The influence of social media on the overseas travel choices of Generation Y.

Daisy Magill

B.A. (HONS.) International Tourism and Events Management

2017
Declaration

I declare that this dissertation has not already been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own independent research except otherwise stated.

Name: Daisy Magill

Signature

Date: 24/04/2017

Word Count: 13,981
ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigated the influence of social media on the overseas travel choices of Generation Y. The aim was to determine if Generation Y make their travel choices specifically to post on social media. The author researched the use of social media throughout the holiday decision process, examining how social media is used before, after and during the trip. The researcher also examined the trust of shared content from other users online, and if this influences their decision. A literature review was undertaken, the researcher used secondary research to explore and critically review the existing literature on the topic. Recent theory revealed that Generation Y are often making their overseas decisions based on how it would look on social media. The author then adopted a mixed method approach to gather primary data. To achieve this, internet-based questionnaires and focus group was obtained. The findings showed that Generation Y use social media a considerable amount. They often take the time to upload and get photo opportunities when traveling as they want experiences to share. Findings also showed that social media creates the inspiration for travel, however word of mouth is the most trustworthy source when gathering information. Generation Y are aware of users editing their photographs to impress others, as they do themselves. The research also highlighted opportunities for tourism and hospitality businesses to alter their marketing strategies for the future.

Key words: Generation Y, social media, word of mouth, influence
Acknowledgments

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the participants and those who have helped and supported me through this study.

I would like to thank Lisa Wright, for being an excellent supervisor, keeping me calm and the constant reminder to not over complicate things.

I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional support and encouragement throughout this dissertation and my four long years at university.

I would like to thank my housemates and my close friends for the constant support, endless advice and making these past years at university unforgettable!

And my partner James, who has really been there for me this last year at university.

Thank you for always believing in me.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Contents

1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 12

1.1 Rationale ........................................................................................................................................ 14

1.2 Research Methods ......................................................................................................................... 14

1.3 Aim and Objectives ....................................................................................................................... 14

1.3.1 Aim ........................................................................................................................................... 14

1.3.2 Objectives ............................................................................................................................... 15

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation ......................................................................................................... 15

2.0 Literature Review .......................................................................................................................... 17

2.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 17

2.2 Generation Y .................................................................................................................................. 17

2.3 Generation Y in Travel and Tourism .............................................................................................. 19

2.4 Technology and Social Media ......................................................................................................... 20

2.4.1 Smart Phones .......................................................................................................................... 20

2.4.2 Social Media ............................................................................................................................ 21

2.5 Impression management ................................................................................................................ 23

2.6 Marketing methods and channels .................................................................................................. 26

2.7 Conclusion ...................................................................................................................................... 27

3.0 Methodology .................................................................................................................................. 29

3.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 29

3.2 Secondary research ....................................................................................................................... 29

3.3 Primary research ........................................................................................................................... 29

3.4 Quantitative research .................................................................................................................... 30

3.4.1 Quantitative methods .............................................................................................................. 30

3.4.2 Research approach .................................................................................................................. 31

3.4.2 Research design ....................................................................................................................... 31

3.5 Qualitative research ...................................................................................................................... 32

3.5.1 Qualitative methods ................................................................................................................. 32

3.5.2 Research approach .................................................................................................................. 33

3.5.3 Research design ....................................................................................................................... 33

3.6 Data analysis .................................................................................................................................. 34

3.7 Reliability and validity ................................................................................................................... 34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Limitations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Ethical considerations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 Chapter overview</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Results and Discussion</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Quantitative research method results</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Gender</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Age range</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Occupation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 Social media accounts</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.5 Main social media account</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.6 Hours spent on social media daily</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.7 Checking social media</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.8 Deactivating social media</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.9 Being without social media</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.10 Impression management</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.11 Posting pictures</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.12 Social acknowledgement</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.13 Other users</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.14 Social media and reality</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.15 Overseas travel</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.16 Posting travel experiences</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.17 Checking in</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.18 Travel inspiration</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.19 Travelling photographs</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.20 Overseas travel</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.21 Added comments</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Focus group data introduction</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Focus group demographics</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Fast Technology</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3 Visual</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4 Reality</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.5 The influence</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.6 Impression management .................................................................................................................. 66
4.3.7 Emotion ............................................................................................................................................... 68
5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations ........................................................................................................ 73
5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 73
5.2 Research aims and objectives ................................................................................................................ 73
5.3 Summary of main findings ....................................................................................................................... 74
5.3.1 Recommendations on findings ......................................................................................................... 75
5.4 Limitations of the research .................................................................................................................... 76
5.4.1 Recommendations for future research .............................................................................................. 76
5.5 Summary ................................................................................................................................................. 77
6.0 References .............................................................................................................................................. 79

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Ethics approval form from Cardiff Metropolitan University
7.2 Appendix 2 – Example of questions for quantitative research method
7.3 Appendix 3 – Completed questionnaire with comments
7.4 Appendix 4 – Participant information sheet
7.5 Appendix 5 – Example of participant consent form
7.6 Appendix 6 – Completed consent forms
7.7 Appendix 7 – Focus group topic list
7.8 Appendix 8 – Focus group transcript
### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>United Nations World Tourism Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 2 – Literature Review
Table 2.1 Plog’s Tourist Typology (Page and Connell, 2006:70)…………………………………………………………..19

Chapter 3 – Methodology
Table 3.1 Distinctions between Qualitative and Quantitative Data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997).........................................................................................................................................................32

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion
Table 4.1 Focus Group Demographics.........................................................................................................................61
LIST FIGURES

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Figure 1.0 - Activity’s on Social Media in 2015 (Statista, 2015) ................................................... 12

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

Figure 4.1 – What gender are you? ................................................................................................. 39
Figure 4.2 – Which age range do you fit into? ............................................................................... 40
Figure 4.3 – Are you employed? ...................................................................................................... 41
Figure 4.4 – Which of the following social media accounts do you have? .................................. 42
Figure 4.5 – Which is your main social media account? ................................................................. 43
Figure 4.6 – How many hours do you spend on social media a day? ........................................... 44
Figure 4.7 – Do you check social media when you first wake up? .................................................. 45
Figure 4.8 – Have you ever deactivated social media? ................................................................. 46
Figure 4.9 - If you were to go without social media, for example - broken phone or no internet access. Would you feel paranoid, isolated, worried or panicked? .................................................. 47
Figure 4.10 - Do you use your social media accounts to emphasize impression management? .................................................................................................................. 48
Figure 4.11 – If you were to post a picture to your social media account – when would you do it? .................................................................................................................................. 49
Figure 4.12 – Do you feel satisfied if your picture receives more than 11 likes? ...................... 50
Figure 4.13 – do you often spend time looking at other users accounts wishing your page looked like theirs? .............................................................................................................. 51
Figure 4.14 – Do you think social media portrays reality? .......................................................... 52
Figure 4.15 – Have you ever been traveling overseas for more than two weeks? .................... 53
Figure 4.16 – if yes, did you post a picture to social media? ......................................................... 54
Figure 4.17 – if applicable – when traveling do you feel the need to check in or post about it?.. 55
Figure 4.18 – Has social media made you consider traveling to places you never thought you would? ................................................................................................................................. 56
Figure 4.19 - Traveling photographs posted by other users make me jealous. Do you agree with this statement? .............................................................................................................. 57
Figure 4.20 - have you ever made an overseas travel decision based on social media? .......... 58
Figure 4.21 – Would you like to add any comments? .................................................................. 59
Chapter 1
Introduction
1.0 Introduction

Social media has created an online culture that encourages users to excessively share experiences, and has changed the way we think and behave. Users are instinctively taking time to consider whether their moments should go online. Consequently, prioritising sharing content to virtual online connections instead of enjoying the immediate moment. Social media such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram attracts users because it allows them to spend time refining and editing their image, resulting in users spending more time doing this then engaging with other people around them. Their identity can be split, who they really are and what they want people to see (Garbutt, 2014). This has resulted in photo sharing becoming a less private activity, in contrast to the traditional main audience who would be close family and friends (Stratigou, n.d.). The figure below shows that sharing holiday photographs was the leading activity across social media platforms in 2015.

**Figure 1.1 Activity’s on Social Media in 2015 (Statista, 2015)**
The era Generation Y grew up in was where digital began to take its shape, they were the first generation to adopt the internet, social media and smartphones. The trend has remained, and today the internet transforms the way in which we do business and live everyday life. There is no agreement on the time frame when Generation Y were born, researchers estimations begin from those born in the years 1977 and 1983, and ending in the years of 1999 and 2009. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, the researcher will use the time range suggested by Bolton et al., (2013) and refer Generation Y as those born between the years of 1981 and 1999 (18-36 year olds). The term generation is used to group of people with common behaviour and attitudes that differentiate from other age groups (Benckendorff et al, 2010).

“We consider social media in the broadest sense of the term and define it as any online service through which users can create and share a variety of content.” (Bolton et al., 2013:248)

Although social media has existed from 1981, the expansion of Web 2.0 in recent years has increased the growth of these websites of user-generated content. Therefore, social media became widely adopted in 2003, and is now a ubiquitous part of consumers’ lives. The proliferation and pervasiveness of social media in the lives of Generation Y, often results in diverse opinions and perceptions when viewing shared content from other online users. Exciting or interesting images can often create users feeling irritated or anxious, and creates motivation to make similar decisions (Alton, 2016).

A survey from Eventbrite in 2014 found that 78% of Generation Y, value experiences like traveling over something tangible that they could own, which contrasts from their cohorts (Williams, 2016) given this, Generation Y have secured their place as leaders in travel and tourism (Dass, 2017).

Generation Y use social media for the same reasons as other generations, to communicate, interact and gather information. These sites give greater consumer purchasing power, as they provide consumers with additional sources of information. Social media therefore, has an influence on the way people plan and consume tourism-
related products as it provides more opportunities and reasons to travel (Huang & Petrick, 2010).

Muther (2016) suggests that the success of a holiday decision is defined by the number of ‘likes’ the photograph receives on sites such as Instagram and Facebook. This further explains why Schofield’s insurance found that 40% of Generation Y travelers are now choosing their overseas destinations based on how it will look on social media. (Hoise, 2017)

1.1 Rationale
As the researcher is a Tourism and Events student who utilises social media daily, the researcher has become aware of Generation Y tourists continuous over-share of images, blogs and stories while travelling. Therefore, questioning if the main motivation is to display to other users, friends and acquaintances what they are doing as opposed to experiencing the local cultures at the destination.

1.2 Research Methods
In order to complete the project the researcher will undertake both primary and secondary data collection. The literature review will satisfy the secondary research, which will display a critical analysis on existing literature relating to Generation Y, social media and their travelling motivations.

1.3 Aim and Objectives
1.3.1 Aim
This dissertation aims to discover the influences social media has on the overseas travel choices of Generation Y. The researcher aims to investigate the motivations of this age group, if Generation Y are making travel choices to specifically post and share on social media.

By researching and defining the influence of Generation Y’s overseas travel choices, in turn can assist tourism and hospitality businesses to advertise appropriately with the motivations in mind. Creating effective marketing strategies. To fulfil the aim of study, four objectives have been set:
1.3.2 Objectives
1) To critically evaluate literature associated with Generation Y and the impact and influence social media has on the overseas travel decisions.
2) Attempt to establish a relationship between social media and travelling decisions made by Generation Y.
3) Use a mixed method approach to undertake primary research.
4) Review and analyse the primary and secondary data in order to make recommendations on findings and future research.

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation
Chapter 1 – *The introduction* gives the rationale for the study and states the aims and objectives.

Chapter 2 – *The Literature Review* provides the reader with theory, knowledge and information on the topic area. Which has been divided up into six main sections.

Chapter 3 – *The Methodology* identifies the methods in which primary data can be collected, this chapter also presents, explains and justifies the approach chosen by the researcher while considering the limitations.

Chapter 4 – *The Results, Analysis and Discussion* displays the results from the primary data. Quantitative data is displayed through graphs and qualitative data will be displayed using themes. This chapter will discuss the findings in relation to secondary research.

Chapter 5 – *The Conclusion and Recommendations* summarises the main findings from both research methods, with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6 – *References*, this chapter shows a full list of references that were used for this study.

Chapter 7 – *Appendices*, this chapter shows the appendices that are referenced throughout the study.
Chapter 2
Literature Review
2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

By conducting a literature review the researcher aims to explore the work already available within the subject area, critically reviewing and discussing the previous research. The literature review identifies gaps and areas that have not yet been investigated, this allows the author to create an effective and suitable data collection method (Hart, 2011; Oliver, 2012).

The literature review will begin with a focus of Generation Y; identifying their characteristics. Social media and technology; how it has changed the way Generation Y travel, Impression management; identifying the motivations of travelling and Marketing methods that are used by businesses.

2.2 Generation Y

Generation Y are often referred to those who are finishing education and moving into the adult life of work. (Pendergast, 2010; Bolton et al., 2013). When discussing Generation Y, authors and researchers often relate to them as the web generation, millennials, nexters or the digital generation as they are the first generation to have spent their whole lives in the digital environment. (Bennet et al., 2008; Wesner and Miller, 2008).

Pendergast (2010) states that “Generation Y is the first generation born into society that features international interdependence and global engagement”, exposure to technology from birth has affected the way this generation live and work and developed them to have unique characteristics. Bolton et al., (2013)

“Generation Y are known for their optimism, education, collaborative ability, open-mindedness and drive.” Says (Spiro, 2006:16)

Generation Y are more likely to speak up, challenge and ask uncomfortable questions. When they set themselves a goal they are very eager in achieving it (Parmet, 2013;
Yeaton, 2008). Parment (2013) suggest that Generation Y respond better from monitoring within the work environment other than being told what to do. They see team members as individuals speaking to them as people rather than positions. In contrast to their predecessors, Generation Y are bound to technology even on an emotional basis. (Bolton et al., 2013), which explains their everyday usage of various electronic devices such as laptops, computers and smartphones.

