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Abstract

Centennials have grown up in the time of the internet, smartphone and as a result have been targeted differently by holiday accommodations. The most popular approach taken by these locations is targeting centennials by using Instagram influencers. An Instagram influencer is a new concept and hence as be termed "social media celebrity", in the sense they attract young social media users to follow them and they share their lives online. This is a similar approach to celebrity endorsement that has been around for years, and has been researched with emotions and beliefs of the consumer explored in depth. However the influencer is relative new and no such study has been undertaken on how they impact the consumer, centennials in particular. This has opened a gap in the theory.

The main purpose of this study is to explore Instagram influencers as a promotional strategy for holiday accommodations through the eyes of a centennials customer. Emphasis will be placed on topics such as co – creation, trust and credibility while understanding the impact the influencers can have on the purchase intentions of these holiday accommodations.

Five in depth interviews were carried with Irish Centennials, who enjoy travelling and would be frequent users of Instagram. An interpretivist, inductive research approach was used through the study in an attempt to obtain a true insight and understanding into the participants feelings and views of the subject. A thematic approach was taken when analysing the data. The findings displayed that Centennials had an ingrained distrust of influencers and would quicker rely on user generated content. However interestingly each participant spoke to the impact influencers had on their consternation set. The findings pointed to a possible larger longitudinal study to be completed to fully understand the topic.

Acknowledgements

This journey has been challenging much like the year the world has suffered, it was a wonderful experience to spend it around great people both staff and students and without certain people this work never would have been completed. On the note, I would like to mention the following people.

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1.Introduction

In the last number of years the rise in comparison price websites for holiday accommodations has interestingly gone hand in hand with the rise of Instagram influencers. Instagram influencers are the new promotional strategy on the block using so called "social media celebrities", (Jin et al, 2018).to target members of the generation z as they try book a holiday with their friends. These comparison websites offer a supposedly honest review of the hotel, while influencers are used to target centennials directly. The question will be asked do you trust either with your money and holiday, while the study explores the impact of the influencer on the purchase intention of the centennial, are they willing to hand over their money on one person's opinion? . Ketrin and Szilárd (2020) suggest that influencers can " appear approachable and credible in the eyes of followers because they allow insight into their daily lives, making it easier for people to empathize with them". This will be put to the test as the researcher will conduct five in depth interviews to gather the thoughts and opinions of Irish Centennials on the topic.

These interviews will be analysed in a thematic approach to gain further insight into their opinions, and the researcher will present their findings from the interviews and discuss them in relation to the current literature and future studies.

1.1Justification for Research

Justification for this research can be found in the fact Instagram influencers have never been defined through the lens of impact of purchase intention on centennials or impact of purchase intention on centennials for holiday accommodation.

While the articles below are of similar nature they explore through different lens and explore in different directions.

1. Modelling the Impact of Social Media Influencers on Behavioural Intentions of Millennials: The Case of Tourism in Rural Areas in Greece - Chryssoula Chatzigeorgiou 2017

2. **Disclosing Instagram Influencer Advertising: The Effects of Disclosure Language on Advertising Recognition, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intent – Nathaniel J. Evans- 2017**

2.Literature Review

2.1 Online Intermediates

The growth of online intermediates has resulted in the change to the way tourist destinations are marketed. User generated content has increased as a result of this growth and in turn has moved the marketing goalposts for the hotel industry from simply promoting a product to having deliver a top standard service from the moment information search, right through to purchase itself and the use of the service. Miguens et al, 2008 suggest that "online social travel networking is changing the way tourists plan their trips", they continue to highlight this by indicating that websites such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Trivago, etc "allow users to interact and provide reviews on hotels or on local tourist attractions".

2.2 The Digital Customer

Miguens et al, 2008 speak to the initial growth of Web 2.0 which they describe as leaving "traditional operators facing a new consumer", they comment on how these "new consumers" are tech savvy and "can easily access information", amongst other uses such as "share their own views , comments and suggestions in an informal and collaborative way, increasing the value and influence powers determinants of choice". Miguens et al, 2008 elude to the idea that hotel destinations aren't the sole creators of content around their destination in recent times, that through co-creation and user generated content customers have a larger role to play in the marketing of the destinations than in previous era's. Ayeh et al 2013, comment how the increase of user generated content is a positive development for hotels and other holiday accommodations, while citing Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008 along with Chung and Bihalis, 2008, they suggest that "since non-commercial information is perceived to be more objective and credible, consumers tend to regard information from their peers as more trustworthy", while holding no allegiance to the hotel if a customer shares positive reviews about their experience it is theorised that future potential consumer will trust these reviews more because they believe it is the content generators own personal opinion on their experience. The risk for the hotel is the posting of negative comments and that more than likely people won't post positive comments as quickly as they will post negative ones.

2.3 Online Intermediates Trust

Despite this perceived trust , credibility and fairness of user generated content Ayeh et al, 2013 explains in recent times these "online intermediates" such as TripAdvisor have been in trouble. They explain how in 2011 The Times newspaper reported how TripAdvisor allegedly contained "nearly 27,000 legally defamatory reviews", while the UK's Advertising Standards Authority warned TripAdvisor and similar sites "not to claim or imply that all their reviews are honest and trustworthy." Shortly after this TripAdvisor "removed all references to the term trust from its UK homepage". This goes to highlight that despite the perceived level of authenticity of user generated content that there is policing whether or not the information is accurate and if it even applies to the readers situation.

2.4 User Generated Content

Casais et al, 2020 support Miguens et al, 2008 in this line of thinking by suggesting that "peer to peer online platforms have created new business models and brought changes in the way customers feel and express experiences". The growth in these "peer to peer online platforms" as lead to an increase in both co creation and user generated content. This could also be attributed to the theory that the customer is the sole decider in the value in use of a product or service, which was first coined by Vargo and Lusch, 2004.

Williams 2006 suggested that tourism marketing was not focused on the consumer and what the consumer wanted to see but instead the "destination or outlet, with marketing strategies being related to the products offered". Williams hints that by solely marketing the tangible aspects of the destination that marketers are not directly showing the value of the hotel to the consumer. All destinations offer the same basic level of tangible items i.e. beds, rooms and bathrooms, while some offer spas and pools amongst other things. But by purely listing or highlighting the tangible products of the destination is of no use to the customer. The customer needs to be told how these tangible items will add value to their stay. Williams offer suggests that "purchase decisions are made on the basis of projected and perceived images, rather than prior experience". Miguens et al, 2008 offer up a theory that as a result of this growing practice of the customer deciding the value in use, "all tourism businesses are thus facing the need to implement strategies and tools (websites or portals) based on user generated contents or, at least, to incorporate these new technologies to enrich their multimedia contents".

As a result this change in the thought process of hotel destinations and their marketing department has seen an increase in the use of experiential strategies being used in hotels to market the perceived value they can offer to the consumer. Castañeda García et al., 2018 argue that "business strategies based on consumer experience in today's market have become a source of competitive differentiation as they provide the possibility of creating a unique brand by nurturing participation and an emotional link with the consumer", this understanding is similar to Berry et al, 2002, Meyer and Schwager, 2007 and Pentina et al 2011. While citing both Hoffman et al, 2012 and Tinsley and Tinsley, 1986, Castañeda García et al, 2018 summarise that "the experiential dimension of tourism, in fact, has seen a great boom due to its link to nurturing the psychological well-being of tourists and their personal development". As marketers we can only offer perceived value as it is the customer who decides on the real value in use of the service.

2.5 Value in Use

This is a theory of "value in use" and "co-creation" that was first offered by Vargo and Lusch, 2004 which states "Value is perceived and determined by the consumer on the basis of value in use. Value results from the beneficial application of operant resources sometimes transmitted through operand resources. Firms can only make value propositions". While citing Gronroos and Voima, 2013, Casais et al, 2020 updates Vargo and Lusch and ads to it by indicating the value of co-creation which Vargo and Lusch offer "demonstrates that the marketing value is co-created by the customer in the process of service consumption. The output from the interactions of all actors of service provision is an opportunity to co – create value".

