

Consumer behaviour has always been influenced by developments in Information Communications Technologies (Buhalis D., 1998; Poon, 1993) and, in this way, it has dramatically transformed T&T sector (Sheldon P., 1997; Werthner & Klein, 1999) posing both opportunities and challenges (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Consequently, the Internet has essentially reshaped the way tourism related information is distributed and how consumers plan for and consume travel (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The Internet has become a vital source of information for travellers when they are in the information search phase of the travel planning process (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2006). As early as in 2006 it was argued that social media started replacing traditional sources of information (Jepsen, 2006). The proliferation of social media platforms available to the society has meaningfully changed the way people search, evaluate, rank, buy and consume products and services in this sector (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Hudson & Thal, 2013). Through social media networks, individuals can connect, communicate, and interact; therefore, users have the power to co-create potentially engaging and therefore strongly influential content (Rinka & Pratt, 2018). The creation of content by users, has transformed marketing communication in various business areas, namely in the T&T sector (Burgess et al., 2009). Travellers use social media to share experiences, emotions and comments, research, and acquire information about destinations and tourism products (Burgess et al., 2009; Howison et al., 2014; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Nandagiri & Leena Philip, 2018; Rinka & Pratt, 2018).

Social Media Influencers serve as an important channel for reaching larger or smaller audiences and influencing their behaviours at various stages of the consumer journey (Magno, 2017). Hence, SMI can be spokespersons of a tourist destination, a marketing strategy that encourages the decision to choose a vacation destination because it contributes to elevating the image of the place (Rinka & Pratt, 2018). It’s shown that SMIs have an impact on the purchasing decision process in the T&T sector and that they can influence the travel intentions of followers (Magno & Cassia, 2018), increasing the likelihood of visiting a particular destination (Rinka & Pratt, 2018). Existing literature points out that the experiential and intangible nature of tourism products (Oh et al., 2007) enhances the role of UGC in shaping the image of tourist destinations, companies, and brands operating in the sector and in supporting consumer decision-making processes (Burgess et al., 2009; Crotts et al., 2009; Fine et al., 2017; Perez-Aranda et al., 2018; Pietro et al., 2012; Serra Cantallops & Salvi, 2014). According to Pan and Fesenmair (2006), travellers consumers normally try to find information related to 10 key sub decisions regarding their trip- travel partners, destination, expenditure required, activities, travel dates, attractions to visit, transportation providers, length of trip, rest stops and food stoops (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). To conclude, user-generated content shared in social media influences the consumers' decision-making process in the T&T sector. The influence can occur before, during and after the trip (Fotis et al., 2012; Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017).

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1. Research design

This whole chapter is centred in the methodology, (Kazdin, 2003) define it as the principles, procedures, and practices that govern research. The first part of the chapter is focused on the research design, in a general way, the research design can be defined as a study intends to answer the research questions associated with the problem discussion and purpose. It will contain the sources from which data will be collected, how the data will be collected and how it will be analysed (Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, 2016).

According to J. W. Creswell (2003) there are three ways in which research methods can be examined; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method. This research study aims to explore the relationship between Social Media Influencers and their followers, more concretely how SMI can be a tool in helping the recovery to the T&T industry in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this aim, it was applied quantitative analysis. At the most basic level, quantitative research makes use of statistical analyses to obtain their findings. Furthermore, it is a mode of inquiry used to test theories or hypotheses, gather descriptive information, or examine relationships among variables. These variables are measured and yield numeric data that can be analysed statistically. Quantitative data have the potential to provide measurable evidence, to help to establish probable cause and effect, to yield efficient data collection procedures, to create the possibility of replication and generalization to a population, to facilitate the comparison of groups, and to provide insight into a breadth of experiences (Meissner et al., 2011). Additionally, this method is often used in order to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics of a large group of people, and when findings need to be generalised to a population (J. Creswell, 2005; Muijs, 2004). Following this thought, the study aims to understand if people are influenced by SMI recommendations when planning their travelling, so, quantitative analysis is suitable as it focuses on consumer behaviour (Bryman A. & Bell, 2015).

3.1.1. Data Collection

Normally, when doing quantitative research, data is collected using questionnaires (Muijs, 2004; Walliman, 2011). They are effective in collecting information from a large group of people. Thus, for the purpose of this research, data was collected through an

Online Survey. The data collected is considered primary data. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill (2009) define data as primary when is gathered specifically for the purpose of the research.

Pinsonneault, A., & Kraemer (1993) defined a survey as a “means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a large group of people”. They are also used to assess needs, evaluate demand, and examine impact (Salant, P. and Dillman, 1994). Online surveys are one of the most popular tools to collect data. They can be characterized as a set of structure questions that the respondent completes over the internet, generally through out a form. One of the strengths of an online survey is an accurate because the margin of error is low, as the respondents register their own answers. It is also easy for people participate and people can be more honest because there is no pressure from other participants, in this way, web surveys can elicit more honest and less socially desirable responses than other modes of data collection (Liu, M., & Wronski, 2018), and it is also easier to analyses. To contrast, online surveys have a few disadvantages, such as reliability of the answers, some people tend to straighlining the responses, they don’t pay attention to what they are responding and select the same option repeatedly. This negative aspect comes along with other, survey fraud, if the responses are not honest and truthful the study can take from the survey wrong conclusions.

The online survey for this research was made in the platform Qualtrics, an online survey provider, and the questionnaire was available online, with free access, from 22nd April to 29th of April 2021. The answers collected constitute a convenience sample, as the survey was shared on the various social media channels and communication tools by the author of the dissertation e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Additionally, the snowball sampling method was used as respondents share the survey further to other potential participants (Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, 2009). Furthermore, the survey was shared in Portuguese because the aim is to have Portuguese residents’ respondents and, for this reason, not limited someone participating due to language issues. It was used a simple phrasing in the questionnaire in order for participants to clearly understand the questions and decrease the inaccuracy and mistakes. The full questionnaire can be found in the Appendix A.

3.1.2. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire starts with a concise introduction that presents the theme of study, explicit that all data entered by responders is anonymous and, in the end, it thanks the participants for responding. Throughout the survey some brief explanations of concepts as SMIs is done in order to increase the validity of responses. After the introduction the survey divides in five blocks, namely: (a) travelling journey information; (b) travelling planning process; (c) social media use; (d) SMIs' related questions; (e) sociodemographic information.

First part of the questionnaire is about the participant's travel journey information, it's questioned frequency and company of travelling and also the sense of security while travelling, in Portugal and outside Portugal and before and after the pandemic. The second block asks about the travel planning process, where is examined how people book their trips, the importance of several information sources and if with the emerge of the COVID-19 pandemic they do a more detail research before travelling. The third section enquires about the use of Social Media, it includes how much time people spend on each social media platform and if they use them of travelling planning. The fourth segment is related to the SMI, it investigates if people follow SMI, what are the reasons to follow a SMI, how they evaluate the information received by a SMI and if they can affect people' attitudes towards products, services or places. It also inquires what type of content responders value the most from SMI. The last part of the questionnaire embodies the demographic questions concerning respondents' gender, age, education level, between others. This data is the base for generalisation of the sample during the analysis stage. Additionally, it offers the opportunity to explore how people' choices differ from one demographic group to another. Table 3.1. shows the literature sources used to construct the questionnaire.

***Table 3.1.**: Literature sources*

Travel Journey Information	
Frequency of travelling (before and after Covid-19 outbreak)	(Filipe, 2018) - Adapted the subject of the dissertation
Predominantly people travel inside or out Portugal? (before and after Covid-19 outbreak)	(IPDT-Turismo e Consultoria, 2020) (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020c)
Company people choose to travel.	(Valente, 2015)
Sense of security while travelling inside and outside Portugal in Covid-19 times.	(United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020c)
Travelling Planning Process	
How people book their trips	(Valente, 2015)
Importance given to the different sources of information when planning your trip	(Magno & Cassia, 2018) (Fotis et al., 2012) (Valente, 2015)
Understand if in pandemic times people take more time planning their trips in more detail and do a thorough research than usual.	(United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020c)
Social Media usage	
Average of time people spend daily on each social network.	(We are Social & Hootsuite, 2021)
Understand if people spend more time in Social Media due to Covid-19 pandemic.	(Hootsuite & We are Social, 2020)
Comprehend which Social media networks are used when planning trips.	(Valente, 2015) (Rinka & Pratt, 2018)
Social Media Influencers	
Apprehend if people follow Social Media Influencers on their Social media networks.	(Johan Grafström, Linnéa Jakobsson, 2018)
Recognise the reasons why people follow SMI.	(Johan Grafström, Linnéa Jakobsson, 2018)
How is the information shared by SMI perceived? (in general, and, more specifically, regarding travel information).	(Magno & Cassia, 2018) (Goldsmith et al., 2000) (Burgess et al., 2009)
Understand to which degree opinions and recommendations of SMI are relevant and increase/create desire to try a product or service (in general, and, more specifically, regarding travel information).	(Prestwich et al., 2008) (Goldsmith et al., 2000)
Understand to which degree SMI motivate attitudes and purchases of their followers (in general, and, specifically, regarding travel information).	(Goldsmith et al., 2000) (Magno & Cassia, 2018) (Burgess et al., 2009)
What type of information do people value the most when they search for travel related information through SMI?	(MediaKix, n.d.) - Adapted to the subject of the dissertation
What kind of content do people value the most when looking for information about a tourist destination through SMI.	(Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006) – Adapted to the subject of the dissertation
Understand if SMI can be a tool to T&T industry in these times of pandemic. In a scenario where SMI show that it is safe to travel and use travelling services in a specific destination, would this increase people willingness to visit that destination?	(Prestwich et al., 2008) (Goldsmith et al., 2000) - Adapted to the subject of the dissertation
Apprehend in a scenario where followers are already going on a trip to the same destination as the SMI, if people choose the same tourist services that the SMI.	(Magno & Cassia, 2018) – Adapted to the subject of the dissertation

The majority of the questions in the survey are closed questions. Most of them use a five-point Likert-style rating scale. The variance is that some questions ask regarding importance of the statement, other questions inquire the agreement with the declaration, frequency of doing something or even the degree of safety. The few remaining questions are multiple choice.