“They view computers merely a part of life” says Yeaton (2008:69), and the access of high speed technology available to Generation Y has developed in them disagreeing the word wait, some call them impatient whereas others say they are ambitious. Savage, Collins-Mayo and Mayo (2011) noted that Generation Y are known for taking email, text messaging and internet access for granted as they have grown to depend and rely on these devices when gathering information. Kane (2017) states how Generation Y prefer to communicate through email and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact, social media is therefore an influential source to Generation Y as this technology has a fast information search with on-time communication.
2.3 Generation Y in Travel and Tourism

Plog (1974) created a tourist theory to categorize tourists on the type of holiday chosen mainly relating to the location. Page and Connell (2006:70) state “Plog’s theory provides a simple model that can explain to some extent aspects of tourist motivation.”

The table below shows and explains the three categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocentric</th>
<th>Mid-Centric</th>
<th>Pscholcentric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoy travelling independently.</td>
<td>• Go to known destinations that may have been found and made popular by Allocentrics.</td>
<td>• Unsure about travel, go to places similar to home destinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek adventurous experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Go to ‘unknown’ destinations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Plogs Tourist Types (Page and Connell, 2006:70)

An advantage of Plog’s theory is that it has a clear difference so can be marketed easily, however, a disadvantage is that tourists and destinations change over time, therefore Generation Y may be Allocentric in their younger stages of life and more Mid-Centric in other stages. (Page and Connell, 2006).

When tourists go through the holiday decision process, it can often be seen as an uncertain decision due to the perishability of the product. The travelling experience cannot be tested before purchase, past experience does not contribute as each destination is different (Maoz, 2007). Pendergast (2010) says that Generation Y are often viewed as uncertain spenders and can often be credit dependent, which is the highest contribution when going through the holiday decision process. Therefore, Generation Y tourists explore and research information through various formats to reduce the risks of unfamiliar product experimentation (Jun et al., 2007).
Earlier research, Richards and Wilson (2003) stated that Generation Y are travelling more
than any other age range because they are eager to gain the experience that travelling to
a new destination gives them. Evidently, this is still apparent today as UNWTO (2016)
calculated that Generation Y represent the 23% of the billion tourists that travelled
overseas in 2016, with reports of this segment constantly growing for international
tourism. Kelly (2013) suggest that a high number of Generation Y are school leavers,
students or recent graduates sharing the commonality of demand to travel in the summer
months.

2.4 Technology and Social Media
Development of technology and high speed internet has allowed the modern day traveler
to become more independent. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) suggest that Web 2.0 is often
referred as travel 2.0 because of the travel applications available that enable tourists to
get to know a destination before leaving their homes. UNWTO (2011) states that
Generation Y are sharing the commonality of using digital sites and mobile applications
when booking travel experiences, regardless of the individual’s motivations and
aspirations.

2.4.1 Smart Phones
The introduction of smart phones together with faster technology, has made a more
convenient way for users to connect with these various social media networking sites
throughout the travel phase. In earlier days making a travelling decision would require a
lot of planning and research, whereas Banks (2015) says that nowadays smartphones
have changed every aspect of travelling.

“Studies show that mobile technology is indispensable to a Generation Y traveler” says
Business Travel Direct (2016) which may be explained by a survey carried out in 2013 ‘The
Future of Travel’ by Expedia, the survey found that 49% percent of Generation Y are using
their smartphones to plan a trip, 40% are using it to share experiences through
photographs and 35% using applications to book a trip. (Sinha, 2011; Expedia, 2013)
Furthermore, Generation Y are booking leisure travel on hand held devices more than any other age group. (Expedia, 2013)

Tourists have the option to access social media using their smartphones as they support the networking tools through applications.

2.4.2 Social Media

The introduction of social media has created greater ways for people to communicate and connect with each other globally. (Kelly, 2016). A report from Mintel (2013) ‘The Impact of Social Media on Tourism – International’ stated how social media plays a significant role for Generation Y travelers, by using the various sites as a tool for keeping in touch with family and friends while traveling. (Kelly, 2013)

“While traditional means of Internet use for travel planning appears to be widespread across all customer segments, higher-order Internet uses (i.e., social media) are now prevalent among some segments, particularly among travelers of Generation Y.” says (Xiang, Magnini and Fesenmaier 2015:244)

Fotis et al., (2011) suggests that Generation Y are the heaviest social media users and therefore most likely to share their travelling experiences online, and has become accepted as post-holiday behaviour. It is acknowledged that other generations are also known for sharing their experiences on the various networking sites through images, photographs and blogs.

Wasserman (2007:12) found that “one in three internet users report their purchase decisions are influenced by sites with social content.” Similarly, Kelly (2016) reported that “Over eight out of ten (85%) travelers worldwide claim that people’s comments, videos and photographs on social media influence their plans.”

Tourists have always relied on word of mouth to gather ideas on where to visit. Friends and family are often seen as the most trustworthy sources as they provided the main tools for inspiration, planning and organising travel (East et al., 2013; Livin et al., 2008). However, one study that looked at the influence of social media on destination choice, suggested that the emergence of the web allows travelers to receive word of mouth from
strangers, having a powerful influence on their travelling decisions (Tham, Croy and Mair, 2012). Moreover, there is strong evidence to suggest that friends and family are still the most powerful way to influence users’ decisions as social networking sites come sixth place after consumer reviews and television (Stewart, 2015). The position may be explained by Cox et al., (2009) who says reading experiences online can often create problems for tourism and hospitality businesses as anonymous users often leave fake reviews or irrelevant content.

Facebook is a form of social media and is used by 87% of Generation Y with 41% updating at least once a day. Facebook is a powerful way of meeting and reaching potential travelers as it allows travelers to engage in discussion. It is a way of gaining tips from friends or users and showing excitement about a trip (Kelly, 2016; Freeman, 2012).

Instagram is the fastest growing major social networking site with the primary use of uploading, sharing and liking images (Clasen, 2015). Instagram launched in 2010 has become very popular among Generation Y, as of September 2015 Instagram reached 400-million users with an average of 80 million photographs shared throughout the network daily (Kelly, 2016). Stewart (2015) found that Generation Y are the group most responsive to posts on this image sharing app, with 68% of 18-24 year olds saying they are much more to likely to purchase an item if a friend they followed shared it. Lo et al., (2011) says that users travel photographs can play a role in formation and circulation of destination image.

A survey conducted by Miss Travel, a travel dating site in 2015 included 79,000 participants and found that 48% of people are using Instagram to help select a new travel destination alongside the 35% that discover new places using the app (Kelly, 2016). Photographs are extremely important to tourists when researching and planning travel therefore, Instagram is known to be a very important tool and has lead The Social Times in 2015, to claim Instagram as the modern day travel tool agent (Cohen, 2015).

Twitter is another form of social media that was launched in 2008, 80% of Generation Y have access to Twitter on a mobile device (Moy, 2014). Kelly (2016) suggests that twitter
is used for travelers to share positive and negative comments about time in real life with only 40% share personal photographs. This can explain why there is lack of evidence to suggest that Twitter influences traveling decisions.

Snapchat is used for people to tell their story through photographs and videos. Snapchat differentiates to Instagram and Facebook as it does not allow users to like or comment on posts. The content uploaded is deleted after a 24 hour period. Snapchat is used for people to show what they are doing at that time, with 71% of Snapchat users being aged 18-34. “While Snapchat is being adopted by more adults, the main demographic using Snapchat may be influencing travel decisions more that we know.” (Hegg, 2015)

Pilon (2016) says that Generation Y are using social networking sites such as Instagram and Snapchat to document their travel adventures and can have an impact on their social media followers. Pilon (2016) conducted a Social travel survey called ‘Instagram, Snapchat users likely to see influence’ asking 1,000 respondents in August 2013 about their travel habits and about the impact of social travel. In the results, 92% stated that Facebook was their main social media account, 64% said viewing travel posts on social media made them want to travel more in general. The 64% also stated that seeing a specific destination in users posts can then make them want to travel to that destination. This suggests that social media is influencing the travel decisions of Generation Y, the researcher will aim to investigate this further in the next section.

2.5 Impression management

“Forming and managing impressions is a fundamental process, and one that has been complicated by new communication technologies.” (Walther et al., 2008:28)

The previous section identified that Generation Y are high users of social media often looking at the various sites for inspiration. Pendergast (2010) says that a variety of pressures from this age range society, social and cultural environment can lead to different decision making. Walther et al., (2008); Jade, (2017) suggest that information shared through social media accounts can often be sources for people make judgments on each other’s lives.
Impression management is “the process for packaging and editing self to distribute positive images to others.” Goffman (1959:132), Goffman (1959) is an original piece of work that studied how people use different strategies to engage with impression management. Cunningham (2014) suggests how social media users often engage with impression management as they can carefully select the pictures they wish to share with others. Similarly, Ellison et al., (2013) says that the ‘need for popularity’ is a strong predictor as to why people share personal posts and images through social networking sites such as Facebook. “Goffman would likely tell us that individuals or (actors) in each context are portraying a particular role for that context or (audience).” (Cunnigham, 2014:29).

Rainbolt (2015) suggests that Generation Y need to validate their lives to their friends by posting their entire travelling trip online. In order to do this Generation Y take the time for photo opportunities and experiences that would be worthy of a good story and photo for their page. According to Kim and Tussyadiah (2013); Lo and Mckercher (2015) travelers are often well known for creating an ideal image for other users, by strategically manipulating their photographs before posting. This can explain why Instagram grows in popularity within Generation Y as the social networking site offers users the ability to enhance the quality of their picture before publishing, promoting the self-presentational phenomenon.

Taking a selfie has now become a routine part of travelling, tourist are often standing in front of landmarks to confirm that they have visited. Posting these pictures online turns an intangible experience into a tangible reality to others (Lo and Mckercher, 2015; Stylianou-Lambert, 2012).

Day (2013) describes the selfie process as, taking a photograph, applying a flattering filter, adding various hashtags that can result in the image being viewed by a greater audience and then upload to social media sites. Day (2013) also suggest that when the user’s smartphones fills with notifications, likes and acknowledgements this can give the users claim that they exist. The process can become addictive and often repeated as they are
worried how they are viewed, it is suggested that this is a consequence of social acceptance. Moreover, Rainbolt (2015) suggests that sharing is important to Generation Y as they want interesting selfies, stories and posts for social media to share with family and friends. This could be a high influence as to why Generation Y make their travelling decisions, and is further explained through a survey carried out in 2017 by Schofields insurance. The insurance company asked over 1,000 UK adults from Generation Y ‘What was most important when choosing a holiday destination?’ The survey found that 40% said ‘how instagrammable the holiday would be’ and this was the biggest motivator when choosing a destination to visit. Further results found that Generation Y are becoming more focused on how their lives appear online, they are becoming more interested in taking photographs than getting involved in local culture (Hosie, 2017). 

“I have no shame in admitting I love going to places that I know will look good on Instagram” a 25 year old female told The Independent News. Similarly, Jade (2017) says that nowadays social media is an obsession with showing other users how ‘perfect’ your life is, if you are traveling to a destination it is required that users take evidence of the experience.

Mahita Gajanan wrote an article in The Guardian titled ‘Young Women on Instagram and Self-esteem’ she describes Instagram as “pressure to be perfect, act perfect, look perfect, the perfect amount of friends and the perfect amount of likes.” Gajanan (2015) also stated that Instagram can make users feel insecure, if an image does not receive a high amount of likes it can often be deleted. Within in the article Jessica Miller, 22 agreed by suggesting how Instagram can be depressing by visualising other users travel photographs, feeling depressing as they do not share the same status. However, Saeeda Tremaine, 23 stated in the article that Instagram is not depressing as it does not represent real life. Hoise (2017) somewhat agrees and states that Instagram does not show the whole story, when travelling social media user’s only post selective pictures.

Perring (2014) wrote an article in The Express News that a female student from Amsterdam, Zilla Van Den Born had a strong belief that people have an act for specifically for social media. She says that users are more concerned about what other online users think of them and it can quickly distort reality. The female student convinced her family
and friends that she had visit South East Asia over a 5 week period, when in reality she did not leave her home. She did this by manipulating and editing photographs for social media. Perring (2014) reported that her aim was to prove that people create an online ideal world that reality can no longer add up to.

This can further explain the previous research, that people from all generations are still rely on word of a mouth when booking their travelling decisions. The research has shown that many social media users believe that travelers are editing photographs before sharing, which may decrease the validity and trust of the destination. However, Rainbolt (2015) says Generation Y takes social media in to a high consideration when booking a trip as they trust their fellow internet users. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to prove if Generation Y are concerned about friends and other users editing their photographs, or perhaps they are aware and still motivated to make the same traveling decisions. The researcher aims to investigate this further throughout the study.

2.6 Marketing methods and channels

Generation Y are becoming an increasingly important market for various destinations. UNWTO (2016) state that “Generation Y travelers are often money poor but time rich which means they can spend longer in a destination than a typical tourist.” Stakeholders are becoming aware of the positive impacts as 23% of international travelers in 2016 were aged 15-29.