Casais et al, 2020, offers some perspective on Vargo and Lusch's theory in relation to the hotel industry they suggest that "tourist involvement in co-creation process has reflection in satisfaction and loyalty since customers feel that their participation is active and valued".

These value propositions are co-created between the hotel themselves and the previous customers in the form of posts, reviews and recommendations made online especially in the modern digital world. These value propositions are created in the form of destination imagine to convey what the hotel has to over from the business side and the co creations is utilized when

the current or past customers share their previous experience and give their opinion on the value of the service they experienced.

By using and promoting co-creation hotel destinations can impact consumers purchase intentions which are defined as the consumers "plan to buy a good or attain a service. It refers to the desire of a customer to buy a particular product of a certain brand", (Shahid et al., 2017). Shahid et al. also suggest that there are four different internal and/or external facts that influence consumers purchase intentions. These are Triggers, Outcome Expectation, Recommendation and Personal Association. In particular to the tourism industry, recommendations and outcome expectations are mostly to be considered from this industries marketing perspective. Electronic word of mouth or co-creation, are recommendations in this sense, this has been added by the growth in social media sites as mentioned above. Outcome expectations have grown by the increase of user generated content which again is down to the growth in social media sites in recent years.

The importance of recommendations and outcome expectations has led to an increase in demand for tourist generated content, or user generated content, to which Bigne et al, 2019 illustrates that because tourist generated content is viewed as more organic it is seen to have "higher credibility than other induced agents such as the information provided by destination marketing organisations". While concluding Bigne et al, 2019 cites Mak, 2017 and indicates the "combination of credibility and accessibility makes tourist generated content a powerful medium for shaping a destinations online image"

The idea of destination image through the increase of user generated content is discussed by Shuqair et al 2017. While citing pervious work by Hautz et al, 2014 and Munar, 2011, Shuqair et al 2017 insist that the rise in social media sites has questioned whether businesses should be the "sole creators of marketing messages", which Williams, 2006 eluded to earlier on. Munar, 2011 contributes to this theory which is later added to by Hautz et al, 2014 by confirming that the business is no longer exclusively responsible for generating marketing content of the business but it is shared "equally by users", which Munar, 2011, conveys to be "highlighting

the potential relative impact of user generated content towards destination image formation in a travel or tourism context".

This is similar to what Williams 2006 was suggesting that purchase intentions are based off of "projected and perceived images", which can be aided by user generated content in the form of both social media posts and co-creation. It is worth noting that holiday destinations don't need to move away from utilising their own marketing communications by should just encourage and promote the co-creation through user generated content in the form of online reviews and social media posts. Negative reviews should also be encouraged as not everything will be perfect the whole time but it is important for consumers to see that the destinations cares enough to address these issues as they arise. De Pelsmacker et al, 2018 comments how electronic word of mouth, or co creations, have "a profound effect on attitudes and buyer behaviour", while they suggest it also holds extra importance for experience products and services.

2.5.1 The Experience

Experience goods refers go products or services that cannot be judged prior to purchase, while we can see previous customers experience we can't foresee how we will experience the service as everyone will have an unique opinion and expectation of the service, for example, Hotels, doctors and haircuts. While citing Casalo et al, 2015, Zhao et al, 2015 and Ye et al, 2011, they agree and conclude that in such scenarios co-creation and user generated content allows previous consumers to share their past experience in the form of online reviews, with all of the authors suggesting that this format "provides information from a source that is perceived as more independent and trustworthy than company information". This suggestion holds water as the pervious consumer holds no loyalty to the business and is not paid to share their reviews so they are honest feedback. This provides the new users with accurate feedback and can easily persuade the new consumer towards using the service or not. De Pelsmacker et al, 2018 suggest that these types of recommendations can persuade a new customers purchase intention. Casais et al, 2020, stresses the importance of not only encouraging user generated content but acting on it, they explain that user generated content is "considered valuable insights to improve quality and understand satisfaction. They discuss the importance of encouraging user generated content in the form of online reviews adding that "besides giving new ideas about the business,

online reviews promote electronic word of mouth, showing satisfaction and dissatisfaction through user generated contents".

2.6 Centennials

Given the emphasis being placed on the digital platforms through user generated content and co-creation it is only natural that this channel of communication is directed towards to centennials. This move to using social media as a platform for marketing communications has led to more direct marketing towards centennials which McGorry, 2017 pushes by stating they are "hyper connected on social media" while also suggesting they "have grown up with smartphones in their hands", which is suggesting that centennials have grown up in a digital world and have placed more trust in digital communications than other forms of marketing communications.

There are contrasting viewpoints across academia as to when Generation Z/ Centennials as a group were formed.

Bencisk, Juhasz and Machova, 2017 are of the view that members of this generation were born after the year 1996, in contrast to this Iorgulescu, 2016 argues that the first members of this generation were born in 2000. While Panwar and Mehta, 2019 give their broad approximation and convey that they believe members of this generation were born between 1995 and 2015. Taking this into account, this study will define Generation Z as being born after 1995 similar to what Rejón-Guardia et al, 2018 states when they suggest "the next generation of tourist consumers born after 1995". According to the latest Central Statistics Office report in 2016 there are 331,208 people aged between 19 and 24 currently living in Ireland, which is where the study will chose its sample for research from.

2.7 Digital Natives

As alluded to earlier by McCorry, 2017 generation z are seen as digital natives having grown up in an era that coincided with the innovation and continued growth of the internet and social media networks. Singh and Dangmei, 2016 describe generation z members as having an "informal, individual and straight way of communicating and social networking is a vital part of their lives", they continue to highlight that "technology is a part of their identity and they are tech savvy", they summarise their description of this generation by saying "they are born and raised in the digital world and what distinguishes them from other generation is that their existence is more connected to electronics and digital world". Williams and Page, 2011 Tell us that "generation z values authenticity and realness", while stating they are influenced by "new media, virtual friends and the power that comes with technology". As a result of this it makes perfect sense that as marketers we use digital platforms and social media websites to communicate our advertising with this generation.

2.8 Rise in Social Media

Duffett, 2017 describes how social media has grown because of websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which allows users to "create personalized online pages, communicate and interact with friends as well as exchange content that they have created themselves". This facility to publish personal videos and content has lend itself to the rise in social media influencers and in particular Instagram influencers. Jin et al (2018) compares social media influencers whom they describe as "Social media celebrities refer to individuals who became famous via their social media presence", to more "traditional celebrities who are famous from film, music and TV shows". Centennials and other social media users feel as if they can relate to these influencer's more because they are seen as more credibly and share their own opinion and experience on goods/services they use which helps them gain more respect from their followers/fans. Ketrin and Szilárd (2020) suggest that influencers can be seen as opinion leaders and state that "unlike celebrities, opinion leaders may appear approachable and credible in the eyes of followers because they allow insight into their daily lives, making it easier for people to empathize with them". Jin et al 2018, convey the growth and importance of having influencers on the same side of your business by concluding "When studying the effects of this new type of celebrities, it has been found that consumers have a stronger connectedness toward them and they perceive them as more authentic". Despite the notion that people are more likely

to believe and trust these "social media celebrities", given the rise of "fake news" being posted online in recent years and months people are becoming more sceptical of what influencers post and whether they are receiving anything in return for their positive posts in relation to their destination. Aldwairi and Alwahedi, 2018 describe fake news as "fictitious articles deliberately fabricated to deceive readers", they highlight it has always been around but in the modern day with social media it has become more rampant as users struggle to decipher between honesty and truth in contrast to the lies and misrepresentation of "fake news". Centennials grew up during the expansion of social media and as a result they are more aware of the dangers of fake news but this doesn't stop them from being subject to subtle pieces of fake news in the form of unidentified sponsored posts.