3.1.3. Data analysis

Hundreds of separate data means nothing to a researcher if not organized, categorised, and interpreted. To analyse quantitative data, it is necessary to processing, sorting, and structing the data. To do this, the data from the survey platform Qualtrics was imported and, then, analysed with the help of a statistic program, SPSS and Excel. First, it was analysed the amount of valid responses and the missing values. Afterward, it was done a descriptive analysis, constructing frequency distributions, measure of location (mean and mode) and dispersion (standard deviation). In addition, it was done a deeper analysis of the data by doing an Exploratory Factor Analysis and a Correlation Analysis using Pearson's Correlation in order to test the strength of the relationship between the variables.

3.2. Research goals

The questionnaire was design to answer the research question and, subsequently, the four objectives outlined in the Introduction chapter. In this way, the questionnaire was likewise divided in four blocks. The first block is related to travel journey and it's expected to answer the all the parameters in Objective 1. Then, the second block is dedicated to understanding people's travelling planning process, hence, answering to all points raised in Objective 2. The third block asks about social media use and it's meant to response to both points in Objective 3. Lasty, the fourth block, it's related to SMIs and the questions on the survey were built to respond to all aspects point out in the Objective 4 involving to SMIs (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: *Association of Questions to the Objectives*

Objective 1	Q2-Q6
Objective 2	Q7-Q9
Objective 3	Q11-Q14
Objective 4	Q15-Q26

Chapter 4 – Results presentation and Analysis

4.1. Sociodemographic profile

The survey had 268 participants but from those 68 answers were considered invalid, as they didn´t respond to enough questions to have relevant answers for the study. All participants are Portuguese residents from the diverse Portuguese districts. Out all of the respondents, 42.1% are residents in Lisbon, followed by 15.8% from Leiria and 6.1% from Porto. As it can be observed in the Table 4.1, more than half of the respondents are women (62.3%), most of the participants are single (72.4%) and young adults (<24 years old) are the majority of responders, representing 61.4% of the total sample. To note that the age groups were formed based on how INE conducts its researches, where the division is done in groups of 4 years. The most common education level is a bachelor's degree describing 38.6% of the respondents and it is followed by high school or equivalent (28.1%) and master's degree (19.3%). Respecting the professional situation, 38.3% are students and 29.4% are full time workers. The most popular answer to the number of members in the household is four (30.7%), followed three elements (20.2%). Lastly, >1000€ until 2000€ is the most popular response to the net household income question (31.1%). More detail information about the respondents' sociodemographic background is available in Appendix B.

***Table 4.1**: Sociodemographic profile*

		N	%			N	%
Gender	Female	142	**62,3%**	**Household**	1,00	14	6,1%
	Male	55	24,1%		2,00	27	11,8%
	Prefer not to disclose	4	1,8%		3,00	46	20,2%
	Missing	27	11,8%		4,00	70	30,7%
Age group	<24 years old	140	**61,4%**		5,00	14	6,1%
	25-34 years old	24	10,5%		6,00	7	3,1%
	35-44 years old	12	5,3%		Missing	50	21,9%
	>45 years old	9	3,9%	**Net household income**	Until 1000€	33	14,5%
	Missing	43	18,9%		1000€-2000€	71	31,1%
	Min: 18	Max: 59			2000€-3000€	46	20,2%
Highest level of education	Until 9º grade	1	0,4%		3000€-4000€	11	4,8%
	High School	64	28,1%		>4000€	10	4,4%
	Bachelor	88	**38,6%**		Prefer not to disclose	31	13,6%
	Master	44	19,3%		Missing	26	11,4%
	PhD	1	0,4%	**Professional situation**	Full time worker	67	29,4%
	Other	2	0,9%		Part time worker	4	1,8%
	Missing	28	12,3%		Student	87	38,2%

Marital status	Single	165	72,4%	Student-worker	25	11,0%
	Married	31	13,6%	Unemployed	10	4,4%
	Divorced	3	1,3%	Other	3	1,3%
	Prefer not to disclose	2	0,9%	Prefer not to disclose	3	1,3%
	Missing	27	11,8%	Missing	29	12,7%

4.2. Travel Journey

This section intents to analyse different aspects of the travelling journey of the respondents. In the Figure 4.1, it is noticeable the big difference in the number of trips made yearly before and after the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic the number of trips made differ a lot but after, the case is not the same, most of respondents only made one trip (62.7%) and 21.5% made two trips accounting for 84.2% of the sample. This shows a strong decrease in the number of trips made by people due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Another relevant change can be observed in the Figure 4.2, Portuguese residents are travelling more inside the country since the emerge of Covid-19 pandemic. To the statement "In pandemic times, I travel mostly inside Portuguese borders", most of the respondents agree with it (57.9% 'Strongly agree' and 20.6% 'Agree', what totals 78.5% of the respondents).

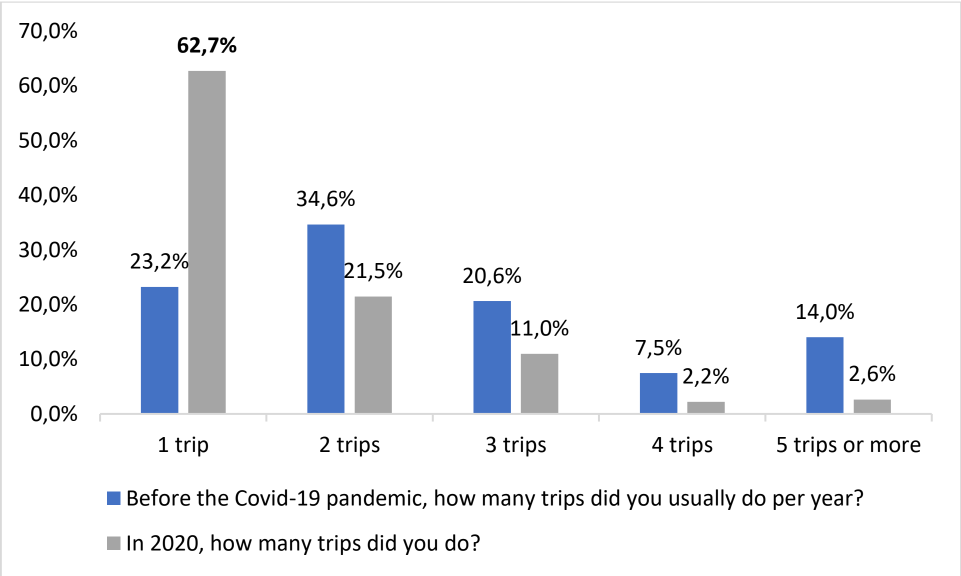

***Figure 4.1**: Number of trips (per year)*

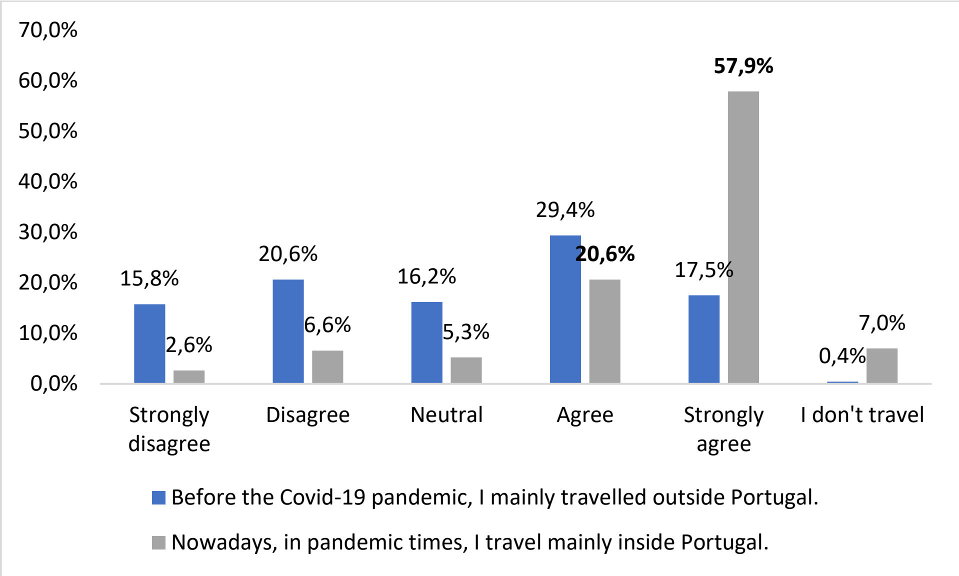

Figure 4.2*: Travelling before and After Covid-19 pandemic*

Regarding the sense of security while travelling nowadays, in Covid-19 era, Portuguese feel safer travelling inside borders that oversea. As it can be observed in Figure 4.3., only 22.3% of the respondents feel safe to travel abroad (18.4% answered "Safe" and 3.9% answered "Very safe") and almost half of the participants feel unsafe while travelling abroad (46.4%). Inside borders the insecurity is much lower, only 8,3% feel unsafe to travel and the larger part of respondents feel safe to do it (72.2%). Lastly, in this section, people responded they most of the times travel with family and friends and most of them never travel alone (63.2%). More detail information about the respondents' travel journey is available in Appendix C.