Generation Y are known to be trail travelers, they visit destinations before they become popular. Their behaviors and preferences shape the products and services in travel industry and can later be adopted by the mainstream travelers says (Rainbolt, 2015). Which relates back to Plog’s (1974) theory, Generation Y are seen as Allocentric tourists, often turning destinations into the Mid-Centric category. Therefore, UNWTO (2016) noted that businesses create strategic marketing plans that cater to Generation Y due to ‘buzz’ atmosphere that this age rage can create when travelling. Generation Y are also known as the generation for creating trends, when posting pictures of using services and products in destinations it can motivate other users to make the same decisions says
O’Brien (2017). For example, Yomads is a company that organizes adventure group tours with a strict age gap of 20-39 year olds. Yomads only uses social media for its marketing purposes to engage with the right target market as the company is becoming aware of Generation Y using these networking sites for travel inspiration.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provide a range of literature regarding Generation Y and social media habits in relation to travel. Theorists suggests that social media can often have a negative effect on Generation Y users, as it creates insecurity and jealousy when viewing other peoples lifestyles. Theory also suggests that many tourists are known for using impression management to create an online ideal image. They do this by strategically editing their photographs. Which supports the evidence suggesting that friends and family are the most trustworthy sources of information when deciding where to travel. This contrasts from Rainbolt (2015) who suggests that Generation Y trust online users. Therefore, has created a gap in the literature, it is unsure if other online users editing their photographs is important to Generation Y, as they want similar pictures for their page.
Chapter 3
Methodology
3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Methodology is described as a ‘plan of action’ (Crotty, 1998:7). This chapter will discuss the plan of primary data collection by identifying both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The researcher will justify and explain the approaches that were used to fulfil the aim of the study, as Kaden and Levinson (2006:77) suggest that “choosing the right methodology for your research is crucial.” The researcher will also discuss the sampling, limitations, reliability and validity of the data collection, types of data analysis used and lastly the ethical considerations.

The researcher has used a mixed methods approach for this study. Mixed methods is “the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone.” (Creswell, 2015:4) Therefore, this is best suited as it will provide a deeper understanding of the research topic.

3.2 Secondary research

Glaser (1963:11) defines secondary research as “the study of specific problems through analysis of existing data which were originally collected for another purpose.” In order to distinguish the most suited research methods, secondary research was conducted first, within the literature review chapter. The author found many suitable books, websites, journals, reports that were accessed via Cardiff Metropolitan University library. The researcher will continue to use this existing literature by relating it to the findings from the study.

3.3 Primary research

In contrast to secondary research, primary research is the search for new information, information that does not exist. Therefore, by conducting secondary research the researcher can make the primary data collection more specific and relevant to the study (Kumar, 2008).
3.4 Quantitative research

Quantitative research can be used to collect basic factual information about people, such as demographic characteristics and behaviour. O’Gorman and Macintosh (2014:153) describe quantitative research as “quantifying the problem and understanding how widespread it is by seeking projectable outcomes for a larger population, and which are associated with the interpretation and presentation of numerical information.”

3.4.1 Quantitative methods

Dawson (2009:14) says “Quantitative research generates statistics through the use of large-scale survey research, using methods such as questionnaires or structured interviews.” The design of the questionnaire can depend on how it is administered. Self-administered questionnaires are usually completed by the respondents. These questionnaires can be sent in the post, completed online or delivered and then collected later by the researcher. Interviewer-administered responses are recorded by the researcher on the basis of each respondent’s answers, these are carried out using the telephone. Structured interviews is where the researcher physically meet the respondents, asking the questions face-to-face. When using quantitative methods, the questions must be relevant to the topic with an easy response process such as yes or no answer or tick boxes. Researchers must avoiding using lengthy questionnaires as respondents may lose interest, and this in turn may decrease the validity of the results. When using structured interviews researchers should not deviate from the questions.

For this study the researcher decided to use internet-based questionnaires as opposed to structured interviews as it is cost efficient and quicker to gather a large sample. The internet-based questionnaires gathered numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes and opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population through Facebook (Fowler, 2013). Web technology has adapted meaning participants can answer the questionnaire using their smartphones. The rationale of distributing the questionnaire
online was to fit with the aim the study alongside further increase the validity as identified in the literature review Generation Y are high users of social media.

3.4.2 Research approach
A positivist approach is often used when gathering facts and statistics through questionnaires or surveys. Belk (2007:198) states “The philosophical assumptions guiding positivist research include an objective view of reality, which research seeks to measure and explain.” Those who use a positivist approach when conducting research in the tourism field, believe those involved behave in a rational way with self-interest being the key motivation. The researcher seeks to generalise knowledge across different people, times and situations (Belk, 2007; Brotherton, 2008).

3.4.2 Research design
The researcher designed the questionnaire through the online survey generator Qualtrics, which was provided by Cardiff Metropolitan University. The questionnaire was distributed through social media, therefore meaning the sample of the participants filling in the questionnaire was random. Veal (2011:357) says “In random sampling all members of the population have an equal chance of inclusion in the sample.” The questionnaire received 141 responses. Large samples help generalise research results to a population and “provide more statistical power to detect significant effects.” (Cash et al., 2016:59)

The questionnaire consisted of mainly close-ended questions to keep on topic, a few multiple choice questions and one open ended question, where respondents could leave comments about the study. Coles, Duval and Shaw (2013) suggest by doing this, it can give the researcher further information on the respondents perceptions. There were 22 questions altogether, and took participants around 3-5 minutes to fill in (please see appendix 2). The questionnaire informed the participants at the beginning that their responses would remain anonymous, in the hope that this would encourage honest answers.
In contrast from Quantitative, Qualitative data focuses more on words rather than numerical data. The table below shows the distinctions between both research methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative data</th>
<th>Qualitative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Based on meanings derived from numbers</td>
<td>• Based on meanings expressed through words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collection results in numerical and standardised data</td>
<td>• Collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics</td>
<td>• Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997:339)

3.5 Qualitative research

“Qualitative methods are useful for researching complex ideas, especially opinions and perceptions.” (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013:61)

3.5.1 Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods give the researcher a more in depth knowledge on the topic, and can be carried out using interviews, focus groups, participant observations or diary based methods (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured and give complex and rich data. However, the researcher sensed that interviewing one participant alone may decrease the validity. When asking about internet consumption, emotional attachment and perceptions on other online users, the participants may have felt intimidated or embarrassed. The researcher then viewed the alternative methods such as focus groups, “The goal of a focus group is to collect data that is interest to the researcher, typically to find the range of opinions of
people across several groups. The researcher compares and contrast data from across groups.” (Krueger & Casey, 2009:7)

Focus groups have been found useful for finding out how people make decisions and evaluating outcomes (Krueger & Casey, 2009) given this, the researcher decided that facilitating a focus group was the most appropriate qualitative method to use. O’Gorman and Macintosh (2014) suggests that the interaction amongst the participants can enhance the prospect of views expressed and can become more reliable. The main aim of the focus group was to attempt to establish a relationship between social media and the overseas travelling decisions made by Generation Y. However Coles, Duval and Shaw (2013) stated that greater discussion between the different dynamics of the group can lead to unexpected outcomes and new directions, often being a rich source of data for the final analysis.

3.5.2 Research approach

By facilitating a focus group the researcher used a phenomenologist approach, Mason (2014) says phenomenologists believe reality is created by people in a way that they think, behave and interact. A phenomenologist approach helps gather deep information and perceptions through personal knowledge and subjectivity. The researcher aims to generalise Generation Y’s opinions and perceptions via quantitative methods, however, Belk (2007) suggests that qualitative methods can be used to support the quantitative research. An interpretivist approach was also adopted by the researcher. This contrasts from positivist, as this research focuses more on human behaviour as opposed to scientific figures. An interpretivist approach is used to explore, explain and to give the researcher a greater understanding. The research approach concentrates on feelings and expressions of the participants, as she aims to see the world from their point of view.

3.5.3 Research design

The researcher familiarised herself with the focus group structure written by Krueger & Casey, (2009) and followed this process when facilitating. The participants for the focus
group were random yet purposive, as each participant was chosen from the Generation Y age range with access to various social media networking sites. The researcher is aware that other generations would have a perception on the topic area, however used participants from Generation Y to get an insight on how they behave. At the beginning of the focus group, the participants were required to read an information sheet (see appendix 4), this gave the participants time to understand the aim of the project. The researcher asked a majority of open-ended questions which allowed the participants to discuss and elaborate, giving their own personal opinion as the researcher monitored. The research in the literature review identified what questions to ask the participants, and questions in the discussion covered social media usage, past travelling decisions, impression management, trust of social media, and using it solely as an information source when choosing a destination. To help gain a deeper understanding of their values, the researcher then gave the participants a scenario, (please See appendix 7) for the focus group topic list.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The questionnaires will be automatically analysed using Qualtrics, the software places respondents’ answers into pie charts and graphs, listing the open-ended comments appropriately. The data will be simple to view, leading the researcher to make patterns and generalise the sample.

The researcher has used thematic analysis to examine the focus group, by listening to the recording and reading over the transcript the researcher can identify any occurring themes. The researcher will use the literature from chapter 2, to compare the findings.

### 3.7 Reliability and validity

The researcher aimed to minimise the bias in the sample when using quantitative research by adding open-ended questions. The large sample size from the questionnaire gave an equal chance for a variety of participants to answer, those from different locations and who had not travelled overseas.
Kruger and Casey (2009) suggest that using more than one focus group can be more effective as it gives different types of perceptions from different people. The researcher therefore could have conducted more than one focus group with participants within Generation Y age range to increase the validity. However, this was not achievable due to the lack of time that an undergraduate degree obtains alongside other deadlines.

3.8 Limitations

It is expected that the study will face limitations along the way, the researcher needs to be aware of these so if possible they can be overcome to increase the validity of the research.

The close ended questions can be mis-read by the participants and may jeopardise the data analysis, the researcher is also unable to gather in-depth data. The questionnaire is internet-based, although the secondary findings stated that a high percentage of Generation Y were active to social media however, not everyone could be online and those who are, may not be representative of the sample under investigation (O’Hara et al., 2011).

Within the focus group discussion questions can often be misinterpreted. Participants may become dominant over others, resulting in opinions and thoughts being misheard. Other limitations include, participants not turning up for meetings or members of the group may not being honest on the topic discussed. The researcher aims to balance out the limitations that may occur with a good methodological approach.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations should form an ongoing part of the research (Miller, 2012). Ethical considerations ensure the research is conducted in an appropriate manner, which is sensitive to the interest of the participants (Coles, Duval and Shaw, 2013). At the start of the internet-based questionnaire the respondents were informed that the project had received ethical approval from Cardiff Metropolitan University committee (please see appendix 1) When asking the participants their age range, options started from 18+, this is to decrease anyone vulnerable (under 18 years of age) participating.
Prior to the focus group, each participant was required to read and sign consent forms (see appendix 6) this gave the participants time to withdraw from participating if necessary. The researcher made the participants aware that the group discussion was going to be recorded for further analysis. The recording will remain on the researcher’s personal laptop to respect the confidentiality of the group. Participants also had the choice to remain anonymous or to have their names used just for this study, to respect this the researcher refers to the participants from letters A-E when discussing the findings. It is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure the safety of the participants, therefore the researcher conducted the focus group at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

3.10 Chapter overview

To summarise, this chapter has identified both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research choices have been justified, described and supported with theory. The chapter also considered the limitations that may be faced when conducting the research. The next chapter will display the results and findings from the primary data with discussion that will establish themes.
Chapter 4
Results and Discussion
4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the results from the primary research that was conducted using a mixed method approach, as discussed in the previous chapter. The researcher will analyse the results, establishing trends comparing and linking back to the secondary research.

The structure of this section will be divided into two, firstly this chapter will display the results for each question in the questionnaire. Secondly, the author will use thematic analysis to review the findings from the focus group.

4.2 Quantitative research method results

Regarding the appropriateness of using an internet-based questionnaire and the justifications that were made in chapter 3, the following section will display the findings from the 141 respondents contrasting from the literature review in chapter 2.
4.2.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 – What gender are you?

Question one asked the participants what gender they were. The researcher asked this question to try get a balanced response however, you can see from the chart that 78% of the respondents were female with 22% being male. If the researcher was to distribute the questionnaire again, purposive sampling would be used. By handing out questionnaires face-to-face in the attempt to balance out findings between both genders.
4.2.2 Age range

The figure shows a mixture of ages have answered the questionnaire, 62.41% aged 18-29 and 37.59% aged 30+. The researcher asked this question attempting to establish what ages where the highest users of social media. However, the figure shows a balanced response which gives the researcher a mixture of perceptions.

Figure 4.2 – which age range do you fit into?
4.2.3 Occupation

Figure 4.3 – Are you employed?

Question 3 asked the participants what is their occupation. From the figure it shows that 21.09% were students, 15.65% part time and majority of the respondents were in full time work with 53.74%.
4.2.4 Social media accounts

Figure 4.4 which of the following social media accounts do you have?

The researcher wanted to know which social media the respondents used. There was a balanced response, although the percentages were close, Facebook was the highest with 32.63% which supported Freeman (2012) who stated that 87% of Generation Y have a Facebook account. Snapchat was higher than Twitter with 23.24% which supported Hegg (2015) who states that 71% of Snapchat users are 18-34.

The question also allowed the respondents to state if they used any other forms of social media. Six commented that they also use LinkedIn, this could be as many of the respondents were in full time occupations.
4.2.5 Main social media account

This question was aiming to find out which form of social media respondents use the most. As you can see from the figure 80.14% said that Facebook was their main social media account. This supports Pilon (2016) who found in his survey that 92% of Generation Y said Facebook is their main social media account. Therefore, the researcher was trying to identify which form of social media would be most influential to the respondents.
4.2.6 Hours spent on social media daily

The figure shows that 58.16% of respondents spend 2-3 hours a day on social media, 24.82% also said they spend over four hours a day. From the previous question, the majority of the respondents said Facebook was their main account, therefore can suggest that respondents are spending more time on this networking site. As the majority of the respondents are in fulltime work, these findings are show that social media is a priority to these respondents, as they manage to work full time hours alongside spend an average of three hours a day browsing.

