



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

The Influence of Social Media Content on  
Youth Tourism:

Can Culture Play a Role?

by

Iva Pervan and Nadezhda Tsankova

May 2020

Master's Program in International Marketing and Brand Management

Supervisor: Javier Cenamor  
Examiner: Tommy Shih

# Abstract

**Title:** The Influence of Social Media Content on Youth Tourism: Can Culture Play a Role?

**Date of the Seminar:** June 4th 2020

**Course:** BUSN39. Degree project in global marketing

**Authors:** Iva Pervan and Nadezhda Tsankova

**Supervisor:** Javier Cenamor

**Keywords:** social media, youth tourism, cultural differences

**Thesis purpose:** This thesis aims to investigate the influence of social media content on youth tourism by assessing the perceptions of youth travelers from four countries - Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the cultural differences of youngsters' attitudes towards social media use in travel planning.

**Methodology:** This study uses a quantitative research approach. The data was collected using an online survey with 7-point Likert scale questions. Indices were created for the scales of the variables and separate groups of respondents by country were identified. To compare the results of the studied groups, correlation coefficients were used to examine if there is a positive relationship between the variables, and the Fisher's test was used to determine whether the differences between groups were significant.

**Theoretical perspective:** This thesis consists of four different literature streams. The first one concerns consumer behavior, the second one refers to social media marketing, while the third one gives an overview of current literature on youth tourism. The final stream includes literature on cultural differences in the international context. These literature streams provide a foundation for establishing a theoretical framework for conducting the study.

**Empirical data:** Primary data was gathered by conducting an online survey. In total 311 responses were collected, with each group of respondents roughly making up a quarter of the sample. The respondents were 15 to 29-year-olds who use social media platforms and have traveled abroad or in their home country at least once 12 months prior to the study.

**Findings/conclusions:** The results of this study indicate a positive influence of all variables studied on youngsters' intention to plan travel by using social media. Also, they tend to perceive social media to be useful for travel planning regardless of their individualism/collectivism and uncertainty avoidance index, so it can be concluded that youngsters' intention to plan travel by using social media platforms is not affected by one's culture. However, the findings suggest that the intensity of the relationships of Bulgaria and Croatia is slightly more pronounced than the one for Sweden and the Netherlands.

**Practical implications:** This study could be instrumental to managers to help them understand the importance of social media to the youth tourists in adjusting their travel offers. While building their company's online presence managers could take into account the cultural differences to be able to tailor their products and marketing campaigns.

# Acknowledgments

This thesis was written during the spring semester of the International Marketing and Brand Management master program at Lund University in 2020. The time allocated for its completion was ten weeks and it was a part of the requirements to obtain a master's degree. In the following paragraphs, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the people who helped us in this endeavor and supported us in our work.

Firstly, we would like to thank our supervisor Javier Cenamor, who guided us through the process of writing and mentored us by using his knowledge and expertise. With dedication and interest, he provided us with valuable feedback and insights and contributed to us reaching our research objectives. Furthermore, we would like to thank Antonio Marañon for leading us through the analysis and assisting us to interpret the results of our thesis. We would also like to show our gratitude to the respondents of our questionnaire. Finally, we thank our families and friends for the emotional support during this master's program.

# Table of Contents

1	Introduction	7
1.1	Background	8
1.2	Purpose	10
1.3	Research question	11
1.4	Thesis outline	11
2	Literature review	13
2.1	Consumer behavior	13
2.1.1.	Consumer behavior in the tourism industry	14
2.1.2	Consumer culture theory	14
2.2	Social media marketing	15
2.2.1	User-generated content	16
2.2.2	Electronic Word-of-Mouth	16
2.2.3	Perspectives of social media marketing	17
2.3	Tourism and social media marketing	18
2.3.1	Effects of social media on the decision-making process in the tourism industry	18
2.3.2	Intention to plan travel	19
2.4	Youth tourism	20
2.4.1	Definition of youth tourism	21
2.4.2	What differentiates youth tourists?	21
2.5	Culture	22
2.5.1	The effect of culture on the tourism industry	23
3	Theoretical framework	25
3.1	Research model	25
3.1.1	Technology Acceptance Model	25
3.2	Hypotheses	27
4	Methodology	31
4.1	Dependent variable	31
4.1.1	Intention to plan travel	31
4.2	Independent variables	32

4.2.1 Perceived usefulness	32
4.2.2 Perceived enjoyment	33
4.2.3 Perceived trustworthiness	33
4.2.4 Perceived similarity of interest	34
4.3 Moderating variable	34
4.3.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions	34
4.3.2 Uncertainty avoidance index	35
4.3.3 Individualism versus collectivism	36
4.3.4 Cultural differences as a moderating variable	37
4.4 Research design	39
4.4.1. Data collection	39
5 Results	41
5.1. Sample characteristics	41
5.2 Reliability test	42
5.3 Analysis of the results	43
6 Discussion	47
7 Conclusion	50
7.1 Implications for theory and practice	50
7.2 Limitations	51
7.3 Future research avenues	52
References	53
Appendix	74

# List of Tables

Table 1. Proposed hypotheses .....	29
Table 2. Variables and scales .....	38
Table 3. Demographic characteristics .....	41
Table 4. Reliability test and factor loadings.....	42
Table 5. Pearson correlations and adjusted R2 of the independent variables in relation to the Intention to plan travel .....	44
Table 6. Differences in the correlations between Group 1 (Bulgaria and Croatia) and Group 2 (Sweden and the Netherlands).....	45
Table 7. Results of hypothesis testing .....	46