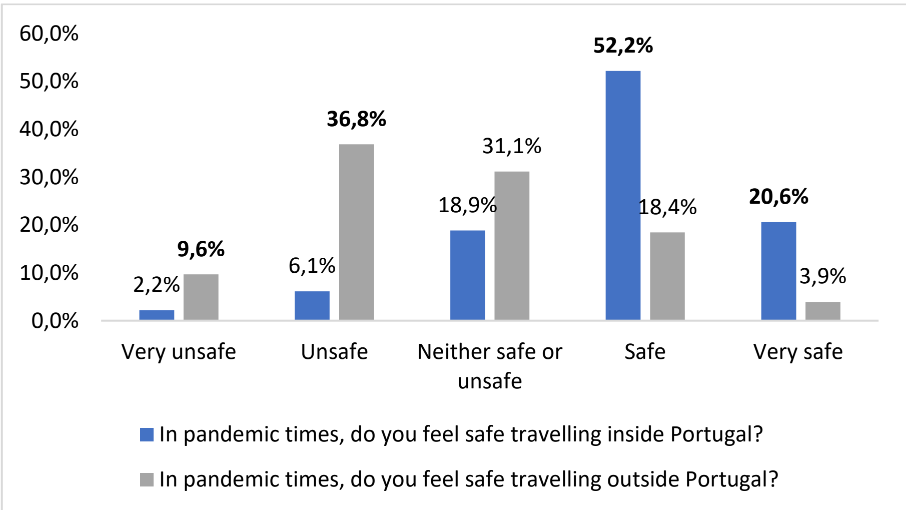

Figure 4.3*: Sense of security while travelling*

4.3. Travel Planning process

Concerning the travel planning process, it was asked in the questionnaire "How do you normally book your trips?", the majority of respondents say they book alone (52.2%) and the next higher value is "through friends and family" (29.4%). Only 2.2% still book through a physical travel agency. Regarding the importance of several information sources when travelling, 'previous own experience' and 'friends and family' take the lead, and, after those, 'travel websites' are the tool that people give more importance when planning a trip, followed by Travel Review Sites. In contraposition, the sources with less importance are 'Travel Agencies' and 'Social Media Influencers' (Table 4.2).

***Table 4.2**: Importance of different information sources*

	Not at all important	Low importance	Neutral	Important	Very important	Mean
Official Tourism Organizations	16,7%	**32,5%**	28,9%	15,4%	6,6%	2,63
Travel Sites	5,3%	11,8%	23,7%	**35,1%**	**24,1%**	**3,61**
Social Media	10,1%	22,4%	35,5%	23,7%	8,3%	2,98
Social Media Influencers	**29,8%**	**28,1%**	25,0%	14,0%	3,1%	2,32
Travel Review Sites	4,8%	9,2%	37,3%	35,5%	13,2%	**3,43**
Travel Agencies	23,7%	32,0%	24,1%	14,0%	5,7%	2,46
Written Press	18,0%	26,3%	34,6%	17,5%	3,1%	2,61
Friends and Family	0,9%	2,2%	18,4%	**50,9%**	**27,2%**	4,02
Previous own experience	0,9%	0,4%	6,6%	**39,0%**	**52,6%**	4,43

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the process of planning a trip change for many travellers as it can be noticed in the Table 4.3. People agree that they prefer to take less risks, plan their trip with more detail by doing a deeper research than usual, trying to understand beforehand if the tourist destination is safe and provides safe tourist services. More detail information about the respondents' travel planning process is available in Appendix D.

***Table 4.3**: Possible changes in the process of planning a trip in Covid-19 times*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Mode
I do a more in-depth research than usual about the tourist destination.	4,6%	7,8%	19,8%	**39,2%**	**28,6%**	3,79	4
I try to understand beforehand if the tourist destination is safe and provides safe tourist services	0,9%	0,9%	12,8%	**37,2%**	**48,2%**	4,31	**5**
I prefer to take less risks and plan my trip with more detail than usual.	2,8%	8,3%	17,4%	**34,4%**	**37,2%**	3,95	**5**
it takes me longer to plan my trips than usual.	5,5%	16,5%	**29,8%**	**26,6%**	21,6%	3,42	3

4.4. Social Media usage and Social Media Influencers

The top Social Media platforms used by the respondents are Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube, to the point that the option answer that was more popular in all three networks were spending per day ‘one hour or more’ in the platform. These top three networks are the also the most used to plan trips by the respondents. Due to the pandemic, most of the respondents agree that they spend more time on social media each day (73.7%) (Appendix E).

The last block of the questionnaire is related to SMIs. The first logical step is to know if people follow SMIs on their social media account, thus, to this question 69.3% of the respondents answered that they follow SMIs on their social media. To deeply understand what type of person follows SMIs, it was done a few cross-table analyses. In the Table 4.4., it’s noticeable that from the female respondents, 82.2% said they follow SMIs, a much higher value than when looking to the male respondents (45.5%). Regarding age, it can be observed that most of the respondents in the age groups of <24 years old and 25-34 years old follow SMIs (80.7%, 75.0%, respectively). Oppositely, the majority of respondents in the age group >45 years old don’t follow SMIs. Moreover, the majority of the respondents that answered that they don´t use Instagram or only use, in average, 5 minutes a day, don’t follow SMIs (77.8%, 60.0%, respectively). Most of the respondents who answered that they use Instagram, in average, 45 minutes and one hour or more, follow SMIs (79.4%, 86.2%, respectively).

Table 4.4*: Characterization of respondents that follow SMIs*

		Do you follow any Social Media Influencers?	
		Yes	No
Gender	Female	**85,2%**	14,8%
	Male	45,5%	54,5%
Age	<24 years old	**80,7%**	19,3%
	25-34 years old	**75,0%**	25,0%
	35-44 years old	58,3%	41,7%
	>45 years old	22,2%	**77,8%**
Daily time spent on Instagram	I don't use it	22,2%	**77,8%**
	5 minutes	40,0%	**60,0%**
	15 minutes	52,6%	47,4%
	30 minutes	52,2%	47,8%
	45 minutes	**79,4%**	20,6%
	1 hour or more	**86,2%**	13,8%

To respondents that said they follow SMIs, several questions related to SMIs were made, to the ones who said 'No', the questionnaire moved on to the sociodemographic questions. Primary, it was asked why respondents follow SMIs, Table 4.5. shows the results. By looking at the table, it can be recognised that the bigger reasons of why they follow SMIs are because they are a good 'Entertainment' and 'Inspiration'. Another compelling reason is to receive 'Feedback of brands, products or services'. According to the results, 'Discounts/Promotional Campaigns' and 'Friends follow them too' have low or not importance it all for the majority of the respondents.

Table 4.5*: Reasons to follow a SMI*

	Not at all important	Low importance	Neutral	Important	Very important	Mean	Mode
Discounts/Promotional Campaigns	**37,7%**	**30,1%**	24,0%	4,8%	3,4%	2,06	1
Inspiration	11,0%	12,3%	31,5%	**30,1%**	**15,1%**	**3,26**	3
Entertainment	2,1%	6,2%	26,2%	**42,1%**	**23,4%**	**3,79**	**4**
Updated on trends	19,3%	22,1%	33,8%	17,9%	6,9%	2,71	3
Feedback of brands, products or services	15,1%	13,7%	28,8%	**28,8%**	**13,7%**	3,12	3[a]
Friends follow them too	**46,2%**	**28,3%**	20,0%	3,4%	2,1%	1,87	1

Using valid percent on this Table as people who answered that they don't follow SMIs skip this block

Another relevant aspect to study is how is perceived the information provided by SMIs. It the questionnaire this point was divided in two, information in general and information related to travelling, to understand if there is a difference between the two. Table 4.6. demonstrates that the majority of the respondents agree that the information received from SMI are helpful (67.1% regarding information in general and 78.1% concerning information related to travel) and interesting (80.1% regarding information in general and 79.6% concerning information related to travel). The aspect that the respondents have more doubts is impartiality, in both cases the mean doesn't reach the neutral value, therefore, it's a fact that respondents don't think the information received from SMI is impartial. The table also shows that there isn't a big difference between the information received by SMI in general and information related to travel, however, travel related information it has better values then the information in general in all aspects in analysis.

***Table 4.6**: How is information received from SMI perceived?*

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Stron gly agree	Mean
Information in general	Reliable	1,4%	8,9%	46,6%	41,1%	2,1%	3,34
	Helpful	1,4%	2,1%	29,5%	**58,2%**	**8,9%**	3,71
	Interesting	1,4%	2,1%	16,4%	**67,8%**	**12,3%**	3,88
	Impartial	14,4%	34,9%	34,2%	13,7%	2,7%	2,55
	Credible	2,8%	11,8%	45,1%	36,1%	4,2%	3,27
Information related to travel	Reliable	3,8%	9,6%	33,3%	**46,8%**	6,4%	3,42
	Helpful	1,9%	2,6%	17,3%	**62,8%**	**15,4%**	3,87
	Interesting	1,9%	3,8%	14,7%	**58,3%**	**21,2%**	3,93
	Impartial	12,3%	21,9%	36,1%	23,9%	5,8%	2,89
	Credible	3,9%	9,7%	32,3%	47,7%	6,5%	3,43

Using valid percent on this Table as people who answered that they don't follow SMIs skip this block

After understanding how information shared by SMIs is perceived, it is also interesting to understand how and to which degree that information affects people. This question was, once again, been divided by two, information in general and travel related information, to comprehend if there is a different between the two. According to the results on Table 4.7., the majority of the respondents agree with the two first statements made, for both information in general and travel related information. These are that SMIs opinions and recommendations are relevant and that SMIs create/increase the desire to purchase a product or a service. The statement with less mean is "Some of my attitudes and purchases are motivated by SMI.", nevertheless, the mean is higher than the neutral value, hence, a part of the respondents still agree their purchases are motivated by SMIs. To highlight that the statement where people most agree is that SMI create/increase the desire to try a product or a service (81.7% regarding information in general and 77.8% concerning information related to travel). The table also shows that there is a very small difference between the information received by SMI in general and information related to travel.