The researcher asked this question in an attempt to establish if users are exposed to social media could be why these platforms influence their decisions. Linking back to the secondary data, this can further explain why Hoise (2017) found that Generation Y are choosing destinations on how ‘instagrammable’ it is, they know their pictures will gurantee to reach an audience.
4.2.7 Checking social media

Figure 4.7 Do you check social media when you first wake up?

The figure shows that 60.99% check social media when first waking up which further suggests that social media is a priority in the life of Generation Y. These findings support the characteristics of Generation Y as suggested by Bolton et al., (2013) who says this Generation are bound to technology.

The results from the previous question suggest that Generation Y have an attachment to these social media networking sites, they are spending hours browsing alongside checking their accounts when first waking up.
4.2.8 Deactivating social media

Figure 4.8 Have you ever deactivated social media, if so, why?

The researcher asked this question to identify perceptions of social media. 57.99% stated that they had never deactivated any social media accounts however, 23.67% stated they had. The question also encouraged respondents to explain why, one participant stated that “everyone else making your life not feel good enough, others constantly showing off – don’t need to see it to make me feel down” which supports Gajanan (2015) and Jade (2017) who suggests Instagram can often be depressing as it is pressure to be ‘perfect’. Other comments suggested that users post worthless talk or ideas, others participants said they spent too much time browsing.
4.2.9 Being without social media

Figure 4.9 If you were to go without social media, for example - broken phone or no internet access. Would you feel paranoid, isolated, worried or panicked?

The aim was to identify if Generation Y rely on social media, these percentages suggest that 35% who said extremely likely or slightly likely have an attachment to social media, and may become worried if they had missed an event. The researcher was trying to establish if the respondents could not be without social media as they rely on these networks to make their decisions. However, 43.98% of the participants said slightly unlikely or extremely unlikely. Furthermore, this question gave a balanced response therefore the researcher investigated this further using the focus group (see chapter 4.3).
4.2.10 Impression management

Figure 4.10 Do you use your social media accounts to emphasize impression management? Goffman (1959:132) defines Impression management as “the process that is purposely for packaging and editing self to distribute positive impressions to others.”

Impression management covered a large section of the literature review in chapter 2, therefore the researcher thought it would be appropriate to ask the participants if they use this process. Just under half, 45.39% stated ‘probably not’ and ‘definitely not’. However, 26.95% admitted to probably doing this, with small percentage of 5.67% suggesting they definitely do this. This contrasts from Kim and Tussyadiah (2013) and Lo and Mckercher (2015) who suggest social media users use this process when posting their photographs online. Again, this question has given the researcher a balanced response and faces limitations as participants may not answer honestly. If the researcher were to ask this question again, the researcher would ask for people’s perceptions on other users. This theory is further discussed within the focus group.
4.2.11 Posting pictures

Figure 4.11 If you were to post pictures to your social media account - when would you do it?

The researcher was attempting to establish if it was important to the respondents to have an audience view their photographs. The figure shows that 68.09% of the respondents said they would upload their photographs when suited them. 10.64% believe they post when most users appear to be active, and can be suggested that this is to gain more interactions.
4.2.12 Social acknowledgement

![Pie chart showing 84.40% Yes and 15.60% No responses](chart.png)

Figure 4.12 Would you feel satisfied if your picture receives more than 11 likes?

84.40% of the respondents said they would feel satisfied when receiving over 11 likes on their images. The findings further explains and supports Day (2013) who suggests that acknowledgments on posts and photographs can give users existential claim, and often be related to social acceptance. In the literature review, Rainbolt (2015) suggests that Generation Y take the time to get photo opportunities for their page when travelling. Therefore, the researcher was aiming to establish a relationship between this and receiving acknowledgments on their images. Identifying if this generation are taking and sharing photographs to receive approval and acknowledgement of other users.
4.2.13 Other users

Figure 4.13 Do you often spend time looking at other users accounts wishing your page looked like theirs?

The researcher asked this question in the attempt to identify if other users travelling photographs or lifestyle choices was a motivator. However, the figure shows that over half the respondents, 63.83% said they do not do this.
4.2.14 Social media and reality

The findings from this question showed that respondents are unsure if social media perceives reality. The researcher was attempting to identify if respondents would trust experiences and images shared and if this would have an impact on their decisions. 59.57% stated that they think social media portrays reality some of the time. However, 17.73% both said about half the time or never, with 1.42% stating always. This could be explained by the results from a previous question that found respondents are spending a large amount of time on social media daily. Therefore, Generation Y are exposed to various forms and becoming unaware as to what is reality and what is not. Which links to Perring (2014) who reported that social media can often distort reality.
4.2.15 Overseas travel

![Figure 4.15](image)

**Figure 4.15** Have you ever been travelling overseas for more than two weeks?

The researcher was aiming to identify if the respondents were interested in travel, and had previously traveled overseas. 62.12%, over half stated that they previously had travelled overseas for more than two weeks. The results from this question further support reports from UNWTO (2016) who state that Generation Y travelers are constantly growing. The researcher also asked this question, to then ask a follow up question.
4.2.16 Posting travel experiences

The figure shows that 66.67% posted their photographs on social media. These findings support Hoise (2017) and Sinha (2011) who says Generation Y travelers are required to take evidence when travelling to post on social media. The findings from this question also support Lo and Mckercher (2015), Stylianou-Lambert (2012) and Fotis et al., (2011) who suggest that Generation Y are known for posting pictures from travel experiences online and this is now accepted as post trip behaviour.
4.2.17 Checking in

![Pie chart showing the responses to the question: When travelling do you feel the NEED to 'check in' or post about it?]

- 21.74% Yes
- 36.96% No, but I post about it anyway
- 41.30% No

Figure 4.17 If applicable - When travelling do you feel the NEED to 'check in' or post about it?

Rainbolt (2015) suggests that Generation Y feel they need to validate their lives using social media. Therefore, the researcher asked this question to identify when traveling if participants feel they have to inform other users. From the results 41.30% said they do not feel the need to check in but still share, whereas 21.74% said they do, which would further support Rainbolt (2015) who also says sharing is important to Generation Y.
4.2.18 Travel inspiration

Figure 4.18 Has social media made you consider travelling to places you never thought you would?

The figure shows that 55.00% of the participants said social media has made them considered travelling to places that they never thought they would. The findings from this question can be seen in a positive way, social media is giving inspiration to online users. These platforms show users different destinations to travel to, giving tips and ideas. It also gives other destinations around the world a chance to be recognized.
4.2.19 Travelling photographs

Figure 4.19 Traveling photographs posted by other users make me jealous. Do you agree with this statement?

The researcher asked the participants if other users travelling photographs made them jealous. The researcher asked those who agreed to state why, to further investigate if other user’s lifestyles would be a motivator to make the same decisions. One participant stated;

“Social media gives you the opportunity to live your life virtually through others. It makes you aspire to do things e.g. travel, shop, lose weight, change the way we look. In some ways this is a good thing but it is also scary how insecure and jealous it can make you of other people and their lives. When you juxtapose your life with another’s via social media you are suddenly competing to be similar to them and you try and reflect that on all of your social media platforms so that people will then be jealous of you. It’s quite a vicious circle if you don’t have control over it.”

This participant’s comment relates to the aim of the study as it suggests that social media users are making travelling decisions especially for social media. Other comments stated that users are often posting images for an act. Therefore, the results from this question suggest that users are motivated when seeing other people’s photographs, as they want similar pictures for their page.
4.2.20 Overseas travel

Figure 4.20 have you ever made an overseas travel decision based on social media?

The figure shows that 79.43% participants said that they had never made an overseas travel decision based on social media, which contrasts from Kelly (2016) who suggests that Generation Y use sites such as Instagram to plan travel. Findings form figure 4.18 also shows 55% of participants said social media has made them consider travelling to places they never thought they would. Therefore, the researcher is aware that after distributing this question it can be interpreted in two ways;

1) Using social media as a source of information.

2) Making a traveling decision just to post on social media.

These findings from both questions can imply that social media is influencing, however the participants are not using social media solely as an information source. Therefore, supporting Stewart (2015) who says that friends and family are the still the most trustworthy source of information when deciding where to travel.
4.2.21 Added comments

The researcher gave the respondents the option to leave comments about the study, as explained in the methodology in chapter 3. Coles, Duval and Shaw (2013) suggests this can give further information on the respondent’s perceptions. One participant stated

“Good study – our generation definitely is influenced by other people’s travelling posts, e.g. jealousy or creates an urge to go there too and find new destinations.”

Another participant stated, “Instagram has a huge influence on travel, I follow lots of different people that travel and then want to go to places they do, and feel envious of their lifestyle.”

Which further supports Cohen (2015) who reported that The Social Times claimed Instagram as the modern day tool agent. These comments from the participants suggest that social media is having a great influence the overseas travel decisions of Generation Y. However, as previously mentioned the findings can be visualized in both positive and negative way. Generation Y have greater information source on how they can travel, influencing them to be more adventurous. Using social media to gather ideas and tips
from people all over the world. However, if they are spending their whole trip on technology devices they can be missing the real experience, becoming more focused on how their lives appear online to other users.

“Instead of interacting with each other when we’re with friends and other people, far too often people are still browsing on their phones when they’re socializing already. It is damaging our communication skills between each other and how we all connect.”

The comments from the open-ended questions have supported both theory from the literature review and the aim of the study. The researcher sensed when asking personal questions it faced limitations therefore may decreased the validity of the responses. The researcher went into through discussion with the participants in the focus group to overcome the limitations and to get a greater understanding that can be seen in the next section.
4.3 Focus group data introduction

The following section will outline the main results from the focus group under themes that the researcher identified when analyzing. The themes are fast technology, visual reality, the influence, impression management and emotion. In this section both primary and secondary findings will be discussed. Please see appendix 8 for a full focus group transcript.

4.3.1 Focus group demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Social Media user</th>
<th>Travelled overseas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Student – part time bartender</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Student – part time waitress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Student – part time bartender</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Student – part time waitress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant E</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Student – part time sales assistant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Student – part time waitress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 – Focus Group demographics
4.3.2 Fast Technology

The participants shared a common characteristic, which supports Kane (2017) who suggested that Generation Y prefers to communicate using technology as it is quicker. Participants D and E in the group discussed how they often use social networking sites to keep in contact with their friends in replacement for text messaging. The group valued Facebook Messenger as this allows them to have group chats, meaning they can speak to more than one person at the same time. Participant D favoured Snapchat, she discussed how she uses this to send instant messages and photographs to her friends. Members agreed throughout the discussion that they valued how quick and easily accessible various social media networking sites are through their smartphones. The participants also discussed that social media is quicker way to gather information when deciding on where to travel.

“It’s gone from when everyone used to look through catalogues to now researching through social media, it’s a new form of seeing where to go, it’s moving on and it’s an easier way, you don’t have to leave the house.” (Participant A)

There was a general agreement amongst the participants with this statement. Participant E described how she does not have to leave her bedroom how as she can access this information quickly. This supported Xiang and Gretzel (2010) who suggested that tourists can get to know destinations online before leaving their homes. The focus group identified a common characteristics of the participants, they value how quick and easy it is to communicate and gathering information using various social media sites. This can further explain why Generation Y are seen as the heaviest users.

4.3.3 Visual

The researcher introduced questions to gather which form of social media the participants used most. The group had a general agreement that Facebook was used as their main social networking site. The findings supported Freeman (2012) and Pilon (2016) who stated that 87% of Generation Y have Facebook with 92% saying it is their main account. Participant B further explained the reason and stated that “Facebook is more for
However, as the discussion went on, Participants D and E spoke about how they often browse on Instagram more. There was strong mutual agreement that the group prefer Instagram as the site is formed of image sharing. The group concluded that they would prefer to look at images rather than read posts which links to Stewart (2015) who states that Generation Y are the most responsive to this image sharing app.

Facebook allows users to have profiles, instant messaging and write blogs this may imply why the participants value Facebook as their main account. However, the participants agreed that they prefer Instagram as it is visual. These findings can further support and explain why Clasen (2015) states Instagram is the fastest growing social networking site.

4.3.4 Reality
The researcher was interested whether the participants thought social media perceives reality, establishing if they would trust other online user’s experiences and reviews. The start of this discussion the group agreed that social media does not perceive reality. However, participant D suggested that social media is important to Generation Y, she also suggested that younger people can often depend on it. This could further explain why Hoise (2017) suggests Generation Y are more focused on how their lives appear online.

“Sometimes you do think it portrays reality, you look at other people’s lives and think they are happy and have a really good life, and then find out the truth and think oh I didn’t know that because it wasn’t shown on social media.” (Participant B)

Participants D and F agreed with this statement, using relationships as an example. Participant D stated how you can often think people are happy because of what they share, but in reality it can often be a different story.

The outcomes of this discussion support Perring (2014) who reported about the Amsterdam student who convinced her friends and family she had travelled through South East Asia. The students aim was to so show users how quickly social media can distort reality, as users try to create an online ideal world.
The researcher then asked the group if they would trust reviews and posts on social media and if they are influential to them. Participants A, B, D, E and F agreed, with participants B and C suggesting that they are definitely influential. This supports both Wasserman (2007) and Kelly (2016) who reported that peoples comments, videos and photographs shared online can influence other peoples travel plans. However, participant C suggested otherwise.