Lou and Yuan, 2018 tell us that an social media influencer and especially Instagram influencers are "content generators", whom "has cultivated a sizeable number of captive followers". These influencers in turn attract the attention of brands to promote their products or services to their loyal followers in return for either payment or free gifts, the influencers then tell their followers about how great the brand is, in an attempt to grow the brands profit. The question can be asked is this fake news, does the influencer truly believe in the brand or are they just doing it for their own benefit while misleading their loyal followers. Furthermore do the followers believe the influencer is being honest, or does it even impact their purchase intentions of said brand, this is of course subjective and is down to each individuals beliefs, but the question must be asked. Clearly it has some level of impact on people or the brand just wouldn't waste their money and time, but how many? Are people really that gullible, do they do everything these so called "social media celebrities" tell them to do or do they just use this brand cause they have got to see it in action and now trust the brand.

2.9 Influencer Marketing

According to Maoz, 2018 "influencer marketing grew by 198% in 2017", which shows its perceived value from a marketers point of view. In a similar time frame "sponsored posts on Instagram doubled to more than 1.5 million between 2016 and 2017", (Lee and Kim,2020). While referring to Erkan and Evans, 2016, Lee and Kim, 2020 express that "influencers are integrating a more detailed description of their experience with the product to influence their followers on the purchase decision making process". Lee and Kim, 2020 turn to Keller, 2005 when they discuss the credibility of influencer marketing, together they highlight "as

influencers add value to a brand, product, or service influencer credibility has been regarded as the most essential antecedent to advertising effectiveness". Lee and Kim, 2020 also suggest that the relationship between source credibility and persuasion effects is yet to be investigated "in the context of promotional posting, especially on social media", which further validates this study as while the topics have been researched this relationship has yet to be defined.

Lee and Kim, 2020 illustrate that "source credibility has been suggested as a predominant predecessor of attitude towards an advertisement and eventually, advertising effectiveness". Again Lee and Kim, 2020 turn to previous work by Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999 and Sternthal et al, 1978 when they indicate that previous studies have found a relationship between source credibility and "consumers attitudes toward advertising and purchase intentions". Similar to credibility, customers hold influencers to high standards with regards to trust which Lou and Yuan, 2018 indicates when they, cite Swant,2016 saying "consumers may accord social media influencers a similar level of trust as they hold for their friends", but given the rise in fake news and the rise in the volume influencers are consumers becoming more wary of them and feel they are less authentic? While little theory exists around this topic there is most definitely a gap here that can be explored and will be a research objective of this study.

As shown above when Ketrin and Szilárd (2020) suggest that influencers can be seen as opinion leaders and state that "unlike celebrities, opinion leaders may appear approachable and credible in the eyes of followers because they allow insight into their daily lives, making it easier for people to empathize with them". Jin et al 2018, convey the growth and importance of having influencers on the same side of your business by concluding "When studying the effects of this new type of celebrities, it has been found that consumers have a stronger connectedness toward them and they perceive them as more authentic". People trust and believe in influencers because they have similar interests and are seen to be more reachable and in touch with the individual consumer, however with the rise in fake news it is possible that this trust and authenticity has dropped as people can see that there is the argument that these influencers are looking out for their bank balance instead of the interests of their loyal following. During the first lockdown in Ireland many influencers left the country to go to Dubai where they continued to promote their products which caused a stir as they were telling people to purchase products while flouting the rules because they saw themselves as celebrities. (Extra.ie)

This study aims to bridge the gap between the perceived impact of influencers and what the generation z consumer actually thinks an influencer is and what impact they have on them.

3.Research Question

Following on from the above literature review and the above noted gap in understanding this study will aim to answer the question, *The Impact of Instagram Influencers on the Purchase Intention of Generation Z for Holiday Accommodation.*

3.1 Research Objections

Within the overall research question the researcher will use research objectives defined by Saunders et al, 2016 as "clear, specific statements that identify what the researcher wishes to accomplish as a result of doing the research". Following from this explanation the research objectives are as follows;

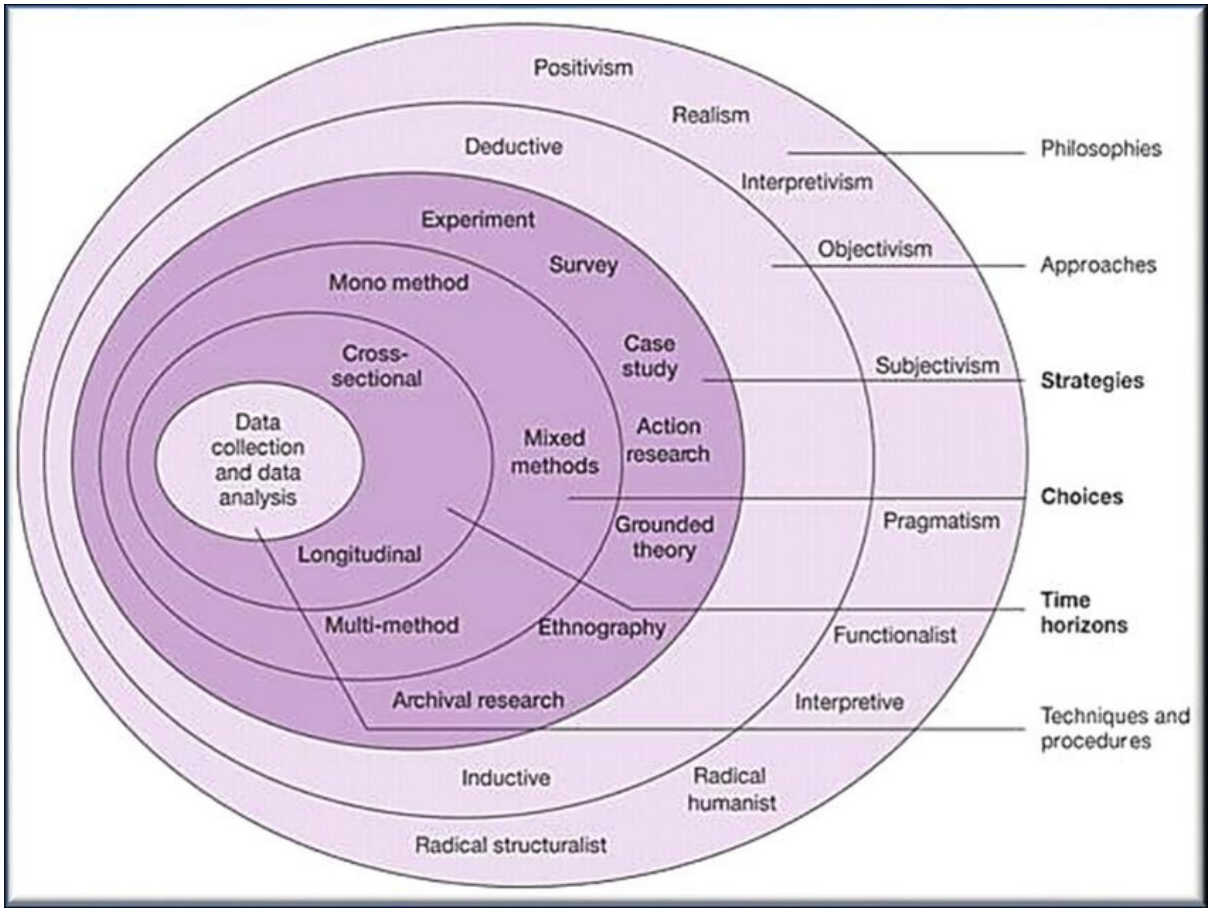
1. To discover whom generation z follow on Instagram outside of friends and family
2. To understanding where generation z gathers their information on holiday accommodations.
3. To understand whether generation z listen more to user generated content in the forms of reviews or Instagram influencers.
4. To understand what impact Instagram influencers have on the purchase intention for members of generation z.