***Table 4.7**: To which degree are SMI influencing people?*

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
Information in general	SMI's opinions and recommendations are relevant.	3,9%	9,2%	34,6%	**44,4%**	7,8%	3,43
	SMI create/increase the desire to try a product or service.	3,3%	3,3%	11,8%	**46,4%**	**35,3%**	**4,07**
	Some of my attitudes and purchases are motivated by SMI.	11,8%	20,3%	19,6%	**34,6%**	13,7%	3,18
Information related to travel	SMI's opinions and recommendations are relevant.	3,9%	13,7%	26,1%	**47,1%**	9,2%	3,44
	SMI create/increase the desire to try a product or service.	4,6%	5,9%	11,8%	**49,7%**	**28,1%**	**3,91**
	Some of my attitudes and purchases are motivated by SMI.	9,8%	19,0%	24,8%	**37,3%**	9,2%	3,17

Using valid percent on this Table as people who answered that they don't follow SMIs skip this block

The next topic approached is what time of information does users' value the most when looking for travel related information through SMIs. Table 4.8. demonstrates that the aspects the respondents value the most to know are the security, climate, attractions, activities, expenses, and accommodation. It is significant to highlight the respondents place 'Security' as the information value the most to know (38% say it's 'important' and 36% say is 'very important', the two options represent 74% of the respondents). In contrast, there are four aspects that people didn't value as much, these are the following: dates for the trip, travel partners, duration of the trip and bars and discos. The mean for these aspects doesn't even reach the 'Neutral' value.

***Table 4.8**: What information does consumers value the most to receive through SMIs?*

	Not at all important	Low importance	Neutral	Important	Very important	Mean
Chosen destination	5,3%	6,6%	30,5%	40,4%	17,2%	3,58
Expenses	7,9%	7,9%	17,2%	**39,1%**	**27,8%**	3,71
Activities	4,0%	4,7%	18,0%	**48,7%**	**24,7%**	3,85
Dates for the trip	16,6%	24,5%	25,8%	24,5%	8,6%	**2,84**
Attractions	3,3%	1,3%	24,0%	**44,0%**	**27,3%**	3,91
Transport services	9,3%	11,3%	28,0%	36,0%	15,3%	3,37
Travel Partners	28,0%	29,3%	23,3%	12,7%	6,7%	**2,41**
Duration of the trip	18,7%	22,0%	26,7%	26,7%	6,0%	**2,79**
Accommodation	7,3%	8,7%	22,7%	**38,7%**	**22,7%**	3,61
Restaurants/cafes	4,7%	5,3%	31,3%	42,0%	16,7%	3,61
Security	4,7%	5,3%	16,0%	**38,0%**	**36,0%**	3,95
Climate	6,0%	6,7%	20,0%	**41,3%**	**26,0%**	3,75
Local Habits	6,7%	8,0%	28,0%	38,0%	19,3%	3,55
Bars/ Discos	19,3%	24,7%	26,7%	22,7%	6,7%	**2,73**

Using valid percent on this Table as people who answered that they don't follow SMIs skip this block

In addition, it was asked how people would prefer to receive the information related to travel from SMIs (Table 4.9.). The most valued forms by the respondents consider are images of the destination (76.2% of the respondents consider important or very important) and videos of the destination (73.8% of the respondents consider important or very important). In contrast, people don't think 'Lifes on social media while travelling' are important, as this option has a mean below the 'Neutral' value.

***Table 4.9**: What type of content do users most value when looking for information about a tourist destination through SMI?*

	Not at all important	Low importance	Neutral	Important	Very important	Mean
Images of the destination	3,3%	2,0%	18,5%	**45,7%**	**30,5%**	**3,98**
Videos of the destination	2,0%	3,4%	20,8%	**39,6%**	**34,2%**	**4,01**
Comparison between tourist products/services	6,0%	14,7%	30,0%	34,0%	15,3%	3,38
Comparison between destinations	5,3%	18,0%	28,7%	32,0%	16,0%	3,35
Lifes in social media while travelling	26,8%	32,2%	23,5%	9,4%	8,1%	2,40

Using valid percent on this Table as people who answered that they don't follow SMIs skip this block

Lasty, it was asked the respondents to express their level of agreement with two statements related to the likelihood of SMIs boosting the T&T industry. According to the results in the Table 4.10., SMIs increase the desire to visit a destination (42.4% of the respondents 'Agree' and 19.9% 'Strongly agree' with the statement). When asked if people would opt for the tourist services that the SMI used in a scenario where people are already travel to the destination, the level of agreement was much lower than the first statement.

***Table 4.10**: Nowadays, in Covid-19 times, are SMIs capable of boosting T&T industry?*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
In these times of pandemic, if a SMI travels to a destination and shares their trip through their social networks, showing that it is safe, would this increase the desire to visit this destination?	7,3%	7,3%	23,2%	**42,4%**	**19,9%**	**3,60**
If you are already traveling to the same destination as the SMI, would you opt for the same tourist services that the SMI used? (Accommodation, transport service, restaurants, attractions, etc.)	7,9%	20,5%	**40,4%**	**28,5%**	2,6%	2,97

Using valid percent on this Table as people who answered that they don't follow SMIs skip this block

It was considered relevant to perform Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to further understand the relationship between items in the questionnaire. The EFA resulted in a meaningful and interpretable ten-component solution from 44 items (Table 4.11.). The ten-factor solution accounted for a total variance of 72.57%. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.79 and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.000$) reflect the suitability of the data (Cerny, C.A., & Kaiser, 1977). Subsequently, it was calculated the Cronbach's alpha value for all ten variables in order to see the reliability and internal consistency. According to Sekaran, U., & Bougie (2016), below 0.6 the value is considered as poor, between 0.6 and 0.7 is acceptable and above 0.8 is good. In the Table 4.10., it can be seen that the Cronbach's alpha value for all of components is above 0.6, meaning the results of the reliability analysis indicate a good reliability and internal consistency of the items.

***Table 4.11**: Exploratory Factor Analysis*

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

		Component										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Valued information related to travel	Q21.5	**0,88**										
	Q21.9	**0,81**				0,24						
	Q21.13	**0,80**									0,21	
	Q21.3	**0,79**	0,23						0,22			
	Q21.11	**0,72**				0,25		0,28				
	Q21.12	**0,70**			0,33							0,22
	Q21.10	**0,70**		0,20						-0,29	0,28	
	Q25.2	**0,69**			0,35						0,24	

	Q21.6	**0,63**				0,24	0,32	0,34				
	Q21.2	**0,61**	0,28							0,26		-0,31
	Q21.1	**0,50**	0,23		0,29				0,33		-0,23	
2.Trust in SMI	Q18.5		**0,85**									
	Q18.1		**0,84**									
	Q18.4		**0,80**					-0,20				
	Q17.5		**0,75**				0,22	0,21				
	Q17.4		**0,66**									
	Q17.1		**0,65**				0,45					
3.Purchases	Q19.3		0,27	**0,85**								
	Q20.3	0,34		**0,76**								
	Q16.1			**0,64**						0,21	0,20	
	Q16.5			**0,57**	0,30	0,24		0,27				0,31
4.SMI contents are attractive	Q25.1	0,51			**0,66**							
	Q18.3	0,25	0,51		**0,60**			0,20				
	Q19.2			0,38	**0,58**		0,22		0,38	0,22		
	Q18.2	0,21	0,53		**0,56**			0,26				
	Q17.2	0,22	0,46		**0,54**						0,21	
	Q17.3		0,48		**0,53**	0,21			-0,21			
5.Comprehensive travel information	Q21.4	0,23				**0,80**	0,26					
	Q21.8	0,34				**0,75**						
	Q21.7			0,27		**0,71**					0,31	
	Q16.4		0,22	0,33		**0,40**		0,32		0,40		0,37
6.Influence of SMIs in consumers' travel related decisions	Q20.1	0,30	0,24	0,24			**0,63**	0,21				
	Q19.1		0,41	0,22			**0,62**			0,30		
	Q20.2	0,33		0,39	0,33		**0,54**		0,22		0,20	
7.Destination and products/services comparison	Q25.3	0,41						**0,70**	0,23			
	Q25.4	0,47					0,30	**0,59**	0,20		0,21	
8. SMI expirience while travelling	Q21.14	0,26						0,27	**0,67**		0,27	
	Q26.1			0,29	0,22		0,26	0,23	**0,63**			
	Q26.2	0,20	0,44			0,26		-0,25	**0,54**			
9. SMIs are funny	Q16.3			0,24			0,32			**0,71**	0,23	
	Q16.2			0,45	0,30					**0,65**		
10. Destination sight	Q25.6	0,22									**0,80**	
	Q25.5	0,26	0,22				-0,30	0,40	0,23		**0,53**	
friends	Q16.6		0,21									**0,83**
	Alpha de Cronbach	0,92	0,87	0,78	0,84	0,78	0,79	0,87	0,61	0,60	0,65	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 17 iterations.