“Well I think they can only be influential if you know the person or if you have met them, if you meet someone in one place and they have gone somewhere else, I would be like yeah I’d go there because I had met them. If you are just searching on social media I wouldn’t because they only post the best parts of it.” (Participant C)

Participant B of the group quickly disagreed with this statement and she suggested that traveling posts would be influential to her. She suggests that users viewing the images do not think of the negative parts to the experience. Evidently, there were different perceptions on social media in contrast to reality; the group started with suggesting that social media does not perceive reality, however, suggesting that traveling posts would still influence their decisions. Participant C further explained his reason by stating

“When I was traveling Chang-Mai in Thailand, I put many pictures on Facebook and people where commenting how great it looks, they would not be wrong but they were also unaware that it rained half the time I was there.” (Participant C)

These findings supports Hoise (2017) who suggests that social media does not show the whole story, users are selective with their photographs before posting. Participant C believes that in general life users are posting the ‘best parts’ and he is aware of this when browsing through social media, he would not trust reviews from anyone other than friends or family. Although participant B somewhat agrees, it contrasts from the rest of the group. Therefore, the majority of the participants support Tham, Croy and Mair (2012), suggesting that online word of mouth has a powerful influence on the decision process. Participant C however supports Stewart (2015); Cox et al., (2009) who suggest family and friends are the influence because of the irrelevant content of online reviews.
4.3.5 The Influence
From the discussion there are many perspectives, it seems although the group are aware that social media does not perceive reality. However, other users travelling posts and pictures are still motivating them to travel. The researcher asked the group how they had previously made their overseas traveling decisions. Participant B who had previously traveled around Bali suggested that she viewed friends travelling on social media which influenced her and her friends to go. Participant B also discussed how she follows specific users on Instagram to get ideas on where to travel. This supports Kelly (2016) who found 48% of people use Instagram to select a new travel destination. The researcher then asked Participant C how he made his travelling decision to Asia, he replied;

“I think South East Asia is one of ones that people started going to before social media, it's like the whole backpacking thing. I think when you think of backpacking you think to go without even looking on social media, you don’t really need to, and Thailand is the main backpacking destination”. (Participant C)

His answer did not give the researcher a clear explanation on how he made his travelling decision. Participants B and D spoke about how they had viewed a large amount of people travelling Thailand on social media in 2016. Participants B and D also suggested that social media can often create trends amongst Generation Y travelers, as people follow what other users do. Further discussion on trends led participant C admit that a large number of travelers where in Asia at the same time as him, and he had viewed other Generation Y travelers on social media. In relation to Plog’s (1974) theory from the literature review, the researcher sensed as though Participant D wanted to be an Allocentric tourist, seen as independent and did not want to admit to following other users decisions.

The researcher then went on to ask the group if they think Generation Y travelers make traveling decisions especially for social media. The participants overall had an agreement that a large number of tourist do, however this does not generalise everyone. This would further support the 40% who admitted to choosing a destination on how ‘instagrammable’ it would be. (Hoise, 2017)
“I remember when I went on a trip to Koh Phangan and there was this group of girls who literally just took pictures the whole time at the water park. They did not interact in the activities, they took hundreds of pictures. On the bus back they spent the whole time editing their photographs.” (Participant E)

Participant C believed that tourists are half-heartedly taking part in activities when travelling because they are attached to their phones and selfie sticks. Participants A, B, D, and E discussed that tourists can often act for social media with pictures often being set up.

“You go to attractions and you see it full of people just constantly taking photographs, not doing anything else, and not even talking to each other. They are obviously doing it for social media” (Participant D)

These findings support Rainbolt (2015) who suggests that Generation Y take the time to get photo opportunities that are worthy of an interesting story for their page.

4.3.6 Impression Management
Throughout the literature review, impression management had covered a large section and evidence was starting to suggest that a percentage of Generation Y are travelling specifically to post on social media. The researcher wanted to get the groups opinions and thoughts on people using traveling images to impress others, attempting to establish if this was an influence on their decisions. The researcher had asked the group if they thought Generation Y posting traveling experiences to social media was evidence and proof that they had visited.

The majority of the group disagreed and explained that their reason for posting their images was to mainly share their experience with friends and family. Participant D discussed how family and friends can often say to them “make sure you upload some pictures.” Participant C explained that smart phones have a restricted storage meaning he would have to upload his images or they can often be forgotten about. The researcher felt that this may be an excuse, technology nowadays allows other places for photographs to be stored such as google drop box, laptops and USB drives. Deeper discussion lead
participants A and B to suggest that sharing traveling experiences can often be shared for more than family and friends to see.

“Deep down though, I think it’s a bit more about showing off – look where I am kind of thing.”

(Participant D)

The researcher then asked the participants if they thought online users use social media to emphasize impression management. Goffman (1959) defines impression management as “process for packaging and editing self to distribute positive images to others.” Majority of the group suggested that they do not support this process personally, however, they are aware of other users editing their photographs to give impressions.

“Especially Instagram with all the filters, you are actually editing them to make them look better.”

(Participant E)

Again, this can further explain why Clasen (2015) suggest Instagram grows in popularity. Participants B and D did not support this comment, and suggested that posting pictures while travelling is not a priority for them. Furthermore, the thorough discussion resulted in participants A and E admitting to using this process some of the time when posting images.

“When I was travelling I was filtering all my photos, although it was grey skies I wanted to make it look like it was sunny, I actually made the photograph have a blue sky, I’m not sure how I did, but I did”

(Participant E)

Comments from participant E supports Kim and Tussyadiah (2013) and Lo and Mckercher (2015) who says travelers are known for creating and ideal image by editing photographs before posting. The group discussed how they did not want other users to know if they were having a bad experience. They wanted other users to be impressed by their travelling photographs. The researcher then asked the group, at what time would they often post their images to social media. Participants B, C, D and F suggested that they would do this at any time when best suited them, whereas two participants A and E discussed that they often post their images when most users appeared to be active.
Participants A mentioned he posts his images between 6pm and 7pm as he believes this is busiest time on social media, which would give him the most views. Participants A and E sounded slightly embarrassed, often repeated the word ‘stupid’ before admitting to doing this.

4.3.7 Emotion
Throughout the discussion it appeared that the members of the group used various social media networking sites daily. The researcher wanted to know how many hours a day the participants spend browsing, trying to identify if constant exposure to these images are influencing their decisions.

Participants B,C,D,E,F admitted to spending around two hours on social media, whereas participant A discussed how he can often spend over four hours a day. Participants B and D suggested that when watching television in the evenings, they hardly pay attention as they prefer to scroll on their hand held devices. When admitting to their behavior, participant B suggested that is ‘sad’ that she spends hours on social media daily rather than interacting with other people.

The next part of the discussion, the researcher wanted the group to describe their emotions when receiving likes on their images, by doing this the researcher was aiming to see if it was important to Generation Y and trying to identify if they take photographs especially for social media. Participant A explained that he has often deleted images if they do not receive over 11 likes in 24 hours, which links to Gajanan (2015) who reported in The Guardian that users can delete images if they do not get enough likes. Participant D agreed said how she would not delete her images however, she prefers it when she receives over ten likes.

“You are always buzzing aren’t you?” (Participant E)

There was a general agreement amongst the group, stating how content they would feel when receiving likes. There was also a sense of frustration between the participants when explaining how the feel if they get no interactions on their images.
“if you get a lot of likes it makes you happy, if I post something and it gets no likes, I feel bad, I feel like why isn’t my family and friends liking my post?.” (Participant E)

Participant C further explain by discussing how he can often revise a picture before sharing it on social media, often messaging friends to like it when it has been uploaded. Other participants are aware of this and had often had friends messaging them for a similar request.

“It’s like a social acceptance thing.”
(Participant D)

The findings support Day (2013) who describes publishing a photograph and receiving acknowledgments can become addictive, users are worried about how they are viewed online.

The group discussed how they can often feel envious of people travelling, Participant A admitted to feeling jealous of users who have a ‘good’ Instagram, further discussion lead for this to mean interesting images shared throughout their profile. Participant D explained that she is jealous of people who have travelled the world and posted their pictures on social media.

The participants discussed how they check their social media when first waking up, and if they were to go without described their feelings as lost, wondering what would be going on and what they may have missed. Although, participant D and E suggested that when losing their smartphones, they can often enjoy the break from social media. They do not feel so attached to it and come to realise that they often do not need it as much as they thought.

The researcher asked if they would still feel the same while traveling, if it would bother them that they had no internet access. Participants C and D they prefer to be without their phones when travelling, it gives them more of chance to interact with the culture at the destinations. Participant E talked about how her phone broke while traveling Thailand, she explained how she struggled to be without it. The researcher asked her to explain why this was, and implying that it was because she could not upload her
experiences to social media. Participant E explained that she used it mainly to contact her friends and family back home which links to Kelly (2013) who suggests that social media is an important tool to stay in contact while travelling. The remainder of the participants agreed and suggested this is why they connect to Wi-Fi when traveling. However, more in depth discussion participant E stated;

“Actually, I did borrow someone’s phone to take photographs when travelling so I could post them on Instagram.” (Participant E)

Which led participant A to expand emphasizing how he needed to be online during his trip in Amsterdam, he purposely walked into coffee shops to connect to their Wi-Fi to upload images on social media. Participant A and E comments support both Rainbolt (2015) and Jade (2017) who state that Generation Y need to validate their lives using social media. When traveling to a destination, Generation Y are required to take evidence of it.

The group where then given a scenario as the researcher was interested by their attachment of their hand held devices while travelling and the need to be online.

“When travelling, if there was a café that sold standard food but had fast Wi-Fi or a café that sold great food but had no Wi-Fi access. Which would you choose?”

The generally response amongst the group was great food, participant B stated she would not go to that extent. Being online was not a great deal to half the group. However, participant E changed the scenario, describing in a different way;

“If I was going to stay in a hostel that was great, but had no Wi-Fi or a hostel that was okish but had Wi-Fi, I would definitely reconsider, but that’s because you don’t have Wi-Fi all the time, wherever I stay I would like to have it.” (Participant E)

This suggests that participant E did not want to admit to needing online access and therefore justified her reason in a different way.

This chapter has presented the findings from quantitative and qualitative data. Evidently, throughout the focus group discussion it appeared somewhat difficult for participants to admit to their online behaviours. In depth discussion lead participants to be honest often
repeating the words ‘stupid’ and ‘sad’ when revising their social media habits. Greater
discussion resulted in a variety of opinions and perceptions of social media. Participants
also expressed their need to be connected, with a correlation of sharing content and
social acceptance. The next chapter will provide a conclusion of the study with a summary
of the mind findings from both research methods.
Chapter 5
Conclusion
5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction
This conclusion will begin with a reflection with the objectives of the research proposal. The researcher will discuss a summary of the main findings, while identifying the limitations and making recommendations. The researcher will also make recommendations for tourism and hospitality businesses in the future.

5.2 Research aims and objectives

Aim
The aim of this study was to identify if social media has an influence on the overseas travel choices of Generation Y, identifying if their purpose was to post on social media appose from interacting at the destinations. Four objectives were set;

Objectives

1) To critically evaluate literature associated with Generation Y and the impact and influence social media has on the overseas travel decisions.
2) Attempt to establish a relationship between social media and travelling decisions made by Generation Y.
3) Use a mixed method approach to undertake primary research.
4) Review and analyse the primary and secondary data in order to make recommendations on findings and future research.

The first objective was met by researching relevant secondary data to make up the critical literature review in (chapter 2), which was used and referenced throughout.

The second objective was achieved through both primary and secondary research methods that researcher compared and analyses in (chapter 4).

The third objective was achieved through using qualitative and quantitative data to collect primary data, both research methods which were explained in the methodology in (chapter 3).
The fourth objective was successfully achieved through analysing and comparing the primary and secondary data. The researcher identified how tourism and hospitality businesses could advertise appropriately with Generation Y’s influences in mind in (chapter 5.3.1).

5.3 Summary of main findings

**Influence**

It is evident that social media has an influence on Generation Y’s overseas travel choices. Participants from both research methods admitted to feeling envious of those who had travelled and posted on social media. In turn, creates jealousy and an urge to then travel as they want to post pictures to then make users jealous of them. Participants within the focus group stated that they had made their travel choices because of what they had viewed on social media. This can be viewed as a positive impact, as social media is giving Generation Y inspiration to travel. Sharing experiences is also important to Generation Y as found by Rainbolt (2015), participants in the study supported this and admitted to taking the time to upload photographs when travelling.

**Honesty**

One of the main findings from the results is that respondents found it difficult to be honest when answering the questions. Results from the questionnaire were often contradicted by the comments left from the open-ended questions. Deep discussion within the focus group led participants to describe their behaviours as ‘sad’ or ‘stupid’ when revising their posting habits on social media. Participants often not wanting to admit to using impression management. However, when asking their perceptions on other users, they stated that are very familiar with others using this process, which supports Kim and Tussyadiah (2013) and Lo and Mckercher (2015) who say travelers are known for using this process. Generation Y participants also wanted to be seen as independent and allocentric tourist which proves Plogs (1974) theory is still relevant as participants did not want to admit to following other user’s experiences when making their travel choices.
Emotional attachment

Both research methods proved that Generation Y are checking social media when they first wake up, with spending an average of 3 hours on various platforms daily. Both research methods also proved that Generation Y feel happy and content when receiving social acknowledgment on their posts which supports Day (2013) who suggests this can be a consequence of social acceptance. Which further explains why people want interesting images, often refining them before posting as they are guaranteed an audience. The excessive exposure to social media explains the mixed perceptions on social media and reality. It is only Generation Y disconnect themselves, they come to realise they do not need to depend on social media as anticipated.