4.Research Methodology

4.1 Methodology Introduction

This section will convey the methods and philosophy used to gather and interpret the data of an individual's emotions and opinions towards the impact a Instagram influencer has on them as a consumer when it comes to the purchase intentions of holiday accommodation for generation z within an qualitative manner.

To assist the objectives of this study the researcher will follow the methodology termed the Research Onion, Saunders et al 2015, to provide the research with structure in its systematic approach. Saunders et al speak about how the model is designed to assist researchers in selecting the correct method to collect their data, one which will enrich their results. They suggest that while "how you collect your data belongs in the centre of the research onion", however they cite Crotty 1998 and comment "you need to explain why you made the choice you did", with Saunders et al summarising, "Consequently there are more important outer layers of the onion that you need to understand and explain". The six main layers of the Research Onion (pictured below) as set out by Saunders et al, are Research Philosophy, Research Approach, Research Strategy, Research Choices, Time Horizons, and Techniques and Procedures. By following these six layers the researcher will be able to gain the most valid conclusions in relation to this study.



The research onion (Saunders et al., 2012)

With the research onion in mind an extensive justification will be provided for both method and design, the researcher will draw comparisons from previous credited work to highlight the validity of the research method and design. This chapter will also discuss the primary research that was undertaken as well as the sampling technique applied to this study. This chapter will also address any limitations and/or ethical concerns that were considered by the researcher.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined as an "overarching term relating to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge in relation to research", (Saunders et al, 726). In this particular insistence the researcher is attempting to gain "new knowledge" around the topic of the impact a Instagram influencer has on them as a consumer when it comes to the purchase intentions of holiday accommodation for generation z.

The research onion model presents us with two philosophical, ontological and epistemological, Saunders et al 2015. Saunders et al 2015, state that "ontology refers to the assumptions about the nature of reality", which Dieronitou, 2014 and discusses how "assumptions of an ontological kind concern the very nature of social entitles being investigated", before referring to Bryman, 2004 when identifying various ontological positions as "objectivism and constructionism". Together Dieronitou, 2014 and Bryman, 2004 illustrate that objectivism refers to a "social entity in question adheres to an external objective reality independent of the researcher's awareness", but suggest the contrast can be identified as constructionism "implies that social entities can and should be considered social constructions built upon the perceptions and actions of social actors". Saunders et al 2015, summarise ontology by highlighting while "this may seem far removed from your intended research project", that the importance of considering and reviewing ontology as these "ontological assumptions shape the way in which you see and study your research objects".

In complete contrast epistemology "concerns assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others , Saunders et al 2015, referring to Burrell and Morgan 1979. Quinlan, 2011 updates this by commenting that epistemology "relates to knowledge, what constitutes knowledge and to the process through which knowledge is created". She also adds there are two main epistemological positions, positivism, social constructionism and interpretivism.

She suggests that "positivism holds that there is one objective reality; reality is singular and separate from consciousness". Dieronitou, 2014 offers up some criticism of positivism while referring to Habermas, 1974; Horkheimer, 1972; Kvernbekk, 2002 and Shadish, 1995 by illustrating that "since the core of positivism has placed extreme emphasis on direct observations, it has been criticised for disregarding values, informed opinion, moral judgements and beliefs".

"Interpretivism is related to constructivism. It holds that social reality is a subjective construction based on interpretation and interaction", (Quinlan, 2011). Walsham, 1995 furthers this by suggesting that "interpretive methods of research adopt the position that our knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors", Saunders et al, 2015 further this by adding that "human beings and their social worlds cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena due to the need to their account of complexity". The advantage of using interpretive methods as opposed to positivist methods is that as researchers we are able to gain a better understanding of the subjects opinion on a topic. With people being subjective and as a result being able to obtain different opinions from the same data, research runs the risk of being tainted as the subject doesn't fully understand the topic or we are unable to follow up on what has been said to gain further insight into their subjective views.

4.3Research Approach: Inductive vs Deductive.

Saunders et al 2015, suggest that in an inductive approach "there is a gap in the logic argument between the conclusion and the premise observed, the conclusion being judged to be supported by the observations made", this approach allows the researcher to gather data and then link their data back to the theory. Adams et al, 2007 tell us that this approach is taking " a general conclusion derivable from a finite number of observations".

Whereas this is in contrast to a deductive approach which they say is "when the conclusion is derived logically from a set of premises, the conclusion being true when all the premises are true", this approach uses existing theories to build a research approach to investigate.

From Saunders et al this study will take an inductive approach as it aims to build theory and understanding around the impact a Instagram influencer has on them as a consumer when it comes to the purchase intentions of holiday accommodation for generation z, this is possible as the researcher aims to observe a consumers behaviours, see if there is any patterns occurring and then finally develop a theory around what has been investigated. While the limitations occur as the theory can never be proven given the subjective nature of the topic inductive is the only approach that will facilitate the best chances of understandings peoples behaviours towards Instagram influencers under the above mention area.

4.4 Research Strategies: Qualitative vs Quantitative

The third layer of the Research Onion conveys the importance of a research strategy which Saunders et al, 2015 tell us is a "plan of how a researcher will go about answering their research question", this is further when they cite Denzin and Lincoln, 2011 who describe it as the "methodological link between your philosophy and subsequent choice of methods to collect and analyse data".

Dibb et al, 2006 illustrate that qualitative research is "research that deals with information too difficult or expensive to quantify, such as subjective opinions and value judgements, typically unearthed during interviews or discussion groups". Quinlan, 2011 expands this definition by conveying qualitative research "focus on words rather than numbers in the collection of data". She continues to highlighted that it as a research strategy it is defined as "inductive and subjective, constructivist and/or interpretivist". Saunders et al 2015 add that the data collection is "non-standardised so that questions and procedures may alter and emerge a research process that is both naturalistic and interactive".

Whereas quantitative research is "research aimed at producing data that can be statistically analysed and whose results can be expressed numerically", (Dibb et al, 2006). Quinlan, 2011 adds to this by stating "quantitative research is deductive. It is said to be objective and situated within a framework of positivism". Saunders et al 2015, agree with this train of thought by suggesting that it "examines relationships between variables, which is measured numerically and analysed using a range of statistical and graphical techniques".

After examining and investigating both options for data collection, the research topic and previous research done in the area clearly favoured an qualitative approach. Dibb et al, 2006 spoke about how qualitative is used for "subjective opinions and value judgements", which is the area this topic is exploring. In this approach the researcher can gain a deeper and clearer insight into people's experience of both looking for information on accommodation as well as their experience and feelings towards Instagram influencers. As the research question is attempting to find out what impact these influencers have this approach will allow us to probe the interviewee to understand not only what impact influencers have on them in this industry but always why and to what extent. To prepare for this approach the research investigated both Instagram influencers content as well as content posted by hotels on Instagram, as well as exploring reviews and user generated content on various comparison websites.

Previous research in the area of both the impact of influencers and any sort of accommodation/hospitality marketing have followed a similar approach so the researcher found no reason to go in the opposite direction of this accredited writers. Whiting and Williams 2013, took a similar approach and conducted 25 in depth interviews with individuals who use social media while exploring the topic 'Why people use social media', Casais et al 2020 use a similar approach and interview 30 people when exploring their topic of 'Tourism innovation through relationship marketing and value co-creation'. The researcher of this study believes it best to follow a similar research approach to the above mentioned accredited articles as they both were deemed successful and are in similar study area to the topic of this study.

4.4.1Qualitative approach.