Next, it was performed the Correlation Analysis using Pearson's Correlation in order to test the strength of the relationship between the variables. Variables can be positively or negatively correlated. Table 4.12. shows the results of the correlation analysis, it is noticeable that all the variables are positively correlated with each other, with a Pearson Correlation Coefficient ranging from r = 0.206 (between Destination sight and SMIs are funny) to r = 0.662 (between 'Influence of SMIs in consumers' travel related decisions' and 'SMI contents are attractive'). All the results were significant at least at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). There is a correlation that stand out from the others, it has a positive correlation of 0,662 and it's between 'Influence of SMIs in consumers' travel related decisions' and 'SMI contents are attractive'. This means that there is a significant relationship between the two. Furthermore, these two variables present a good correlation with most of the other variables and, therefore, a strong positive relationship with most of the other variables. For instance, SMI contents being attractive and the influence of SMIs in consumers' travel related decisions has a positive correlation with the Purchases (r=0.522; r=0,583).

***Table 4.12**: Correlation Analysis using Pearson's Correlation*

Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Valued information related to travel	1									
2.Trust in SMI	,264**	1								
3.Purchases	,383**	,402**	1							
4.SMI contents are attractive	**,596****	**,577****	**,522****	1						
5.Comprehensive travel information	**,547****	,244**	,472**	,364**	1					
6.Influence of SMIs in consumers' travel related decisions	**,570****	**,511****	**,583****	$\boxed{\textbf{,662**}}$	,392**	1				
7.Destination and products/services comparison	**,621****	,281**	,387**	,440**	,484**	,447**	1			
8.SMI experience while travelling	**,554****	,363**	,396**	,494**	,483**	,488**	,475**	1		
9.SMIs are funny	,355**	,251**	**,546****	,464**	,358**	,482**	,211*	,270**	1	
10.Destination sight	,403**	,290**	,259*	,324**	,360**	,338**	**,539****	,405**	0,206	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Future research

5.1. Main conclusions

This study has gone through several phases in the pursuit of the clarification of the role that Social Media Influencers can have on boosting T&T industry in today reality, the covid-19 pandemic. T&T is one of the biggest sectors worldwide, driving socio-economic development, prosperity, and job creation and it had a huge negative impact with the emerge of Covid-19 virus worldwide, its recovery is essential for the global economy to prosper.

In order to understand how can SMI affect people's travel decisions, the research started by studying the travel journey of the respondents. The results of the survey support the United Nations Word Tourism Organization reports on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on people travels. Most people did less trips in 2020, within those trips most were made domestically, and less outside Portugal and people feel safer travelling inside the country than outside.

Regarding the planning process of a trip, and according to the results, SMI aren't the most important source of information, on the contrary, they are considered the less important information source from the respondents. People consider Travel Sites and Travel review Sites the most important information sources, next to their own experience and opinions from friends and family. The present study also discloses that most people now do a deeper research than normal trying to understand if the destination and the tourist services are safe.

After comprehend travel aspects, the study asked about social media usage, and the results show that top used platforms are Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube. The three platform are also the most used when planning a trip. The last part of the research was all directed to SMIs. First, it was observed that most of respondents follow SMIs (69.3%). Then, the aim was understanding why people follow them, and the top answers was because of "Entertainment" and "Inspiration". Respondents think the information received from SMIs are interesting and helpful, but they have some doubts regarding the impartiality of that information.

When asked if "SMIs create/increase the desire to try product or a service", the majority of respondents agreed, showing that SMIs are definitely a good tool to boost

T&T, as they stimulate people to try services/products. Other important discover made by the present study is that the information respondents value the most to have about a destination is security. This means that people are interested in retrieving that information through SMIs, what makes another good reason to have SMIs promoting tourist destinations. Lastly, in the present study it can be observed that the fact that SMIs are attractive is positively linked with the consumers' travel related decisions and purchases. Additionally, trust in SMIs is also a factor that is positively linked with the fact that consumers are influenced by SMIs in their travel related decisions.

To conclude, all four objectives outlined were achieved and the main research question was answered. Accordingly, Social Media Influencers can stimulate T&T industry in these times of Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2. Contributions to the scientific and business community

The present study has a great value to the scientific and business community as its analysis involves a new reality for the society, the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though the existence literature is already extensive both for Social Media Influencers and the Tourism & Travel industry, it doesn't exist as nearly as much literature when connected with the covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the value of this dissertation lies on this gap that emerged recently with the Covid-19 pandemic.

As stated before, the present study analyses how and in which degree SMIs can be used as tool to boost T&T industry after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the study provides a deeper understanding on what consumers value to know, in these times of fear to travel due to the pandemic. Hence, in a business point of view, the insights of the present study can be used by managers of tourist services, travel agencies, tourist organizations or governments to promote tourist cities. In such way, this study can be used as a starting point to many other future researches.

5.3. Research limitations

Even though this research contributed to the literature as it provides a better understanding on the relevance of SMIs on promoting a tourist destination, it had its limitations. The first one is that the study only has in scope Portuguese residents, what means that the impact of SMIs on T&T was not studied cross nations. The second one is that the study only had in consideration influencers in social media leaving out other types of influencers which may limit the findings of the research. The third one, is that the study focused on the impact that SMI can have in the T&T industry, disregarding all other industries that were negatively impacted by covid-19 pandemic. Other limitation is that the present research only uses quantitative methods, thusly, it doesn't have meaningful insights from the respondents. The last limitation is related to the questionnaire, despite the effort of the author to obtain a sample as diversified as possible, a substantial number of the respondents are people that belong to the researcher's circle of contacts restraining the sample for instance in age and demographics, resulting in a not very impartial representation of the entire Portuguese population. To some extent, this might decrease the reliability of this study.

5.4. Future research proposals

The present study can be used a baseline to many future researches on the matter with different approaches to the subject. Along these lines, future research may use the limitations of this study and explore them. Accordingly, spread this study to a larger scale, for example in a worldwide level. Do an identical analysis on how can SMIs be used as a tool to boost an industry after the covid-19 pandemic, but the study would focus on other negatively impact industries other than T&T. Other researches can also be directed to understand how to boost T&T in these times of straggle due to the pandemic other than with SMIs, these solutions can go from promoting on social media, offer benefits or promotions, between many others.

Futures researches can also concentrate on only a type of T&T services, for instance focus only on restaurants or hotels, or any other type of tourist related services/products. Likewise, a future study could specify the channels, for example, focus the research only on Instagram, as it's one of the most used platforms by SMIs and is where most young adults spend a portion of their daily time. In the same line of thinking, specify the research on young population as they are the one that are most on social media. Other alternative is to do a qualitative research on the same topic, as this dissertation is only doing a quantitative analysis. The qualitative research could complement the present research with more meaningful insights. In conclusion, the present study can be used as starting point to many future researchers on the same topic.

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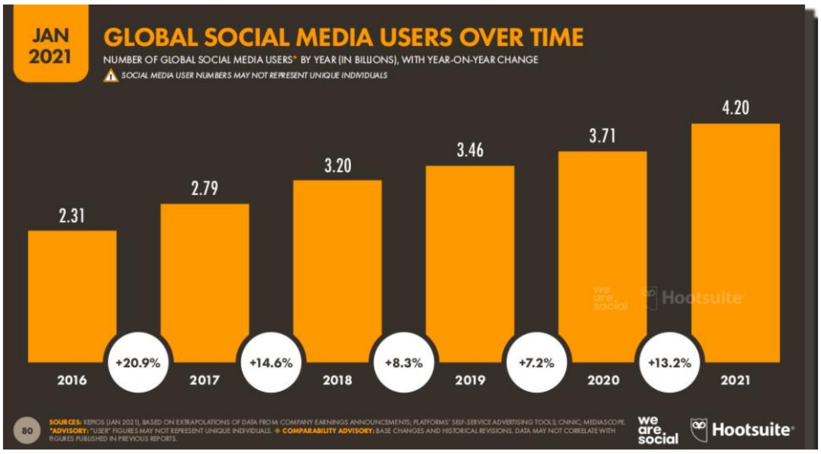
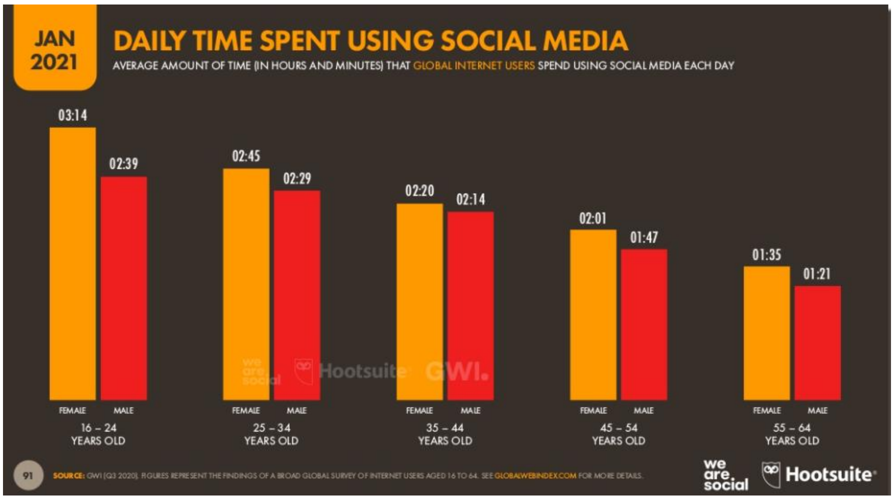
Annexes and Appendixes