Word of mouth

Both research methods show that images on social media is a stimulus and inspires Generation Y to visit destinations. However, this is often a starting point to then gather more information using other sources. Generation Y suggest they need to research further, as people online may not be trusted when choosing where to visit. This cohort explained how they are aware of tourists only uploading highlights of their trip, as they do this themselves. This contrasts from Rainbolt (2015) who suggests Generation Y trust other online users, and further supports Stewart (2015) who says word of mouth is the most trustworthy source.

5.3.1 Recommendations on findings

- The author recommends that tourism and hospitality businesses should become aware of Generation Y sharing only their finest experiences on social media, and the influence it has on other users. These companies could alter their marketing strategies by offering complimentary drinks or discounts to guests who ‘check in’ or ‘like’ the company brand on social media, to increase the awareness of businesses.
• Tourism and hospitality businesses could post images of the destination using sites such as Instagram, as from both primary and secondary findings Generation Y is using this networking site for travel inspiration.

• Tours at destinations could advertise the picture opportunities as motive for tourists to attend the trips.

5.4 Limitations of the research
This section will explore and identify the limitations of this research project. This section will then discuss what could have been done to overcome these and suggest recommendations for future research. Time, access and resources were the three limitations that limited the reliability and validity of this study.

• The numerical results from the questionnaire often had a balance response or contradicted the respondent’s comments on the open-ended answers, thus restricted in-depth information.

• The researcher was studying human behaviours and perceptions, therefore lead to a variety of new directions and mixed opinions.

• The researcher only conducted one focus group with six participants, where more focus groups would have created a greater understanding as participants often struggled to answer honestly.

5.4.1 Recommendations for future research
• By using only a qualitative methodology approach, could give a greater understanding on the perceptions and influences. The researcher could analyse the conversation then asking appropriate questions for the next group.

• Having a focus on one form of social media, may increase the validity and reliability of the data.
5.5 Summary

This research has provided evidence of the importance of social media in the lives of Generation Y, in how they live and behave. Nevertheless, it would depend on the mindset of the individual as to how other user’s content would affect and motivate them, as expressed throughout the study this identified a range of opinions and perceptions. The overall conclusion of the study suggests that Generation Y are fundamentally making traveling decisions to display to other users. However, their honesty restricted a full in-depth analysis.

Secondary research identified Generation Y, their characteristics, behaviours and influences when making their overseas travelling decisions. This background research help create a methodological structure to undertake primary research. This was achieved through a mixed method approach. The primary research was conducted over a period of a month, to gather enough respondents and allow enough time to analyse the focus group recordings. The research for this project could have been conducted for a longer period of time, to give a more depth and insight on the behaviours and influences of Generation Y. Although, each of the objectives that were set for this project have been met through the process of the research and analysis. The researcher has learnt beneficial skills completing this project, as she’s investigated many perceptions. Overall, a vast amount of hard work and time has gone into this dissertation in terms of planning, analysing and researching to include as much information as possible.
Chapter 6
References
6.0 References


Chapter 7
Appendices
Appendix 1
DEVOLVED ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION SUMMARY

Student Name: DASH MAGUI
Module Name: DISSEMINATION
Programme Name: INTERNATIONAL TOURISM & EVENTS MANAGEMENT

Student Signature; Supervisor Signature;
Yes N/A Yes N/A
- Application for ethics approval
- Participant information sheet
- Participant consent form
- Pilot interview/s
- Pilot questionnaire/s
- Letter/s to participating organisation/s
- Confirmation of interviewee participation

First Submission / Resubmission
Date: 26/12/2016

For use by the devolved ethics approval panel:

Panel Members Name Signature

Module leader, Chair:

Supervisor:

CSM Ethics Committee Representative:

Date: 20/12/16 Date of Reassessment: 16/01/17

Outcome:

Project Approved [ ] Reference number issued: 2016 D0150
Chair’s Action [ ]
Application not Approved [ ]

Comments for projects not fully approved:

- Add in normal feedback.
- Appeal & add question for those who work part-time, unemployed, etc.
- Add questions about any social media for travel choices of destination & reflect on title of dissertation.
- Add some group questions at the end of questionnaire to ask if interested to participate.
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Daisy Magill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Lisa Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>School of management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>ST20052697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>International tourism and events management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>The impact of social media on the overseas travelling decisions of Generation Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>01/01/2017 - 11.02.2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
participants (eg curatorial, practice audit) | No
---|---
Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education) | No
A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS) | No

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project

The project is investigating whether social media is the main source of inspiration/ influence to the decisions made by generation Y travellers. Researching how many youths/millennials use social media and base their decisions about posts viewed online, finding out if youths travel decisions would remain the same if there was no social media to advertise or influence these decisions. Researching the psychology effects of using social media sites has on youths and how it motivates their behaviour. This project also aims to find out how social media creates trends in the travelling decisions as other users see posts and are inspired to make the same decisions. By administrating questionnaires and using a focus group this will ask questions on their social media usage and trying to find out how much of an impact these social media sites have on the individuals.

DECLARATION:

I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

Signature of the applicant: Daisy Maytill Date: 06/12/2016

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY

Name of supervisor: Lisa Weight Date: 7.12.2017

Signature of supervisor: [Signature]

Research Ethics Committee use only

Decision reached: Project approved
Project approved in principle
Decision deferred
Project not approved
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project? Yes/No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

One of the methods will be quantitative using online questionnaires.

- An online questionnaire will be created on www.qualtrics.com.
- The author will use students from Cardiff Metropolitan University.
- Questionnaires will also be shared on social media sites such as Facebook as this is the type of audience that is being targeted.
- By sharing the questionnaire on social media sites the author aims to create the snowball effect.
- The researcher aims to have around 100 questionnaires completed.
- The Questionnaire will have 15-20 close ended questions taking approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Another research method will be using a Focus Group.

- 8-10 people will be selected for the focus group.
- Focus group meeting will be held at Cardiff Metropolitan University.
- Participants of the focus group will also be asked to fill in the questionnaire.
- Recording the discussion while prompting questions.

Sample

- Students that have been travelling from Cardiff Metropolitan University will be selected.

Participants

- All participants will be over the age of 18
- The researcher will only ask Age range and gender to remain anonymous.

Consent

- Consent from participants is required from the interviewees by the completion of the consent form

1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
before they can take part in the study.

Analysis

- Data gathered from questionnaires will be analysed and counted using excel
- The focus group meetings will be recorded with the permission of the participants and then used for thematic analysis.

A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research? No
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research
Click here to enter text.
A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications? Yes
A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them

Online questionnaires
- Youths filling in questionnaires may not want to admit to feeling depressed about using social media accounts. For these questions the author will use multiple choice.
- Participants may not want to admit to how much time they spend on social media. When gathering the results and analysing them the questionnaires will be coded to respect people's identity.

B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?
Click here to enter text.
B2 Student project only
What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?
Experience of supervising undergraduate and post graduate research projects alongside her own PhD research.

C POTENTIAL RISKS
C1 What potential risks do you foresee?
Online questionnaires
- Not all questionnaires are completed meaning that the findings will not be appropriate.
- Not having a successful platform distribute the questionnaire.

Focus Groups
- Not finding a mutual date and time for all participants to meet.
- Not having enough participants
- Personal safety

C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?

Online questionnaires
- Making sure questionnaires are ready to distribute in plenty of time for all to be completed.
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

- Using online surveys to distribute to wider the target audience.

Focus group
- Gathering a focus group together as soon as ethics is approved to arrange a date and time suitable for all participants.

When submitting your application, you MUST attach a copy of the following:
- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
Appendix 2
Appendix 2 - Example of questions

The influence of social media on the overseas travel choice of Generation Y.
This project has received the approval of Cardiff School of Managements’ Ethics Committee, Cardiff Metropolitan University

1. What gender are you?
   Male ☐  Female ☐  Rather not say ☐

2. What is your occupation?
   Student ☐  Part-time ☐  Full-time ☐  None of the above ☐

3. Which age range do you fit into?
   18-20 ☐  21-23 ☐  24-26 ☐  27-29 ☐  30+ ☐

4. Which of the following social media accounts do you use? If other please state.
   Facebook ☐
   Instagram ☐
   Snapchat ☐
   Twitter ☐

5. Which is your main social media account?
   Facebook ☐
   Instagram ☐
   Snapchat ☐
   Twitter ☐

6. How many hours a day do you spend on social media?
   Less than an hour ☐
   Around 1-2 hours ☐
   Around 3-4 hours ☐
   Over 4 hours a day ☐

7. Have you ever deactivated social media, if so, why?
   Yes ☐  No ☐

8. Is social media the first thing you check when waking up?
   Yes ☐  No ☐

9. Would it bother you if your picture/post did not get more than 10 likes from other social media users?
   Yes ☐  No ☐
10. If you were to go without social media, for example – broken phone or no internet, would you feel paranoid, isolated, worried or panicked?

- Extremely likely
- Slightly likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Slightly unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

11. Do you use social media to emphasize impression management? Goffman (1959) defines impression management as the process that is purposely for packaging and editing self to distribute positive impressions to others.

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

12. If you were to post a picture to your social media account, when would you do it?

- Whenever you felt like it
- As soon as the photograph was taken
- When most users were online

13. Do you often spend time looking at other users accounts wishing your page looked like theirs?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Definitely not

14. Do you think social media portrays reality?

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

15. Have you ever been travelling for more than 2 weeks?

- Yes
- No
16. If yes, did you post on social media?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

17. If applicable – when travelling do you feel the need to ‘check-in’ or post about it on social media?
   Yes ☐
   No, but I post about it anyway ☐
   No ☐

18. Has social media made you consider travelling to places you never thought you would?
   Yes ☐
   Maybe ☐
   No ☐

19. Do pictures of other users travelling photographs make you jealous?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

20. Have you ever made an overseas travel decision based on social media?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

21. Would you consider participating in a focus group to discuss this further?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

22. Would you like to add any comments?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you for your time.
Appendix 3
Appendix 3 – Completed questionnaire with comments

1) What gender are you?

2) Which age range do you fit into?
3) Are you employed?

4) Which of the following social media accounts do you have?
5) Which is your main social media account?

- Facebook: 80.14%
- Instagram: 11.30%
- Twitter: 2.10%
- Snapchat: 0.96%
6) How many hours do you spend on social media a day?

7) Do you check social media when you first wake up?
8) Have you ever deactivated social media, if so, why?

- Spent too much time on it
  - For a break
  - Hacked
  - to save time, improve concentration, help sleep
  - Felt I was spending too much time on it & also divorced my iPhone at the same time
  - Stalking exes, spending too much time on them

- Bored with it
  - Break from gossip
  - People talking load of rubbish
  - Because someone was stealing photos, and just being a nuisance
  - To avoid procrastinating
everyone else making your life not feel good enough, others constantly showing off - don't need to see it to make me feel down

I got bored of reading the same things all the time

relationships

Wrong name couldn't change back for 60 days

People posting crap constantly

Never used it

I found I was spending too much time looking at social media, wanted some time away from it

To focus on study

Instagram was hacked

To have a break from it!

Bebo, didn't really see the need for it anymore

During revision for university exam periods

To stop me going on them

Dad told me to in school due to not focusing on school work

Privacy
9) If you were to go without social media, for example - broken phone or no internet access. Would you feel paranoid, isolated, worried or panicked?
10) Do you use your social media accounts to emphasize impression management? Goffman (1959) defines impression management as a process that is purposely for packaging and editing self to distribute positive impressions to others.

11) If you were to post pictures to your social media account - when would you do it?

I rarely post pictures .....if I do I think first and intention is for close friends to see to keep in touch
11) Would you feel satisfied if your picture receives more than 11 likes?

13) Do you often spend time looking at other users accounts wishing your page looked like theirs?
14) Do you think social media portrays reality?

15) Have you ever been travelling overseas for more than two weeks?
16) If yes, did you post a picture to social media?

17) If applicable - When travelling do you feel the NEED to 'check in' or post about it?
18) Has social media made you consider travelling to places you never thought you would?

19) Traveling photographs posted by other users make me jealous. Do you agree with this statement?
Depends where they’ve been travelling. For me anywhere with snow or skiing can make me a bit jealous.

Because I would love to be where they are

Would love to be there

I want to be in the sun

Depending on where they are!

Only makes me jealous because you want a nice holiday

Social media gives you the opportunity to live your life virtually through others. It makes you aspire to do things e.g. Travel, shop, lose weight, change the way we look. In some ways this is a good thing but it is also scary how insecure and jealous it can make you of other people and their lives. When you juxtapose your life with another’s via social media you are suddenly competing to be similar to them and you try and reflect that on all of your social media platforms so that people will then be jealous of you. It's quite a vicious circle if you don't have control over it.

to act like they have a better life

If the picture is of a beautiful place then it would make me want to travel to that place

It makes me want to book more holidays but I'm also happy for people that are exploring the world we live in

Because I don't travel much so seeing others travel makes me jealous

Makes me want to travel again

Because I can't afford a holiday at the moment!

Makes me want to visit the places they’ve been

Makes me want to go abroad

because I would rather be travelling than doing what I'm doing.
20) Have you ever made an overseas travel decision based on social media?

21) Would you like to add any comments?
Instead of interacting with each other when we’re with friends and other people, far too often people are still browsing on their phones when they’re socialising already. It is damaging our communication skills between each other and how we all connect.