As alluded to above the researcher has chosen a inductive qualitative approach, through the use of interviews with members of generation z whom use Instagram and travel regularly. The researcher believes the inductive, q approach is best suited as it is best suited to the interpretivism approach which is vital as the research looks investigate people's opinions around the research topic,(Quinlan, 2011). Saunders et al, 2015 convey that there are 3 main types of interviews;

- Structure Interviews are "predetermined and standardised" set of questions and can be known as "interview completed questionnaires", this is eliminates the flow of the interview and as a result is not ideal for our topic as we are looking to gain an insight into opinions and probe further on certain topics, something that isn't possible in this format as it is used to collect "quantifiable data".
- For Semi-Structured Interviews there is a "list of themes and possibly some key questions to be covered, although their use may vary from interview to interview". Saunders et al continue to explain that some questions may be eliminated or added but the themes will remain consistent throughout the process. They also emphasis the order of the questions can change. These type of interviews are in theory meant to resemble a guided and scheduled chat more so than an actually interview. Saunders et al, 2015 suggest the "data will be captured by audio-recording the conversation"
- The final type of interviews is unstructured interviews or in-depth interviews as they are more commonly called. For a this "there is no predetermined list of questions to ask in this situation", however there is need for a "clear idea about the aspect or aspects that you want to explore".

Thus for the purpose of this research a s method will be applied Throughout the interview process the a serious of open interview ended questions along with probing questions to provoke a discussion and gain insights into the interviewees process to gain this "rich knowledge" we are searching for.

4.4.2Research Strategy: In-depth Interviews

For the purpose of this study in depth interviews will be used. In depth interviews or unstructured interviews are defined as "loosely structured and informally conducted interview(s) that may commence with one or more themes to explore with participants but without a predetermined list of questions to work through", (Saunders et al, 2016). They note however that there are four situations as to why to use unstructured interviews, the purpose of the research itself, the important of establishing personal contact, nature of the questions and time required and completeness of the process. In this particular scenario the unstructured interviews were selected as they presented the best opportunity to build a personal contact with the interviewee and also as we are asking people's reactions about topics there is no need to be structured as the interviewer will need to be able to probe certain topics further depending on the answers given. Saunders et al, 2016 also indicate this style of interview allows the interviewee to talk freely about the topics being discussed with is also appealing to allow the interviewee to investigate whether or not their purchase intentions of holiday accommodations are impacted by Instagram influencers.

Hair et al, 2008 suggests that what makes unstructured interviews unique is that the interviewer can use "probing questions to elicit more detailed information on the topic". He details this can be done by turning the initial response from the interviewer into a question which he states "encourages the respondent to further explain the first response, creating natural opportunities for more detailed discussion". He highlights that the more a subject talks about the topic the more they will reveal about their "underlying attitudes, motives, emotions and behaviours".

According to Hair et al, 2008 the three man advantages of using unstructured interviews are:

1. "Rich detail that can be uncovered when focusing on one participant at a time", it is fair to assume that by being one on one with someone they will have your full attention and the you will have theirs. This presents an opportunity to focus solely on what they say and how they say it which lends itself to more specific follow up questions as you aren't trying to cater to the group in focus groups. By being one on one marketers are ask the

questions they want and fully explore the consumers mind and behaviours around topics.

2. "Lower Likelihood of participants responding in a socially desirable manner because there are no other participants to impress", because the participant is alone the hope is that they will be honest and not hold back. Equally relatable to this advantage is that they won't hold back their true opinions in fear of being judged. If you use groups being instantly try hide what they are insecure about which is not ideal if that is the topic that is being discussed. By being one on one we can eliminate that fear factor and help relax the participant so that they are comfortable being open regarding the topic with the interviewer.
3. "less crossover that may inhibit some people from participating in a focus group", this is similar to the others in the sense that because it is one on one the subject does not need to be concerned about being interrupted or talked over or anything similar to this as it may occur in focus groups. The subject can be relax and unfazed in a one on one environment and can share their opinion easily and openly.

The limitations to unstructured interviews occur in three forms of bias;

1. Researcher bias, Quinlan, 2011 explains that "researchers can be biased in favour of a particular result or finding in their research". Quinlan says how researchers can use research design, as well as influencing respondents by using leading questions, through playing emphasis on certain words or phrases and by encouraging particular responses to agree or disagree with the hypothesis. It is worth noting however that the researcher my unintentionally be bias towards a certain outcome and unknowingly taint the results.
2. Sampling bias, again Quinlan suggests that this "occurs when the sampling procedure used in the research is flawed or compromised in some way". Quinlan continues to elude that this occurs when the researcher selects their sampling from a "particular population or sample population. Almost as if the research picks a certain sample who will satisfy their desired results. Quinlan recognises that on some occasions it is necessary to select people with certain interests to allow them to qualify for the study but the respondents should be picked at random from the eligible population. This is an issue that occurred during this research as respondents needed to be centennials, use Instagram frequently and travel, but from these eligible participants a sample was picked at random.

3. Respondents bias, Quinlan that respondents can be bias by using pattern answers, answering yes/no to each question, or acquiescence bias which is agreeing with the everything the researcher says or when the respondent gives the "socially desirable" answer to appease everyone. This finally one is the stumbling block, it is the role of the researcher to make the respondent comfortable and assure them everything is confidentially that the answers are purely for research purposes and will be destroyed after. If the respondent doesn't trust or have confidence in the researcher then the whole interview is wasted as there is no way to distinguish their honest answers from their "socially desirable" ones.

4.4.3Interview Structure

In depth interviews or unstructured interviews are described as "informal", to allow for a deep investigation into the research topic. For in depth interviews there is "no predetermined list of questions", but their needs to be a clear idea of themes that will be discussed. In this insistence the respondent "is given an opportunity to talk freely about events, behaviour and beliefs" in relation to the proposed topics/themes.(Saunders et al, 2015). Quinlan, 2011 suggests that the use of open questions will aid the study as they "do not anticipate particular questions". She illustrates they are used to gain "explore understandings, feelings and beliefs", which answers usually require reflection before answering as the question requires a

longer more rich answer. This structure is similar to a conversation she suggests as the interviewee is allowed to guide the "discussion in any direction they wish in order to explain or illustrate their perspective". She says the interviewer can "probe responses, ask interviewees to elaborate or to illustrate an answer with an example. Quinlan concludes by stating "this loose structure and flexible approach to interviews in qualitative research allows for the production of rich and complex data".

The above set out structure will be implemented by I the researcher as the researchers needs to explore the theme of Instagram influencers and people's beliefs and opinions towards them. This is why an informal setting and open questions will aid the research and enrich the results.

4.4.4Sample

Acharya et al, 2013 define a sample as "a subset of the population, selected so as to be representative of the larger population". While citing Becker, 1998 Saunders et al 2015 they suggest that when selecting a sample "it should represent the full set of cases". As a researcher it is worth noting the sample taken from the population must be representative of the population of the study and be selected at random once they satisfy the terms of the study.

For this research non-probability sampling will be used to select the sample. Non probability sampling or non-random sampling as it is also known can be defined as "selection of sampling techniques in which the chance or probability of each case is not known".(Saunders et al, 2015). Within this the research utilised quota sampling. Quinlan, 2011 suggests that quota sampling is when "the researcher fills a sample of participants in the research using different quota criteria, Vehovar et al, 2016 elaborates on this by adding the sample participants are selected with "some socio-demographic quotas in order to reflect the population".

Following on from this respondents were selected based on their age, use of Instagram, who they follow on Instagram and travel frequency. To participate in this study the respondents would need to be classified in as a centennial, Rejón-Guardia et al, 2018 states that centennials are "the next generation of tourist consumers born after 1995", making them between the age of 18 and 23 at the time of Rejón-Guardia et al, writing their article. Once they are within this age bracket, the participant must use Instagram as their main social media, and follow Instagram influencers while travel or look to travel frequently. The volume of people to be interviewed will be decided by theoretical saturation.