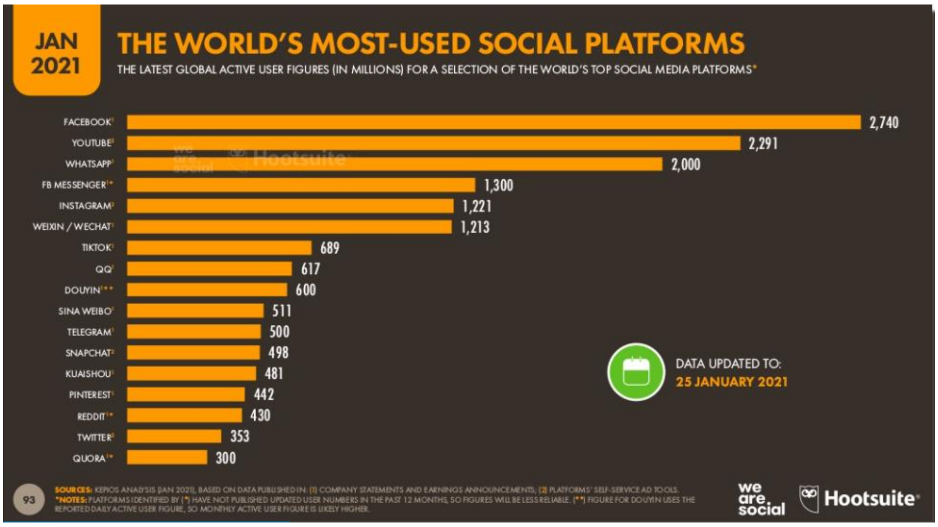
Annex A.: Global Social Media users over time



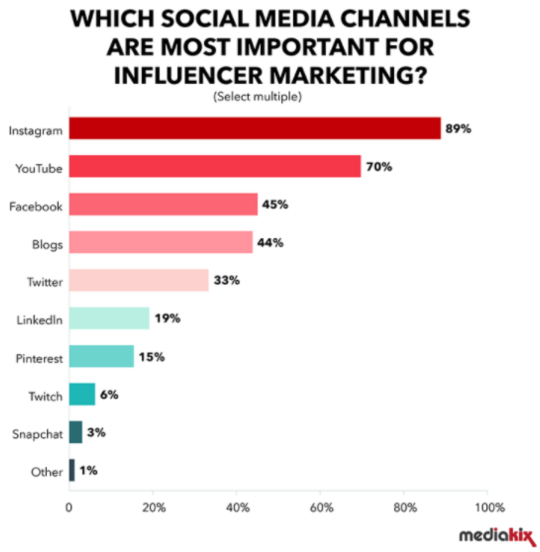
Annex B: Daily time spent using social media



Annex C.: The world's most-used social platforms

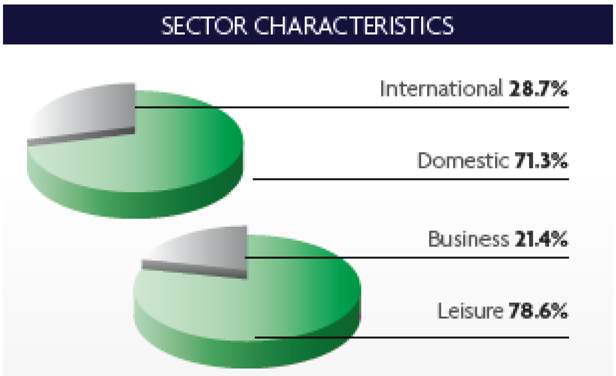


Annex D: Which Social Media Channels are most important for Influencer Marketing?

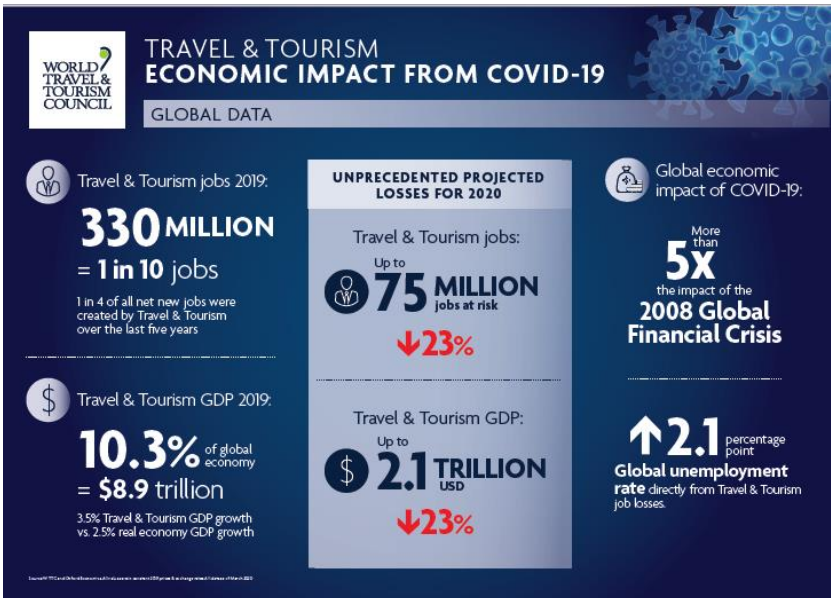


Annex E: Influencer Marketing Expected to grow to b worth $13.8 billion this year

Annex F: T&T characteristics



Annex G: T&T economic impact from Covid-19



Annex H: Policies being used to boost T&T industry by country

POLICIES	COUNTRIES
1. Incentives	
Holidays vouchers and bonus	Greece, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Macao (China), Malaysia, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Thailand
Fiscal incentives (VAT tax reductions, etc.)	Hungary, Turkey
Long weekends	Costa Rica, Mexico, New Zealand
2. Marketing and promotion	
Marketing campaigns and promotional efforts	Argentina, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Uruguay
3. Product development	
Development of tourism products (i.e., rural tourism, ecotourism, wellness, gastronomy, etc.)	Argentina, Costa Rica, Jordan, Hungary, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru
4. Partnerships	
Public-public partnerships (NTAs/NTOs and municipalities, DMOs and/or other Ministries, etc.)	Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Hungary, Paraguay, Peru
Public-private partnerships (NTAs/NTOs and/or DMOs and private sector, i.e. accommodation establishments, travel industry, restaurants, transport service providers, domestic travel agencies)	Costa Rica, Finland, France, Macao (China), Republic of Korea
5. Market intelligence	
Creation of observatories Studies, surveys, forecasting	Argentina, Australia, China, Malaysia, Paraguay and Philippines
6. Capacity building and training	
Webinars Online Training initiatives and tools	Australia, Chile, Costa Rica, Paraguay

Appendix A: Questionnaire

SMI and travelling in COVID-19 era

Q1 Caro/a participante,

O presente estudo surge no âmbito de uma dissertação de Mestrado de Estudos de Internet no ISCTE-IUL, sob a orientação científica do Professor Bráulio Alturas. A sua participação é de natureza estritamente voluntária e todas as respostas serão anónimas e confidenciais, sendo os dados apenas usados para fins académicos.
O objetivo deste questionário é conhecer a sua opinião relativamente a viajar e, mais especificamente, viajar em tempos de pandemia. Adicionalmente, perceber qual o papel que os Influenciadores das Redes Sociais podem ter neste cenário.
Desde já agradeço a sua colaboração.
Ao carregar no botão continuar, está a indicar que compreendeu esta informação e aceita participar neste estudo.

Continuar (1)

Início do bloco: travel journey information

As primeiras questões pretendem averiguar o tipo de viagens que realiza. Para efeitos deste questionário, o termo "viagens" é relativo apenas às viagens realizadas em lazer.

Q2 Antes da pandemia, quantas viagens costumava realizar (por ano)?

1 viagem (1)

2 viagens (2)

3 viagens (3)

4 viagens (4)

5 viagens ou mais (5)

Q3 Em 2020, quantas viagens realizou?

1 viagem (1)

2 viagens (2)

3 viagens (3)

4 viagens (4)

5 viagens ou mais (5)

Q4 Indique o seu nível de concordância com as seguintes afirmações.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)	Não viajo (6)
Antes da pandemia, viajava predominantemente para fora de Portugal. (1)						
Atualmente, em tempos de pandemia, viajo predominantemente dentro de Portugal. (2)						

Q5 Relativamente à companhia que escolhe para as suas viagens, classifique a frequência que escolhe as seguintes opções.

	Nunca (1)	Raramente (2)	Cerca de metade das vezes (3)	A maioria das vezes (4)	Sempre (5)
Amigos (1)					
Família (2)					
Sozinho (3)					

Q6 Hoje em dia, em tempos de pandemia, sente-se seguro a viajar...

	muito inseguro (1)	pouco seguro (2)	Nem muito nem pouco seguro (3)	Seguro (4)	Muito seguro (5)
... dentro de Portugal? (1)					
... fora de Portugal? (2)					

Início do bloco: Travel Planning process

Neste bloco de perguntas é questionado o modo como costuma planear as suas viagens.

Q7 Como costuma, mais frequentemente, marcar as suas viagens?

Sozinho (1)

Através de uma agência de viagens online (2)

Através de uma agência de viagens fisicamente (3)

Através de amigos/familiares (4)

Outro (5) ____

Q8 Que importância dá às seguintes fontes de informação quando está a planear a sua viagem?