Social media places pressure on my daughter that I have never experienced. It is great for connecting with people but it can become compulsive & I love to take a break from it & live in the real world

I do know from close family relationships that many look to portray an image of contentment, happiness and excitement in lives ....and I’m generalising but would suggest females on the whole are far more likely to do this. I also see huge dangers in younger people especially adolescent teens using social media as they often share very emotional feelings positive and negative without understanding impact.

Visited specific attractions in Thailand after seeing them on Instagram

Good study - our generation definitely us influenced by other peoples travelling points, e.g., jealousy or creates an urge to go there too and find new destinations etc...

I often look at check-ins and reviews on social media when deciding where to eat when overseas

Only been abroad twice but just like warm/happy weather x

Instagram has a huge influence on travel. I follow lots of different people that travel and then want to go to the places they do, and feel envious of their lifestyle.

22) Thank you for completing my questionnaire, would you consider participating in a focus group to discuss social media’s influences on Generation Y’s travelling decisions?
Appendix 4
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The influence of social media on the overseas travel choices of Generation Y.

Cardiff Metropolitan University Protocol Number: (if applicable)

Project summary
The purpose of this research is to establish a relationship between social media and the overseas travelling decisions made by Generation Y, using primary data to analyse if this is the main influence that motivates their decision. Your participation will enable the collection of data which will form part of a study being undertaken at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Why have you been asked to participate?
You have been asked to participate because you fit the profile of the target audience that is being studied; that is, you are between the ages of 18 and 30 and have access to social media accounts.

During the focus groups you will be asked about your social media usage, past travelling decisions, motivations and influences. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Project risks
The research involves the completion of a consent form prior to the participation in the focus group interview and which will be recorded for later analysis. We are not seeking to collect any sensitive data on you; this study is only concerned with social media behaviours and the power it has over Generation Y’s travel decisions, and will not discuss any immoderate behaviours. We do not think that there are any significant risks associated with this study. However, if you do feel that any of the questions are inappropriate then you can stop at any time. Furthermore, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time – we will completely respect your decision.

How we protect your privacy
All the information you provide will be held in confidence. We have taken careful steps to make sure that you cannot be directly identified from the information given by you. Your personal details (e.g. signature on the consent form) will be kept in a secure location by the research team. When we have finished the study and analysed all the information, the documentation used to gather the raw data will be destroyed except your signed consent form which will be held securely for 5 years. The recordings of the focus groups will also be held in a secure and confidential environment during the study and destroyed after 5 years.

YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP

If you require any further information about this project, then please contact:
Daisy Magill, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Cardiff Metropolitan University email: st20052697@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk
Appendix 5
Appendix 5 - Example consent form

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Ethics Committee

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on the overseas travel choices of Generation Y.
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

___________________________________________________________________

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [ ]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [ ]

3. I agree to take part in the above study. [ ]

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded [ ]

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [ ] [ ]

6. I would like my organizations’ name to be anonymised in all publications [ ] [ ]

_______________________________________  ___________________
Signature of Participant                                      Date

_______________________________________  ___________________
Name of person taking consent                                Date

____________________________________
Signature of person taking consent
Appendix 6
Appendix 6 - Completed consent forms

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Committee

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on travelling overseas decisions. (Generation Y).
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded [ ]

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

6. I am happy for my details to be used in publications

Signature of Participant

Name of person taking consent

Signature of person taking consent

Date 07/03/2017
Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Committee

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on travelling overseas decisions. (Generation Y).
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [ ]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [ ]

3. I agree to take part in the above study. [ ]

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded [ ] Yes [ ] No

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [ ]

6. I am happy for my details to be used in publications [ ]

Signature of Participant _______________________________ 07/03/17 Date

Name of person taking consent _______________________________ 07/03/17 Date

Signature of person taking consent _______________________________
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on travelling overseas decisions. (Generation Y).
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

Participant to complete this section:  Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

6. I am happy for my details to be used in publications

Signature of Participant: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Name of Participant: Laura Myatt  Date: ___________________________

Signature of person taking consent: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Name of person taking consent: ___________________________
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on travelling overseas decisions. (Generation Y).
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [ ]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [ ]

3. I agree to take part in the above study. [ ]

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded [ ] Yes [ ] No

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [ ]

6. I am happy for my details to be used in publications [ ]

Signature of Participant ________________________________ Date 07/03/16.

Name of person taking consent ________________________________ Date

Signature of person taking consent ________________________________
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on travelling overseas decisions. (Generation Y).
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [V]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [V]

3. I agree to take part in the above study. [V]

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded [V]

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [ ] [V]

6. I am happy for my details to be used in publications [V] [ ]

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date 7/3/17

Name of person taking consent ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Signature of person taking consent ___________________________
Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Committee

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number:
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: The influence of social media on travelling overseas decisions. (Generation Y).
Name of Researcher: Daisy Magill

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the focus group being recorded

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

6. I am happy for my details to be used in publications

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of person taking consent

Signature of person taking consent

Date

7/3/12
## Appendix 7 - Focus group topic list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of the focus group</th>
<th>Discussed</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome all the participants and introduce myself and the project title.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure everyone has signed consent form and copies to the attendees. Remind them about recording systems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) In your opinion do you think social impact upon your daily life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Which is your main social media account? Is it the first thing you check when waking up?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Have you been travelled overseas for more than two weeks? Where? How did you make this decision?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Do you spend time looking at other people’s social media accounts? If so, do you have social media envy? How does this make you feel? i.e. Instagram and wish yours looked like theirs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) When posting your pictures on social media do you post them when most users appear online? If so is this to gain more interactions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Would you make a decision to travel somewhere solely based on what you saw on social media?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) When travelling to a destination would you post about your experiences?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Would it bother you if you did not have access to the internet/social media while travelling?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Do you use impression management on your social media accounts?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) When travelling it can be difficult to find Wi-Fi in some destinations, if you were in this situation would you; Pick a restaurant that had a high quality food but no access to internet/Wi-Fi? Pick a restaurant that had poor quality food but access to internet/Wi-Fi with a high speed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8
Appendix 8 - Focus group transcript

Researcher: in your opinion do you think social media has an impact on your daily life?

Jared: Yeah
Laura: Yes, I agree
Alice: Definitely
Ollie: Yes
Rachel: Yes, I do go on it everyday

Researcher: why do you think it has an impact on your daily life?

Laura: well I use it quite a lot throughout the day, just to keep up to date
Alice: I like to keep in contact with everyone
Jean, Laura, Ollie, Jared: Agree

Researcher: do you think that’s what you use it for mostly?

Alice: probably yeah, I mostly use Facebook messenger, I don’t really text anyone it is all social media, I mainly use snapchat.

Jared to researcher: Does WhatsApp count as social media?

Researcher: I think WhatsApp is a form of social media but not really.

Jared: it’s more texting with a profile photo
Laura, Rach, Jean and Ollie: Yeah it’s not really social media
Jean: they have now added a story though

Researcher: yeah, so would you say it is adapting to be more like social media

Agree

Researcher: which is your main social media?

Ollie: Facebook
Rach Facebook probably yeah

Agree

Jean: Instagram
Laura: Facebook probably yeah, but I do spend a lot of time on Instagram, I don’t really post on Instagram though I just look
Jarred: I spend a lot of time looking through Instagram

Alice: Facebook is more a profile one, the rest I use to be nosey

Laura: I use Facebook to be nosey

Ollie: Facebook is the cool one, Facebook as a bit of everything, whereas Instagram has more pictures

Laura: I rarely post on any of them

Rach: I use Facebook messenger a lot, I have a lot of group chats.

Laura: Agrees

Researcher: would you all agree then that Facebook is your main social media account? Well Jean, you said Instagram?

Alice: I use Snapchat a lot

Rach: yeah I use Snapchat I like to send quick messages to people, I have a lot of conversations through Snapchat rather than Facebook because it is quick

Alice: yeah it is very quick, I just send to my friend like yeah I am having a coffee

Researcher: so you like how it is quick?

All agree

Alice: I also like how it is visual

Researcher: so you prefer the visual?

Rach: yeah I like the visual and especially if you don’t see someone for a long time I like to keep in contact through Snapchat.

Researcher: so would you say you prefer using Snapchat as appose to going on Facebook and reading through posts, you like the picture side of things?

Laura: Yeah

Rach: that’s why I scroll through Instagram more than Facebook

Researcher: do you think you check your social media accounts as soon as you wake up?

Rach: No, I don’t have time in the morning - I look at it when I get in from my day but I don’t do it in the morning

Laura: I do, I will lie there and scroll through them all

Jared, Ollie, Jean: agree

Ollie: takes like 15 minutes in the morning to go through them all

Laura: even if I was still late I would still do it
Researcher: do you make sure you have enough time to go through all your social media before you start your day?

Laura: well I wouldn’t actually plan to schedule time in, but I just do it

Ollie: yeah

Rach: I just don’t think to do it

Researcher: if you weren’t to check it in the morning or went without it for the day would you feel like you’ve missed something, feel paranoid or panicked if you were to go without it?

Jared, Ollie: No

Laura: if I hadn’t been on there for a day I would, you don’t think you would but I suppose you would, I would wonder what’s been going on

Alice: it’s when you lose your phone, you feel lost

Laura: agrees

Alice: like I don’t know what’s going on

Rach: sometimes, I do find it quite nice when I brake or lose my phone and can’t go on social media for a few days you don’t feel so like attached to it

Alice: you do realise that you don’t need it

Rach: yeah you don’t actually need to be on it all the time

Researcher: do you think that’s because you are so used to having it all the time that it is so part of your routine?

Laura, Rach, Alice: Yeah

Researcher: have you ever travelled overseas for more than two weeks and if so where?

Jared: Asia

Alice: yeah, Thailand

Laura: Yeah, Bali

Jean: Yeah, Thailand and Australia

Ollie: America

Jean: Africa

Researcher: how did you make that decision?

Laura: me and my friends we just thought it looked nice, we saw a few pictures of other people that had been going and suppose we must have thought oh that looks nice

Researcher: on social media?
Laura: yeah we saw other people going, we saw people we knew going

Researcher to Jared: how did you make the decision to go to Asia?

Jared: I think South East Asia is one of the ones that people started going to before social media, it’s like the whole backpacking thing – I think when you think of backpacking you think to go without even looking on social media, you don’t really need to, Thailand is like the main backpacking destination

Laura: but you do see everyone going on social media

Jared: yeah but people have been before that, If someone mentioned backpacking you would think South East Asia

Rach: I feel like there was a craze from last year where everyone was going

Laura: ye it was all over social media

Rach: literally everyone was going

Jared: yeah everyone was in Asia at the same time

Alice: ye I saw a lot of people in Asia, I was there the same time as a few people

Rach: I think people influence each other to go

Ollie: you see pictures of beautiful places and you’re like ye I want to go, I want to see that myself

Researcher: do you think it creates trends then?

Rach: yeah definitely

Laura, Ollie, Jared and Alice: yeah

Researcher: do you spend time looking at other peoples social media accounts? Do you have any social media envy’s?

Laura: ye, skinny girls

Rach: I stalk a lot of people but I wouldn’t say I am envious of anyone on there

Alice: I think I am – when I see someone is away

Laura: yeah I am

Rach: I guess when people are travelling then yeah

Ollie: when someone has a good Instagram I am

Rach: when people have gone all round the world and done loads of stuff

Laura: I follow loads of people who are travelling, I suppose it’s to get ideas where to go

Alice: yeah
Researcher: do you ever wish your social media pages looked like theirs?
Laura: I’m not so bothered what my page looks like, I just want to do what they are doing
Jared, Ollie, jean, Alice: agree

Researcher: when posting your pictures on social media do you post them when most users appear to be online?
Laura: no
Alice: I feel like I do
Rach: I know a lot of people that do
Ollie: 6-7 I would

Researcher: you would post your pictures at 6 or 7?
Ollie: I feel like it would get like, I know it’s stupid but if you want to get a lot of likes that is when I would post
Jared: everyone always does it when they think most people will see it, you wouldn’t wake up first thing in the morning and post an album on Facebook
Ollie: I have probably taken a photograph at night then waited the next day to post it like 6 or 7.