4.4.5Theoretical Saturation

Saunders et al, 2015 describe theoretical saturation as a way of deciding logically how much research needs to be done. They argue the research is complete "when data collection ceases to reveal new data that are relevant to a category, where categories have become well developed and understood and relationships between categories have been verified". This is the approach this study will follow as not to over load the analysis and keep it relevant to the study.

4.5 Layer Four: Research Method

The fourth layer of the research onion is concerned with research methods. Quinlan et al, 2011 state that research methods refers to "data collection methods or data gathering techniques". Saunders et al, 2015 talk about three main types of methods; the mono method, multi method and the mixed method. They describe mono method as "a qualitative research design that may use a single data collection technique", meanwhile a multi method approach as "a qualitative research design which may also use more than one qualitative data collection technique and corresponding analytical procedure", finally they suggest that "mixed methods research is the branch of multiple methods research that combines the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analytical".

4.6Layer Five: Time Horizons

Time Horizons are the second last later of the research onion and are either cross-sectional or longitudinal. Saunders et al, 2015 define cross sectional research as "the study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time" while they define a longitudinal study as "the study of a particular phenomenon over an extended period of time". Given the time constraints a cross sectional study was best suited to this particular study. The research was conducted over a ten day period in the middle of July 2021 and the data was only collected once from each participant in a single interview.

4.7Layer Six: Data Collection and Data Analysis

The final layer of the research onion deals with the data collection and analysis of said data. As discussed either in layer three, this study has adopted an inductive, qualitative approach in the form of in depth/unstructured interviews. As a result of this approach the collection and analysis of the data unearthed through this approach were of utmost importance for the quality of the findings.

4.7.1Data Collection

Given the COVID-19 restrictions at the time of conducting the data collection face to face interviews was not feasible for all interviewees so the decision was made by the researcher to conduct all interviews through an online medium (Microsoft Teams) as to ensure each interviewee was given the same conditions for the interview. All interviews were conducted at a time that best suited the interviewee as to avoid putting the interviewee under any unnecessary stress or pressure. Each interview lasted between forty minutes to an hour to ensure all topics could be discussed in depth. The researcher found that people were quite comfortable and open while conducting the interviews and notes this could be as a result the interviewee was in the comfort in their own home. All interviews were recorded for the purpose of relistening as to not take the interviewees words out of context, the interviewee was made aware of the recording prior to the interviewee by a few days and again before recording started. Each interviewee was made aware their interview will not be shared with others and will only be used for academic purposes and will be deleted at the earliest possible opportunity. Each interviewee was also made aware that they could withdraw their data at any time.

While the interviews were being conducted the interviewer, point blank questions were avoided, and as mentioned earlier open ended questions around themes and topics were discussed. The questions poised aimed to be fair and without any trigger words or changes in tone as to avoid any bias or confusion towards the interviewee. To create a discussion around the topics both a thematic question guide and open ended questions were utilised to spark a free flowing conversation to maximise information being collected. The topics discussed ranged from hotel information searches, using Instagram, Instagram influencers, reviews/user generated content, do either of the previous mentioned impact purchases intentions/consideration set/idea generation, before ending on the topic of trust and credibility of both Instagram influencers and user generated content.

The basis of these topics were formed in the literature review and the questions came from there but the researcher attempted to limit the use of academic language in an effort to not overwhelm the interviewee and take away from the relaxed and non-intimating atmosphere that was being created.

To ensure validity of the work the researcher took notes of any repeated phrases, change in tones, reactions and expressions while recording both voice and picture as well as creating a transcript. This was done in an effort to ensure all available data was collected to allow for maximum exposure to said data, to increase the accuracy of the results.

4.7.2Data Analysis

In relation to data analysis a grounded approach was taken as there is no other definite theory established around the research topic to which we can test this current study against.

While citing Charmaz 2006, Glaser and Strauss 1967, Suddaby 2006, Saunders et al, 2015 illustrate a 'Grounded Theory' approach "as a process to analyse, interpret and explain the meanings that social actors construct to make sense of their everyday experience in specific situations". While Quinlan, 2011 adds that it is "used when the specific focus of the research is on building theory from data". Quinlan, 2011 then continues and refers to Strauss and Corbin, 2007 who "presented the methodology as a qualitative methodology".

One tribute of grounded theory is a thematic approach which is a "technique used to analyse qualitative data that involves the search for themes or patterns occurring across a data set", Saunders et al, 2015.

To use this approach the interviews must be transcribed and read in great detail, while constantly seeking key phrase, concepts or ideas that are repeated throughout or that are of interest to the researcher. Saunders et al 2015 suggest that by using thematic analysis the research can lead to "rich descriptions, explanations and theorising". Quinlan, 2011 illustrates

that there are three stages to analysing data using grounded theory; open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

According to Quinlan open coding involves reviewing the data collected for "every concept that has meaning in relation to the research". She explains that by using this approach "the fundamental aim of the research project is to generate theory from data". She continues to elaborate on why the open coding collects all data related to the research topic, she justifies this approach by highlighting that "researchers tend to draw their concepts and categories more from the language of the data gathered", more so than becoming overly reliant on the literature that was previous reviewed.

The second stage is axial coding which Quinlan, 2011 conveys is when the research begins to "integrate the concepts under key concepts". The research begins to narrow their focus and organise the data into different key themes. In this stage the coding is more focused on relating the key concepts back to answering "critical questions", which Quinlan suggests "helps deepen the analysis of the data".

The final stage is the selective coding stage which Quinlan, 2011 indicates is where the researcher "now identifies the key category in the data". She stresses "the focus at this stage of the data analysis process is developing and explicating a theory which details the phenomenon under investigation by connecting and explaining the relationships between each of the key categories to emerge from the analysis". In this final stage the research is tasked with demonstrating how their research and the data collected and analysed is relevant to the research topic and more importantly what is says about the topic.

4.8Ethical Considerations

During this study the National College of Ireland's 'Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants', were followed throughout the entire process and an ethical review application was submitted to prior to the beginning of this study.

4.9Limitations

During the research the researcher came across two main limitations to the study.

1. Limitation one was attached to the literature. The theory behind the age of Generation Z is flawed and each author offers up their own age range which makes furthering student awkward as the research must select an age range best suited to them. Also given that Instagram influencers are a new trend there is very little literature around the topic and an literature that exists is vague, this is reflected in the literature review. To combat this the researcher suggests a longitudinal study to combat the lack of research and maybe re interview the original participants and even observe their engagement and information search of hotels and the booking process.

2. The second main limitation was related to conducting the interviews themselves. Due to Covid restrictions all interviews were conducted online which added to the degree of difficulty especially given the time frame, the researcher couldn't re interview the participants. As well with conducting online research, bad internet and exterior noise was something else that was needed to overcome during interviews.

4 Findings, Analysis and Discussions

The rationale behind this section is to present an analysis and discussion on the main findings that were unearthed as a result of the in- depth interviews undertaken as part of this research. By investigating the feelings and opinions of Centennials, consistent themes and beliefs came forward. This chapter will convey each theme that appeared and offer direct quotes from the interviewees with the overall aim of addressing the main topic of the study which is to investigate the impact of Instagram influencers on the purchase intentions of generation z in terms of holiday accommodations.

5.1 Research Objective 1.

'To discover whom generation z follow on Instagram outside of friends and family'

For this research objective the reoccurring theme was relatability. The data collection process began with all participants being asked about their social media habits, what content they like and who they follow. Interestingly all interviews spoke about not following so called "main stream" influencers but more so famous people or fitness people they felt they related to. While they said they didn't follow influencers they all in turn listed groups of people who are deemed influencers but the interviews were adamant they only followed people who had similar interests to themselves. The following quotes are direct quotes from the interviewees.

Interviewee 1: "*I'll follow mainly sports stars, hurlers, football and soccer players, F1 drivers. I also follow a few Youtubers on it, vloggers erm so like I follow Mr Beast, all those a people. It depends like if I have a lot of mutual follows like my friends and stuff that follow them that would impact"*

This comment suggests that if the participant has something in common with the Instagram influencer they will follow them, also if their friends follow them it would impact their decision. This comment indicates that they are open to following the majority of people and listening to them once they share some sort of common ground.