	Nada importante (1)	Pouco importante (2)	Moderadamente importante (3)	Importante (4)	Muito importante (5)
Organizações Oficiais de Turismo (ex. Visit Portugal) (1)					
Sites de viagens (ex. booking.com, trivago.com) (2)					
Redes Sociais (3)					
Influenciadores das Redes Sociais (4)					
Sites de avaliação de viagens (ex. tripadvisor) (5)					
Agências de viagens (6)					
Imprensa escrita (7)					
Amigos e familiares (8)					
Experiência própria anterior (9)					

Q9 Tendo em conta os tempos de pandemia que vivemos, indique o seu nível de concordância com as seguintes afirmações.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Faço uma pesquisa mais aprofundada que o normal sobre o destino turístico. (1)					
Procuro perceber se o destino turístico é seguro e disponibiliza serviços turísticos seguros (hotéis, restaurantes, serviços de transporte, etc) (2)					
Prefiro correr menos riscos e planear mais detalhadamente a minha viagem que o normal (reservar o hotel, as atividades que vai realizar, os serviços de transporte, etc). (3)					
Demoro mais tempo a planear as minhas viagens que o normal. (4)					

Início do bloco: Social Media

Esta secção é dedicada a compreender a sua utilização das Redes Sociais.

Q11 Indique, em média, o tempo que passa diariamente em cada rede social.

	Não uso (1)	5 minutos (2)	15 minutos (3)	30 minutos (4)	45 minutos (5)	1 hora ou mais (6)
Facebook (1)						
Youtube (2)						
Whatsapp (3)						
Facebook Messenger (4)						
Instagram (5)						
Tiktok (6)						
Reddit (7)						
Snapchat (8)						
Pinterest (9)						
WeChat (10)						
Twitter (11)						
Skype (12)						
LinkedIn (13)						
Twitch (14)						
Tumblr (15)						
Viber (16)						
Outra (17)						

Q12 Indique o seu nível de concordância com a seguinte afirmação.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Devido à pandemia, passo diariamente mais tempo nas redes sociais. (1)					

Q14 Quando está a planear as suas viagens usa as seguintes redes sociais?

	Nunca (1)	Raramente (2)	Ocasionalmente (3)	A maioria das vezes (4)	Sempre (5)
Facebook (1)					
Youtube (2)					
Whatsapp (3)					
Facebook Messenger (4)					
Instagram (5)					
Tiktok (6)					
Reddit (7)					
Snapchat (8)					
Pinterest (9)					
WeChat (10)					
Twitter (11)					
Skype (12)					
LinkedIn (13)					
Twitch (14)					
Tumblr (15)					
Viber (16)					

Início do bloco: Social Media Influencers

Nesta secção é introduzido o termo "Influenciador", para efeitos deste estudo, Influenciador é um utilizador das Redes Sociais com a capacidade de inspirar ou orientar as ações de outros, alguém que pode gerar interesse em algo (por exemplo gerar interesse por um local que visita, através de publicações nas redes sociais).

Q15 Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador?

Sim (1)
Não (2)

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q16 Quais as razões que o levam a seguir Influenciadores? Classifique cada uma delas relativamente à sua importância.

	Nada importante (1)	Pouco importante (2)	Moderadamente importante (3)	Importante (4)	Muito importante (5)
Descontos/campanhas promocionais (1)					
Inspiração (2)					
Entretenimento (3)					
Estar constantemente atualizado das tendências (4)					
Feedback de experiências (marcas, produtos e serviços) (5)					
Os meus amigos também os seguem (6)					
Outro (7)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q17 No geral, como avalia a informação recebida através de um Influenciador?

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Confiável (1)					
Útil (2)					
Interessante (3)					
Imparcial (4)					
Credível (5)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q18 Relativamente a informações relacionadas com viagens, como avalia a informação recebida através de um Influenciador?

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Confiável (1)					
Útil (2)					
Interessante (3)					
Imparcial (4)					
Credível (5)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q19 Classifique as seguintes afirmações a nível geral.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
As opiniões e recomendações de um Influenciador são relevantes. (1)					
Os Influenciadores criam/aumentam o desejo de experimentar um produto ou serviço. (2)					
Algumas das minhas atitudes e compras são motivadas por Influenciadores. (3)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q20 Classifique as seguintes afirmações tendo em consideração o planeamento das suas viagens.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialemente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
As opiniões e recomendações de um Influenciador são relevantes. (1)					
Os Influenciadores criam/aumentam o desejo de experimentar um produto, serviço ou destino turístico. (2)					
Algumas das minhas atitudes e compras são motivadas por Influenciadores. (3)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q21 Da variedade de informações, que pode receber através de Influenciadores, relativamente a viagens, quais valoriza mais?

	Nada importante (1)	Pouco importante (2)	Moderadamente importante (3)	Importante (4)	Muito Importante (5)
Destino escolhido (1)					
Despesas (2)					
Atividades a realizar (3)					
Datas para realizar a viagem (4)					
Atrações a visitar (5)					
Serviços de transporte (6)					
Parceiros de viagem (7)					
Duração da viagem (8)					
Acomodação (9)					
Restaurantes/cafés (10)					
Segurança (11)					
Clima (12)					
Hábitos locais (13)					
Bares/discotecas (14)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q25 Que tipo de conteúdo mais valoriza quando procura informação relativamente a um destino turístico através de Influenciadores.

	Nada importante (1)	Pouco importante (2)	Moderadamente importante (3)	Importante (4)	Muito importante (5)
Imagens do destino (1)					
Vídeos sobre o destino (2)					
Comparação de produtos e serviços turísticos (3)					
Comparação de destinos (4)					
Diretos enquanto viaja (5)					
Comentários e sugestões (6)					

Apresentar esta pergunta: If Através das suas redes sociais segue algum Influenciador? = Sim

Q26 Responda às seguintes questões relativamente ao nível de concordância.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	Discordo parcialmente (2)	Nem concordo nem discordo (3)	Concordo parcialmente (4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Nestes tempos de pandemia, se um Influenciador for viajar e partilhar a sua viagem através das suas redes sociais, mostrando que é seguro, aumentaria a sua vontade de visitar este destino? (1)					
Se já vai realizar uma viagem ao mesmo destino que o Influenciador, optaria pelos mesmos serviços turísticos que o Influenciador utilizou? (Estadia, serviço de transporte, restaurantes, atrações, etc) (2)					

Início do bloco: Demographics

Q27 Género

Feminino (1)
Masculino (2)
Outro (3) ____
Prefiro não responder (4)

Q28 Qual a sua idade?

____

Q29 Qual o grau de instrução mais elevado que concluiu?

Até ao 9º ano (1)
Secundário (2)
Licenciatura (3)
Mestrado (4)
Doutoramento (5)
Outro (6) ____
Prefiro não responder (7)

Q30 Qual a seu distrito de residência?

Açores (1)
Aveiro (2)
Beja (3)
Braga (4)
Bragança (5)
Castelo Branco (6)
Coimbra (7)
Évora (8)
Faro (9)
Guarda (10)
Leiria (11)
Lisboa (12)
Madeira (13)
Portalegre (14)
Porto (15)
Santarém (16)
Setúbal (17)
Viana do Castelo (18)
Vila Real (19)
Viseu (20)

Q31 Qual a sua situação profissional?

Emprego a tempo inteiro (1)
Emprego part-time (2)
Estudante (3)
Estudante trabalhador(a) (4)
Desempregado(a) (5)
Outro (6) ____
Prefiro não responder (7)

Q32 Qual o tamanho do seu agregado familiar?

____

Q33 Qual o seu estado civil?

Solteiro(a) (1)
Casado(a)/ União de facto (2)
Divorciado(a) (3)
Viúvo(a) (4)
Prefiro não responder (5)

Q34 Qual o seu rendimento familiar líquido?

Até 1000€ (1)
>1000€ e até 2000€ (2)
>2000 e até 3000€ (3)
>3000€ e até 4000€ (4)
Superior a 4000€ (5)
Prefiro não responder (6)

Appendix B: Sociodemographic statistics

Statistics

		Q27 Gender	Q28 Age	Q29 Highest level of education	Q.30 District of residence	Q.31 Professional situation	Q32 Household	Q33 Marital status	Q34 Net household income
N	Valid	201	185	200	200	199	178	201	202
	Missing	27	43	28	28	29	50	27	26
Mean		1,33	25,0865	2,93	11,85	2,64	3,3596	1,22	2,94
Mode		1	23,00	3	12	3	4,00	1	2
Std. Deviation		0,586	7,49370	0,818	2,703	1,396	1,18605	0,570	1,627

Q28 Age

	N	%
18,00	8	3,5%
19,00	10	4,4%
20,00	23	10,1%
21,00	14	6,1%
22,00	30	13,2%

23,00		43	18,9%
24,00		12	5,3%
25,00		6	2,6%
26,00		3	1,3%
27,00		1	0,4%
30,00		2	0,9%
31,00		1	0,4%
32,00		2	0,9%
33,00		5	2,2%
34,00		4	1,8%
35,00		1	0,4%
36,00		2	0,9%
37,00		2	0,9%
38,00		1	0,4%
40,00		1	0,4%
43,00		3	1,3%
44,00		2	0,9%
45,00		2	0,9%
46,00		3	1,3%
47,00		2	0,9%
48,00		1	0,4%
59,00		1	0,4%
Missing	System	43	18,9%
Total		228	100,0%

Q.30 District of residence

		N	%
Açores		1	0,4%
Aveiro		2	0,9%
Braga		2	0,9%
Bragança		1	0,4%
Coimbra		2	0,9%
Évora		12	5,3%
Faro		8	3,5%
Guarda		1	0,4%
Leiria		36	15,8%
Lisboa		96	42,1%
Madeira		2	0,9%
Portalegre		5	2,2%
Porto		14	6,1%
Santarém		6	2,6%
Setúbal		10	4,4%
Vila Real		1	0,4%
Viseu		1	0,4%
Missing	System	28	12,3%
Total		228	100,0%

Appendix C: Travelling journey statistics

Statistics

		Q2 Before the Covid-19 pandemic, how many trips did you usually do per year?	Q3 In 2020, how many trip did you do?	Q4.1 Before the Covid-19 pandemic, I mainly travelled outside Portugal.	Q4.2.Nowadays, in pandemic times, I travel mainly inside Portugal.
N	Valid	228	228	228	228
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		**2,54**	**1,61**	3,14	**4,46**
Mode		2	1	4	5
Std. Deviation		1,308	0,954	1,365	1,100

Q2 Before the Covid-19 pandemic, how many trips did you usually do per year?