Researcher: if you were travelling then and you took loads of pictures would you post them when the home time zone or just whenever?
Ollie: just whenever
Rach: I don’t think I would work it out in my head
Ollie: yeah especially with the time difference stuff and that

Researcher: so as you said, you post at that time is that just to gain more interactions?
Alice: it sounds really stupid
Ollie: yeah it is really stupid, but yeah

Researcher: would you make a decision to travel somewhere solely based on what you saw on social media?
Laura: yeah I would – if it looked nice
Rach: yeah
Jared: no
Laura: if I saw a picture and was oh that looks nice, well yeah
Rach: yeah if I had never thought of going there before
Ollie: it’s probably an initial, the starting point
Jared: yeah but you have to research things like money
Ollie: it’s definitely where it starts though
Laura: oh yeah other stuff definitely come into it, like when I went to Bali I seen oh that’s looks good, so I went t
Alice: yeah that’s what we did with Thailand
Laura: it’s not because other people are going
Researcher: so your decision to go to Bali was mainly because of social media?
Laura: ye because I had seen other people go, not because of the people that went but because I saw pictures on social media and it looked nice – so we went yeah
Researcher: when you travel to a destination would you post about your experience?
Laura, Ollie: yeah
Researcher: do you feel like you have to?
Everyone: no
Ollie: I want to
Rach: I usually rely on other people to check me in or tag me in it
Researcher: do you think when you post about your experiences on social media, it is concrete proof of you’ve been there?
Or – would you feel like it hasn’t happened if you didn’t post.
Laura: no I don’t think so, I’m not fussed on making sure everyone knows I went
Jean: it has more to do with memories
Laura: ye
Rach: ye
Alice: it’s more about sharing them with your family and friends
Jared: depends where you have to store them – I had to upload mine because of the low storage on my phone and if didn’t put them up I would forget about them
Laura: in a way though, it is for everyone to see
Rach: I like to show my family, like when I go away people always say to me make sure you post some pictures
Alice: yeah they want to see you
Ollie: deep down though, I think it’s a bit more about showing off – look where I am kind of thing
Laura: well yeah it is, if you think about it yeah it is
Researcher: so do you think people use their social accounts then to emphasize impression management, Goffman (1959) describes impression management as a process for editing strategically manipulating and self
Alice: to make yourself look good?
Researcher: yeah – so basically – editing your images to give an impression to others
Rach: yeah definitely
Ollie: yeah people do that
Laura: suppose that’s the whole point of social media
Alice: yeah especially Instagram with all the filters you are actually editing to make it look better
Laura: yeah maybe not so much Facebook but definitely Instagram
Jared: yeah
Laura: Instagram is basically look what I’m doing
Ollie: it’s very visual yeah and hashtags so more people see it
Laura: Facebook is more about family and friends
Ollie: Snapchat has got that whole filter and added location to show people where you are
Alice: yeah the location option
Researcher: do you think you do that with your social media accounts?
Ollie: probably a bit
Laura: I’m awful, I hardly ever post
Rach: yeah same, I always forget
Laura: I don’t think I do – because I rarely post but I do look at others and think they do
Alice: when I was travelling I was filtering all my photos although it was grey skies I wanted to make it look like it was sunny – I actually made it have a blue sky, I don’t know how I did, but I did
Researcher: was that using Instagram?
Alice: yeah and it feels really stupid when you admit to it, but like yeah, trying too hard to make it look like it wasn’t as miserable as it was
Laura: you don’t want anyone to think you’re having a bad holiday?
Alice: exactly

Researcher: I do appreciate your honesty.

When you are travelling then does it bother you if you don’t have access to the internet or social media?

Jared: no

Rach: no I quite like it

Alice: well my phone broke when we were in Thailand and really struggled, I had it for the first few weeks and then it broke

Rach: I suppose then you literally had no contact?

Alice: yeh I had no contact with anyone at home

Researcher: was that your main reason? Or was it because you couldn’t post things while you were in Thailand? Or a bit of both

Alice: it wasn’t that I couldn’t post things, but I didn’t have a phone so I couldn’t take pictures to post things,

Laura: I will connect to Wi-Fi when I’m away but it’s more to speak to people to stay in contact

Rach, jean: yeah

Rach: I like to have a break

Researcher: would you say you post your photographs post trip then?

Laura: yeah

Alice: actually, I did borrow someone’s phone to take photographs when travelling so I could then post them to Instagram

Ollie: yeah when I was in Amsterdam I purposely went into coffee shops to connect to their Wi-Fi

Alice: yeah

Ollie: I would connect so I could post a picture to Instagram or upload some pictures on snapchat

Researcher: when you are travelling then and there was a café that sold great food, but no Wi-Fi or okish food and great Wi-Fi, and there was hardly no Wi-Fi around which would you choose?

Jean, Jared, Laura, Rach: Good food

Laura: I wouldn’t go to that extent

Jared: when I was in Asia I chose good food

Alice: good food yeah, but Wi-Fi is nice
Alice: If I was going to stay in a hostel that was great but had no Wi-Fi and a hostel that was okish but had good Wi-Fi I would have to reconsider Wi-Fi, but that’s because you do not have Wi-Fi all the time so wherever I’m staying I would like to have it

Researcher: do you all own a smartphone?

All: yes

Researcher: When travelling did you stay in hostels and hotels that were all social media friendly?

Jared: some

Alice: some places yeah

Jared: depends how big they were, the more big ones and commercialized ones in south of Thailand had like us on Facebook but other places not so much

Laura: some places stayed in when travelling were a dive

Jared: more like the most popular ones other things that are based around attractions like the full moon party in Thailand like us on this

Rach: when I went to Amsterdam, everywhere had a page, there link on the wall

Ollie: you usually have to like them on Facebook before joining their Wi-Fi

Researcher: when meeting people when travelling did you connect with them through social media and why/

Jared: yeah

Laura: yeah

Jared: yeah it’s a way to connect easy without having to stay in constant contact – if you exchange numbers and don’t text you’ll never speak to them again but when having them on social media you an kin of interact with them it’s not too much either like “hi how are you?”

Laura: yeah I have people on my Facebook from when I went

Alice: and also people may move to paces that you are going to travel in the next few days

Jared: and recommendations

Alice: and they may have done something cool that then you can do

Researcher: so that’s like word of mouth so do you think like the electronic word of mouth is very influential

Alice, Laura: definitely

Researcher: solely social media, could you just trust the reviews of there?
Alice: not even just reviews though – I know you can edit your pics but actually seeing pics of somewhere or said food is really good here I would go and they put a picture of it up like

Laura: I think it’s better than looking online you get more of a personal opinion

Alice: and it can be off someone you don’t even know

Jared: well I think they can only be influential if you know the person or if you have met them, if you meet someone in one place and gone somewhere else – id be like ah yeah id go there because I met them, if you are just searching on social media I wouldn’t go because they only post the best parts of it

Alice: yeah

Laura: I still do though – if I want to go somewhere I will look on social media and see if people have been there and keep looking where they have been and what they did when they were there

Researcher: do you believe people just post the best bits?

Laura: well yeah

Jared: definitely ye

Alice: even if it’s like horrible places

Researcher: even if they post just the best bits then, is it still influential you to make the same decisions?

- For example then, you’re going somewhere and just posting the best bits but it could have been not as good and I’m making it out to be and you probably know that would you still make the decision?

Laura: no because I don’t actually think you think about that when you are looking at other peoples pictures, you don’t think oh that must have bad parts as well

Jared: I do

Rach: I would do research on top of that before I made a decision

Researcher: so even though you do believe they are not just the best bits where the pictures are, when you visualize them you don’t think about that bad parts?

Laura: yeah definitely

Researcher: you are just drawn into the pictures thinking it’s all good?

Laura: yeah

Jared: no, I disagree, because you know that just through general life you just post the best pictures you can go and have a shit day somewhere and you can post one picture and make out like it is great
Unless, I knew the person and they posted a picture, I would ask them more about the trip because I knew they would be honest with me and a backup behind the picture – if it was someone else who I just kind of knew or seen randomly I would be like nah and I wouldn’t trust it, I wouldn’t go off that because I know they just pick the best images.

Rachel: yeah

Ollie: everyone is a pinch of salt on social media, as much as it shows you what it is like it is not the full picture you have to research it further otherwise you may waste money.

Jared: in Chaing-Mai, I put loads of pictures up and half the time it was raining but other users are like oh that’s great and they wouldn’t be wrong but at the same time they didn’t realize how bad the weather was.

Researcher: you wouldn’t say it reflects reality then?

Jared: oh no

Laura: I know it doesn’t

Ollie: nobody will tell you the terrible time they had.

Alice: they only post the great sides.

Laura: that’s the same with everything though.

Ollie: yeah

Researcher: do you think our generation does think it reflects reality? Because of growing up with technology and they are soaked into it?

Jared: yeah, depends how switched on they are.

Rah: it’s a big part of their lives isn’t it, younger people love social media.

Laura: sometimes you do though, you look at people’s lives and think they are happy and really good life, then find out the truth and think oh I didn’t know that because it wasn’t shown on social media.

Rach: yeah you do yeah

Laura: sub-concisely yeah, relationships for example, you think they are perfect, and they are split up the next week.

Jean: and you are really shocked.

Laura: just because of what they post on social media.

Researcher: have you ever deactivated any of your social media?

Ollie, Alice, rah, jean, Laura: no

Jared: yeah
Why?

Jared: Few times, firstly, while traveling because I wanted to disconnect and have more fun there so I deleted it for around a month, and then in December 2016, I deleted for 3 week because I found I was often getting jealous over another user, I was on it at times when I shouldn’t of been like before bed meaning I would wake up late or I will be on it instead of getting ready or I would be on it and end up missing the bus so I would be late again.

Researcher: so it was having an impact on your life? Making you late? Effecting your routine?

Jared: yeah, it’s not healthy

Researcher: does anyone else feel like that? Like they have to make time for it?

Rach: not really, if I have time to go on it I will, like sitting in front of the TV then I will go on it, that’s probably the only time I go on it, during the day I will reply to chats on Facebook but I won’t scroll through the newsfeed.

Alice: it’s when you are doing nothing

Jared: I also deactivated it because people don’t realize how much time they spend on it, even if you go on it for 5 minutes in the morning then 15 minutes waiting for the bus before you now it you’ve been on it for over two hours on one day.

Laura: I got an app once and it told you how much time you spend on different social media accounts

Ollie: yeah, hours and hours

Jared: I was on it a lot, it would add up to hours

Researcher: how many hours do you think you would spend on it then?

Laura: more than two hours

Ollie: probably four hours a day

Laura: when I sit down and watch TV I hardly even watch it

Rachel: to be fair, I don’t either

Ollie: I’m always on my phone going through stuff

Rach: not interested on the TV

Laura: it’s a bit sad really

Agree

Researcher: would you ever delete your posts or pictures if it did not receive enough likes?

Ollie: ye, I have done it

Researcher: so what would be not enough likes?
Ollie: I don’t know, it used to be 11 likes and it would change from names to a love heart on Instagram, so I would give it 24 hours and if it didn’t, I would delete it

Rachel: I don’t, but I do admit that I am gutted when I don’t get likes, I prefer it when it is in double figures

Researcher: do you feel satisfied when it receives a high enough likes?

All agree

Alice; you are always buzzing aren’t you!

Rach, Laura, Jared, Ollie, and jean: yeah

Rach: I have 11 likes now, wow

Alice: when I change my profile picture and it gets lots of likes it stays there forever

Alice: it’s stupid though isn’t it?

Laura: I know, I know

Jared: people revise the pictures too much, like when I post one, I may look at it again the next day and be like no I don’t like it, maybe I was just having a good day that picture is not nice

Ollie: if you see a photo and then like next day you see the same photo again some users delete them and then put them back up to get more likes – you catch them out

Alice: people do it all the time

Researcher: just to get more likes?

All: yeah

Rach: I like it’s like a social acceptance thing

Ollie: yeah

Alice: yeah, if you get a lot of likes it makes you happy, If I post something and it gets no likes, I feel bad, all your family and all your friend why aren’t they liking my photo?

Rach: yeah, why can’t they like it!

Alice: I get my friends messaging me like, can you like my picture on social media?

Rach: yeah

Alice: people always ask me

Jared: yeah

Researcher: do any of you ever do that?

Jared: yes, I’ve done it before
Alice: sometimes yeah

Ollie: yeah

Jared: or if I see a friend that has hardly no likes, I’ll give them a like

Rach, Laura: yeah

Rach: if I see any of my friends on my news feed no matter what it is, I will just like it

Alice: when I see my friends post on Instagram I just like it straight away, no matter what it is – bad isn’t it? Moral support though

Researcher: do you think people will still make travelling decisions without social media?

All: yeah

Jared: travelling has been around much longer than social media

Laura: I think a lot of people go traveling because of social media

Researcher: why do u think that is?

Laura: like we said, people just put up the best bits, so when you see someone travelling, it looks amazing – a lot better than it actually is – so why would you not want to go do that? But then it’s not as true as there is a lot of bad parts

Rachel: I think people don’t realize how easy it is to go travelling they see people they know going travelling and think if they can do that then so can I

Alice: you are more exposed to it

Laura: if everyone else is doing it then you are missing out

Alice: yeah like why can’t I go?

Ollie: it’s gone from when everyone used to looks at catalogues to now researching on social media

Jean: I still do

Ollie: it’s a new form of seeing where to go, it’s moving on it’s an easier way you don’t have to leave the house

Alice: ye you can sit in bed

Ollie: yeah just relax and research holidays

Researcher: jean, you still use catalogs then? Not social media?

Jean: well I do to some extent, but I often look at catalogs first

Rach: yes, I think it would influence my decision but I would definitely do more research
Researcher: do you think people would still make these decisions if they didn’t have somewhere to brag about it?

Jared: yeah

Ollie: yeah

Rach: you do get some people I suppose

Jared: say that again

Researcher: so say someone makes a travelling decision to post about it all over social media

Jared: they go on purpose

Rach: yeah I know people who definitely do

Alice: me too, I know people who do

Rach: you go to attractions and you see it full of people just constantly taking photographs, not doing anything else and they won’t even talk to each other – they are obviously doing that for social media

Alice: yeah I remember when I went on a trip in Koh-Panghang and there was these girls and literally just took pictures the whole time like water ark stuff – they didn’t interact in the activities just taking hundreds of photos, on the bus back they spent the whole time editing their pictures and yeah they did look amazing but..

Rach: surely they had no fun?

Alice: it was the weirdest thing

Researcher: do you think people forget about their behaviour off camera?

Alice: yeah definitely

Jared: yeah when I was travelling people constantly had selfie sticks, taking part but at the same time just holding this stick, they are have heartedly doing it

Ollie: like its set up

Rach: I feel like people do just do certain things for social media

Laura, Alice: they do

Researcher: to finish then, do you think social media is the main influence in generation y’s travelling decisions?

Jared: depends on the person

Ollie: I think it’s a starting point

Laura: yeah I do

Alice: I think it has an influence over most decisions
Jared: as a majority I would agree so yeah
Laura: yeah
Researcher: any other comments? Thank you all so much.

**End of focus group**