Interviewee 2: "People like kind of followers mainly kind like a fitness and kind of lifestyle influencers. They don't real class themselves as influencers they don't really like that title. but like their content would be all Like stuff to do with gyms and healthy foods and lifestyle tips".

Interviewee 3: "follow Manchester United and then some of their players and might also follow one or two to Dublin football team and then some general people are involved in fitness and stuff. I thought I'd follow them as well. Yeah, I think it's just more I can resemble to their personality in the way they kind of put themselves across. They're very honest. I am hard working as well, so you can kind of relate"

Interviewee 4: "not only fitness influencers but a lot of the pages would be a lot about fitness".

The three above comments are intriguing all three participants describe following fitness people and pages but they aren't influencers only to them comment later how they follow them for workout tips and healthy eating tips, demonstrating that they are following influencers for their content not for who they are, which is important for influencer marketing as a whole.

Interviewee 5: "Yeah, like I have to be more for like their style and how they

present themselves to people and how they dressed and how they act and the things that there into would kind of be similar to what I like"

This comment suggests that the individual is well aware of following an influencer but is quick to stress only for the similar style and fashion sense which is similar to the fitness pages mentioned above.

The purpose of making this a research objective was to see are centennials aware of how many influencers they follow without realising. The majority of these interviewees mentioned how they only followed these people because they had similar interests. While the people they follow differs vastly and the initial reason might differ they each admit that they follow these pages as a result of a shared interest or they feel similar to these people in some way.

This is in line with the current literature in this area, as discussed earlier. Ketrin and Szilárd (2020) told us that influencers can be seen as opinion leaders and state that "unlike celebrities, opinion leaders may appear approachable and credible in the eyes of followers because they allow insight into their daily lives, making it easier for people to empathize with them". However differences can be seen as some of the followers mentioned above are traditional celebrities and have carried their following and fame online.

The theory is shown to be accurate when it discusses people who are purely famous for their online presence. Each interview talks about how they can relate to the people they follow whether it is someone from YouTube, a fitness influencer or a fashion influencer, which coincides with Jin et al 2018, who illustrate "When studying the effects of this new type of celebrities, it has been found that consumers have a stronger connectedness toward them and they perceive them as more authentic".

While on the surface the interviewees seem uninterested in influencers it is clear to see that whatever their initial motives they all follow influencers they feel represent their interests.

In terms of what this means for business's who use Instagram influencers going forward they should be aware that centennials may follow a particular influencer cause of similar interests and that's all. As a result influencers followings may look inflated, so to combat this the

business should check engagement rates, such as likes, comments and reshares. Also centennials might follow a particular person bud never engage with their content or even see their content.

As for the theory, it seems to be accurate on the basis that if the Instagram user feels like relate to the influencer they will follow them and most likely trust them a bit just because they share the same interests. The trust is increased because having similar interests attracts them and a relationship is formed over time with the sharing of content.

Overall the research suggested that business's should be wary of what influencers they use to target their following otherwise potential customers, equally the research indicates that Instagram influencer's should only promote products that fit their personal brand given that they have gathered the majority of their following through their current personality and no a fake one with fake interests.

5.2 Research Objective 2.

To understanding where generation z gathers their information on holiday accommodations.

The rationale behind this objective was to understand what different locations Centennials find their information on holiday accommodations but also was there a process or a system. While no theme was apparent comparison websites and Instagram were two reoccurring locations. All participants indicated they use the accommodations website, the accommodations Instagram page and a third party comparison site similar to what was indicated to in the literature, previously shown above.

Interviewee 2: "So like all the time, I'll go onto a hotel's Instagram 100%"....." Now I wouldn't take it for like I kind of get the information from the hotel but use the other websites as a second source".

Both of the above direct quotes show that this participant is keen to look around different places for the accommodation as they suggest *"I know sometimes even on some websites you don't really show if you're looking for something".* This is an interviewee who does their research before booking, someone who probably won't be easily influenced.

Interviewee 3: "I think a very good go to is booking.com, so for me that's a really good place to compare and see the prices and stuff obviously they give a breakdown of every room that's in a place or whether it's from a standard double bed to obviously you're bigger suites…….And I think the with booking.com they take excellent pictures and then I would also look on Instagram to see what their website is like or tagged photos".

Both of the above interviewees share a similar process of researching their accommodation. Both look at all available resources to help them make the informed decision, as marketers of certain accommodations the opportunity is there to try and win back the focus to solely their own website and Instagram pages, if the customer feels compelled to look elsewhere to see your accommodation clearly our website is lacking something that they feel they need more information.

Meanwhile in interviews four and five discuss how they automatically revert to Instagram when researching any accommodation, which highlights how importantly centennials view social media as it is their first go to when making a decision regarding accommodation.

Interviewee 4: "Well, I'll be honest with you. That's what I do for everything. It's not only hotels, no matter where I'm going these days. I'm always checking the Instagram page. I think that's a lot of people seem to do".

Interviewee 5: "there was one hotel like I was purposely looking on Instagram just to see what people would say about them because it is more of a modern hotel that I knew there would be more In depth reviews I guess on Instagram by. Customers are in my age and all that stuff because".

The theory in this aligns itself with what the above interviews have said. As disguised earlier Miguens et al, 2008 describes how "online social travel networking is changing the way tourists plan their trips", they name websites such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Trivago, etc and how they "allow users to interact and provide reviews on hotels or on local tourist attractions", this coupled with McGorry, 2017 stating that centennials are "hyper connected on social media" while also suggesting they "have grown up with smartphones in their hands", suggests that centennials are quite comfortable browsing the internet for more information. Suggesting that centennials are nearly hungry for information given the ease searching for it comes to them.

The impact this has on the industry of marketing and tourism cannot be under estimated. Everything and anything appears online these days, and given the comments made above centennials will find the mistake if it is there to be found. It is added pressure that customers now can use comparison website's which is beyond the control of the industry itself, however the industry can try protect themselves from coming across in the wrong way across all platforms.

1. The brand can show the same message across all platforms, the good and the bad, brand consistency is vital to hotels and other accommodations as you want the user to experience the same experience across all information points to leave no doubt.
2. The brand should post regularly and update their website and Instagram page in an effort to not encourage the user to search elsewhere. If the pictures and posts and regularly updated the customer will see the current situation in the accommodation and won't need to look for up to date information or pictures on the location.

5.3 Research Objective 3.

To understand whether generation z listen more to user generated content in the forms of reviews or Instagram influencers.

In this research objective two clear themes were repeatedly mentioned; trust and creditability, of both user generated content and influencers.

5.3.1 User Generated Content/Reviews

All of the participants spoke about their experience and their rationale behind the impact that user generated content had on them when it came to a decision about whether to go to a certain hotel or not.

When describing what they look for when looking at the user generated content and whether they would trust them and believe in them or not, the participants responded,

Interviewee 1: "Ah I look at the most recent (reviews) I want to see like an overall picture of what people are saying. Like it could just be one really bad review for no reason at all like they could've just having a bad experience where other people there more had amazing experience. I would like to get an overall so look at it"…… "Yeah, I'll trust them enough to help make a decision. Won't be like that are 100% right or they are 100% wrong, I trust them enough to help base the decision off".

Interviewee 2: "Well before the holiday I always look up in any way the hotel on Instagram because you kind of want to see what people like especially you click into their hashtags. Well you can see people who stayed there before"……. "Yeah I I would. I would go on peoples experiences before I would the hotel now I don't know if it would 100% sway my decision completely".

Interviewee 3: "And I think like if there's a rating on booking.com I normally stick to and just go with it"…… "think if you see something for five/six that were just consistently in the room wasn't clean, etc, I definitely probably take a bit more time before booking it to just maybe see if that's cropping up a bit".