	N	%
1 viagem	53	23,2%
2 viagens	79	34,6%
3 viagens	47	20,6%
4 viagens	17	7,5%
5 viagens ou mais	32	14,0%

Q3 In 2020, how many trip did you do?

	N	%
1 viagem	143	62,7%
2 viagens	49	21,5%
3 viagens	25	11,0%
4 viagens	5	2,2%
5 viagens ou mais	6	2,6%

Q4.1 Before the Covid-19 pandemic, I mainly travelled outside Portugal.

	N	%
Discordo totalmente	36	15,8%
Discordo parcialmente	47	20,6%
Nem concordo nem discordo	37	16,2%
Concordo parcialmente	67	29,4%
Concordo totalmente	40	17,5%
Não viajo	1	0,4%

Q4.2.Nowadays, in pandemic times, I travel mainly inside Portugal.

	N	%
Discordo totalmente	6	2,6%
Discordo parcialmente	15	6,6%
Nem concordo nem discordo	12	5,3%
Concordo parcialmente	47	20,6%
Concordo totalmente	132	57,9%

Não viajo	16	7,0%

Statistics

		Q5.1.Frequency that travels with friends	Q5.2.Frequency that travels with family	Q5.3.Frequency that travels alone
N	Valid	228	228	228
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3,13	3,42	**1,57**
Mode		3	4	1
Std. Deviation		0,987	0,992	0,915

Q5.1.Frequency that travels with friends

	N	%
Nunca	11	4,8%
Raramente	47	20,6%
Cerca de metade das vezes	90	39,5%
A maioria das vezes	62	27,2%
Sempre	18	7,9%

Q5.2.Frequency that travels with family

	N	%
Nunca	5	2,2%
Raramente	41	18,0%
Cerca de metade das vezes	63	27,6%
A maioria das vezes	91	39,9%
Sempre	28	12,3%

Q5.3.Frequency that travels alone

	N	%
Nunca	144	63,2%
Raramente	57	25,0%
Cerca de metade das vezes	10	4,4%
A maioria das vezes	15	6,6%
Sempre	2	0,9%

Statistics

		Q6.1.In pandemic times, do you feel safe travelling inside Portugal?	Q6.2.In pandemic times, do you feel safe travelling outside Portugal?
N	Valid	228	228
	Missing	0	0

Mean	**3,83**	**2,70**
Mode	**4**	**2**
Std. Deviation	0,901	1,006

Q6.1.In pandemic times, do you feel safe travelling inside Portugal?

	N	%
muito inseguro	5	2,2%
pouco seguro	14	6,1%
Nem muito nem pouco seguro	43	18,9%
Seguro	119	52,2%
Muito seguro	47	20,6%

Q6.2.In pandemic times, do you feel safe travelling outside Portugal?

	N	%
muito inseguro	22	9,6%
pouco seguro	84	36,8%
Nem muito nem pouco seguro	71	31,1%
Seguro	42	18,4%
Muito seguro	9	3,9%

Appendix D: Travel Planning process statistics

How do you frequently book your trips?

	N	%
Alone	119	52,2%
Through an online travel agency	33	14,5%
Through a physical travel agency	5	2,2%
Through friends and family	67	29,4%
Other	4	1,8%

Statistics

		Q9.1 In times of pandemic, I do a more in-depth research than usual about the tourist destination.	Q9.2 In times of pandemic, I try to understand beforehand if the tourist destination is safe and provides safe tourist services	Q9.3 In times of pandemic, I prefer to take less risks and plan my trip with more detail than usual.	Q9.4 In times of pandemic, it takes me longer to plan my trips than usual.
N	Valid	217	218	218	218
	Missing	11	10	10	10
Mean		3,79	4,31	3,95	3,42
Mode		4	5	5	3
Std. Deviation		1,084	0,799	1,061	1,158

Appendix E: Social Media use statistics

Daily usage of different Social Media platforms (in average)

	I don't use	5 minutes	15 minutes	30 minutes	45 minutes	1 hour or more	Missing	Mean	Mode
Facebook	20,2%	22,8%	18,0%	18,0%	5,7%	11,0%	4,4%	2,99	2
YouTube	8,3%	12,7%	13,2%	19,3%	11,8%	30,3%	4,4%	**4,09**	**6**
WhatsApp	0,9%	5,3%	11,8%	17,1%	15,4%	**45,2%**	4,4%	**4,84**	**6**
FB Mensager	27,6%	26,3%	14,0%	10,1%	5,7%	11,4%	4,8%	2,73	1
Instagram	3,9%	4,8%	8,3%	10,1%	15,8%	**51,3%**	5,7%	**4,94**	**6**
TikTok	67,5%	5,3%	2,6%	4,8%	4,4%	10,5%	4,8%	2,00	1
Reddit	81,6%	4,4%	2,6%	2,6%	1,3%	2,6%	4,8%	1,38	1
Snapchat	87,7%	5,3%	1,8%	0,4%	0,0%	0,0%	4,8%	1,11	1
Pinterest	64,5%	12,3%	7,9%	6,6%	2,2%	1,8%	4,8%	1,69	1
WeChat	94,3%	0,9%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	4,8%	1,01	1
Twitter	57,9%	9,6%	5,7%	6,6%	6,1%	8,3%	5,7%	2,13	1
Skype	86,8%	3,5%	1,8%	0,9%	1,3%	0,4%	5,3%	1,18	1
LinkedIn	50,4%	20,2%	13,2%	7,5%	2,6%	0,4%	5,7%	1,87	1
Twitch	86,4%	1,3%	1,8%	3,1%	0,4%	1,8%	5,3%	1,26	1
Tumbler	89,9%	2,2%	1,3%	0,9%	0,4%	0,0%	5,3%	1,10	1
Vibe	92,5%	1,8%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	5,7%	1,02	1

Due to the pandemic, I spend more time on social media (daily).

		N	%
Strongly Disagree		14	6,1%
Partially disagree		9	3,9%
Neutral		27	11,8%
Partially agree		94	**41,2%**
Strongly Agree		74	**32,5%**
Missing	System	10	4,4%
Total		228	100,0%
Mean		3,94	
Mode		**4**	

Q14.1 I use Facebook to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		128	56,1%
Raramente		35	15,4%
Ocasionalmente		41	**18,0%**
A maioria das vezes		7	**3,1%**
Sempre		3	**1,3%**
Missing	System	14	6,1%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.2 I use Youtube to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		81	35,5%
Raramente		45	19,7%
Ocasionalmente		59	**25,9%**
A maioria das vezes		19	**8,3%**
Sempre		9	**3,9%**
Missing	System	15	6,6%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.3 I use Whatsapp to plan trips

	N	%
Nunca	74	32,5%
Raramente	29	12,7%
Ocasionalmente	55	24,1%
A maioria das vezes	43	**18,9%**
Sempre	13	**5,7%**

Q14.4 I use Facebook Messenger to plan trips

	N	%
Nunca	133	58,3%
Raramente	36	15,8%
Ocasionalmente	29	12,7%
A maioria das vezes	14	6,1%
Sempre	1	0,4%

Missing	System	14	6,1%
Total		228	100,0%

Missing	System	15	6,6%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.5 I use Instagram to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		43	18,9%
Raramente		33	14,5%
Ocasionalmente		72	31,6%
A maioria das vezes		45	**19,7%**
Sempre		20	**8,8%**
Missing	System	15	6,6%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.6 I use Tiktok to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		195	85,5%
Raramente		9	3,9%
Ocasionalmente		5	2,2%
A maioria das vezes		2	0,9%
Missing	System	17	7,5%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.7 I use Reddit to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		202	88,6%
Raramente		3	1,3%
Ocasionalmente		3	1,3%
A maioria das vezes		1	0,4%
Missing	System	19	8,3%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.8 I use Snapchat to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		202	88,6%
Raramente		2	0,9%
Ocasionalmente		1	0,4%
Missing	System	23	10,1%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.9 I use Pinterest to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		164	71,9%
Raramente		13	5,7%
Ocasionalmente		18	7,9%
A maioria das vezes		8	3,5%
Sempre		3	1,3%
Missing	System	22	9,6%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.10 I use WeChat to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		199	87,3%
Raramente		6	2,6%
Missing	System	23	10,1%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.11 I use Twitter to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		183	80,3%
Raramente		15	6,6%
Ocasionalmente		3	1,3%
A maioria das vezes		3	1,3%
Missing	System	24	10,5%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.12 I use Skype to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		199	87,3%
Raramente		4	1,8%
Ocasionalmente		3	1,3%
Missing	System	22	9,6%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.13 I use LinkedIn to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		194	85,1%
Raramente		8	3,5%
Ocasionalmente		1	0,4%
Missing	System	25	11,0%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.14 I use Twitch to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		205	89,9%
Missing	System	23	10,1%
Total		228	100,0%

Q14.15 I use Tumblr to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		197	86,4%
Raramente		3	1,3%

Q14.16 I use Viber to plan trips

		N	%
Nunca		201	88,2%
Missing	System	27	11,8%

Ocasionalmente		2	0,9%
Missing	System	26	11,4%
Total		228	100,0%

Total	228	100,0%