Interviewee 4: "To be honest with you, I only look at the first few, and get the overall recent vibe"….. "It's very quick to jump to reviews these days as well. Bad reviews, more so than good reviews".

Interviewee 5: "I live or die by them"…… "cause like a hotel could post a picture, let's say, oh let's say a dish, but they would have it done absolutely pristine because they're posting on their on their page. Let's say on Instagram, where as a customer composed the same dish on it. Could be, you know, below par"

As highlighted in each of the above statements maybe by the participants, they do review the user generated content in the form of reviews and tagged Instagram pictures. The levels of trust vary from participant to participant with interviewee five starting they live or die by them but on the other end of the scale interviewee three comments how a consistent complaint would only slow the process and might not stop the purchase altogether. The majority mentioned how they would view the recent ones to see the current standard of the hotel.

On credibility most of the participants gave various answer but all came to the same conclusion which is summed up perfectly by interviewee five.

Interviewee 5: "normal consumers like me, not paid to go to the hotel".

Interviewee 3: "You can always put a filter on a picture from an influencer or make it look real scenic but the actual user generated content is people staying there".

Some however while still having trust and believing in the reviews that they are subjective and shouldn't be read into too much as each person will experience it differently.

Interviewee 2: " No, I would take some with a pinch a salt, every person is different these days"

Interviewee 1: "Like each individual is going to have a different experience, but like there's going to be some people that actually make their holiday worth their time while other people might just be want to post something just complaining for absolutely no reason, so it's kind of getting overall look at a place like it one comment is going to make me out now"

While the participants said they trust and believe the reviews and other content they are aware of the value in use theory introduced by Vargo and Lusch, that explains everyone will find didn't value to an experience or product. While this demonstrates that maybe the consumer is more mature and advanced than the theory gives them credit for. Bigne et al, 2019 say that "higher credibility than other induced agents such as the information provided by destination marketing organisations", which is seen above as all participants placed their trust in reviews, however Bigne et al almost hint at a blind faith which is clearly not visible as all participants spoke too not being 100% swayed by them but that they do factor into the decision.

5.3.2 Instagram Influencers

While discussing this topic all participants again alluded to trust and credibly or lack of, when viewing content posted by influencers. All participants spoke to how they would prefer user generated content over influencers with one such comment being;

Interviewee 1: "I'd probably be more inclined to trust the reviews .it's more opinions than just his opinion".

This differs slightly to an opinion offered up by,

Interviewee 2: "an influencer who travels a lot who's been around the world and I followed that person id be more inclined to listen to that person"

However interviewee two still claimed to believe in reviews more than influencers but was merely suggesting that one who had experience in the travel industry would have the ability to make them listen more so than other influencers. This is similar to interview four who notes they would use the influencers content to form their own opinion and not pay attention to the opinion of the viewer. This interviewee also shared this is as far as it goes when it comes to trusting an influencer as they say they have no faith in influencers who post products that claim to work wonders on skin or body shape, etc. They commented on the lack of proof and they are unable to make up their own mind on the quality of the actually product.

Interviewee 4: "Because I trust it to a certain extent like with the product so I don't trust them at all where products. Exactly, yeah, like whatever and influencer were saying about the hotel, I take that with a pinch of salt. I probably won't even listen to it. I'm purely looking at the photographs".

Interviewee 3 shares a makes a similar point about lack of trust and credibly when speaking about the sheer volume that an influencer promotes in a similar industry.

Interviewee 4: "sense of desperation there because it's like OK if I can go for 5-6 hotels under my belt instead of getting one really good one. And I think that's what they'll do. So for me it's like they kind of cloud your judgment a little bit then, because they're kind of selling your story more than anything".

This differs to the theory which explains earlier that people trust influencers which is clearly not the case. Jin et al, 2018 talk about how customers view the influencers who are described as "social media celebrities" as authentic, however this is clearly not the case as demonstrated above. This is also in contrast to what was spoken about earlier in research objective one when people said they followed and listened to certain influencers, however this is still possible because they can follow them and just not believe them or believe in what they are saying.

For the industry and for marketers the message from these findings is clear. Focus on the current customer first and make them happy, their happiness will lead to them co creating content, which will lead to better reviews. The recommendation is not to move away from influencers but maybe not to forget about the current customers and use them to attract new ones.

In terms of the theory it is clear it needs to be updates and redefined as the research shows it doesn't give the customer enough credit to being mature enough to understand the way both influencers and user generated content works.

5.4 Research objective 4

To understand what impact Instagram influencers have on the purchase intention for members of generation z.

Research objection four had one main theme and it was consideration set.

While no participant commented that an Instagram influencer could make them solely purchase a product they all commented on how they would consider it and do their own research on the hotel but it would definitely become part of their consideration set.

Each interview was simply asked something along the lines of would any Instagram influencer promoting a hotel every make you want to go there purely off their experience and opinion. They each replied the following;

Interviewee 1: "Yeah, if it. If it looks nice, I'll definitely go onto the website, like if it looked nice from his photos and videos, I would go onto the website. They have an impact on me to actually look it up, but not to 100% book it".

Interviewee 2: "Yeah, you click into it definitely and have a look but would defo add it to my consideration".

Interviewee 3: *"It will make me aware of the place order wouldn't necessarily make me go there".*

Interviewee 4: *"They can make me to consider".*

Interviewee 5: *"I'd actually look it up and be like actually I heard of this hotel. Let's have a look. Yeah definitely".*

While everyone comments they would look at the hotel no one even remotely suggests they would go to that hotel based off the influencer. This can be attributed back to research objective three as all participants spoke to their lack of trust in influencers, however it is interesting to learn that influencers would make all the participants consider the hotel.

While the lack of theory on this hurts the discussion nature of the findings, the mentioned findings allow the researcher to conclude that if a hotel is to use an Instagram influencer as a promotion tool it is not proven in this study but it will get the name of the hotel into the targeted audiences head and will result in them considering the hotel. So it will not directly relate to an increase in sales but has the potential to start the process of a sale by adding it to the consideration set for centennials.

6.Conclusion and Recommendations

Through the use an interpretivist, inductive qualitative data through unstructured/ in depth interviews over a two week period the researcher was able to unearth rich data from the participants. The rationale behind this approach was justified as the researcher was able to gain an insight into the opinions and feelings of the participants in relation to the research topic. The rationale behind the investigation was to discover did Instagram influencers impact the purchase intentions of centennials for holiday accommodation.

Due to the growing number of Instagram influencers it would be to assume there is a direct link between using them and an increase sales, however this was not the feedback received. The participants all suggested that an influencer would impact their consideration set but at no stage could an influencer impact their direct purchase intention of any anything let alone holiday accommodation.

Instead the evidence suggested that user generated content mostly in the form of reviews had for of any impact on them and even at that they would only ever impact the consideration set.

The literature told us how influencers could be trusted but people spoke differently saying the opposite, that they had no faith or belief in influencers, but spoke to how similar to the literature suggested they had trust in user generated content but commented they were aware that everyone would have a different experience while using the accommodation, as Vargo and Lusch, 2004 theorised with their value in use concept.

In conclusion it is hard to understand the full extent of which influencers impact centennials purchase intention without more time and research, this is why this researcher suggests a further longitudinal study to explore these initial and limited findings further.

6.1 Recommendations

1. Similar to recommendations given above influencers are not the fit for the main role in any promotional plan as there is not enough evidence to suggest they directly impact purchases and cover their costs.
2. Industry marketers should focus more on the internal performance of the service delivery to avoid bad reviews while you can't whole eliminate them they should become the exception and not the norm.
3. From a theory standpoint a further study is required to explore influencers and their role in a promotional plan, the study should have more resources and be a longer timeframe and explore other countries and continents.

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