# List of Figures

Figure 1. Hofstede’s insights – Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden and the Netherlands (2020).....	23
Figure 2. Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989) .....	26
Figure 3. Proposed model for youth tourist’s intentions to plan travel, moderated by cultural differences .....	30

# 1 Introduction

Tourism today is a continuously growing segment, which supports the socio-economic progress of countries by creating benefits for both travelers and hosts (UNWTO, 2020). However, tourism represents a complex industry involving diverse, interrelated products and services. For example, one cannot travel without trying the local food and buying souvenirs, nor seeing cultural performances or sightseeing tours. Also, tourism is extremely important because its volume has exceeded the exports of oil, fast-moving consumer goods, and automobiles (UNWTO, 2020). According to the World Tourism Organization (2020), tourism has been a steadily growing segment during the last few years. Their most recent report shows that for 2017, 2018 and 2019, the number of international arrivals has been increasing respectively by 7%, 6%, and 4%.

However, the nature of the tourism industry is fragile and can be subject to unpredictable events (Pine & McKercher, 2004). As people travel more frequently internationally, and as they travel greater distances, the tourism industry is subject to great vulnerability to diverse crises (Murphy & Bayley, 1989; Faulkner, 2001; Drabek, 2010; Schroeder et al., 2016). Crises may have catastrophic economic consequences, which pressure not only local but also national economies that highly depend on tourism (Tourism Crisis Management Institute, 2012). For instance, Hong Kong was the main epicenter of the SARS virus outbreak in the early 2000s, and it had a drop in total visitors by 38% in 2003 (Pine & McKercher, 2004). The impact of SARS on tourism in Hong Kong was so severe that it turned out to be more harmful than 9/11 in the U.S. or the Asian financial crisis in 1997 (Au, Ramasamy & Yeung, 2005).

Furthermore, the prospects for the tourism industry in 2020 point to dramatic results due to an infectious disease caused by COVID-19 virus discovered in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan in China (World Health Organization, 2020). The virus started to spread throughout the whole world in the following months, with over 5,700,000 confirmed cases worldwide (World Health Organization, 2020). Hence, COVID-19 has impacted the world economy greatly, with the tourism industry being one of the most affected industries (Henley, 2020). For instance, the tourism industry in the EU alone is gauged to lose 1 billion euros monthly as a result of the pandemic (Niestadt, 2020), with just Italy estimated to lose over 60% of tourists this year (Assoturismo, 2020). For example, the world's busiest airport, located in Atlanta, lost 85% of its passengers due to the pandemic (Shah, 2020). Furthermore, low-cost air carrier Ryanair said it expected a net loss of more than 100 million euros for the first quarter of 2020, with further losses in the second one (BBC, 2020).

Therefore, the crisis is pushing industries to rapidly react by finding deep transformations of their business models. Specifically, the use of digital technologies is gaining remarkable attention. So, companies are rapidly adopting technologies in creative ways to maintain a feeling of shared culture and community (EY, 2020). Hence, to ensure long-term survival and continuous value



creation, companies had to adapt to the new environment (EY, 2020). In this respect, youth segments are crucial, since youngsters are usually early adopters of technologies (Rodgers, 1983; Zollo, 2004) and are highly skilled in using new technologies (Valor & Sieber, 2003). However, youngsters have a three times higher chance of being laid off compared to adults due to the COVID-19 pandemic (International Labour Organization, 2020), with much slower expected recovery than the one from the 2009 financial crisis (United Nations, 2020). So, it is expected that their purchasing power will decrease and might discourage them to engage in traveling.

Also, some prospects point towards the domestic market as the key trigger of recovery (Jackson et al., 2020). In this regard, understanding the differences between countries becomes critical, since global companies need to implement multi-domestic strategies. Regarding the tourism industry, because of regulations and health concerns, tourists now are shifting to domestic traveling (Gostin & Wiley, 2020). So, to be able to retain their customers around the globe, companies have to ensure that they are aware of the cultural differences in the different markets they operate in.

In general, the majority of industry experts are convinced that youth tourism is the fastest-growing segment of tourism and there is a significant growth potential for long-term growth youth tourism and its impact on the economy of a destination (Mohamed, Omar & Mey, 2010). Studies carried out by UNWTO have shown that young tourists travel more often than other tourists (Yunusovich, 2018). They tend to extensively share their experiences on social media platforms (Morrisey, 2012). Also, the majority of users engaged in user-generated content are young adults (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). Furthermore, social media is a crucial communication tool for marketing for the majority of companies nowadays since it enables enhancing consumer engagement (Hoffman & Novak, 2012). It is emerging as a technology that has become vital for people's future (Leikas et al., 2011) and it has all characteristics of a social network, with complexities that are difficult to analyze (Guliciuc, 2014).

## 1.1 Background

According to WYSE Travel Confederation (n.d.), the youth travelers segment consists of 336 million young tourists and it is one of the fastest-growing segments of international tourism. However, some may still argue that youth tourism is not an important segment of the tourism industry since it represents less than a quarter of the number of international tourists (UNWTO, 2016). Nevertheless, during the 1990s, youth tourism constituted only 15% of the tourism market, and then rose to 20% in the 2000s (Yunusovich, 2018). Also, according to UNWTO (2016) "youth travel has become one of the fastest-growing segments of international tourism, representing more than 23% of the tourists traveling internationally each year." Therefore, youth tourism as a sector is growing steadily, and, with the lack of research on the influence of social media platforms on young tourists, we believe that this topic is worthwhile to explore.

Moreover, many would probably claim that youth tourists spend less per day than regular tourists. Although this is true, youth tourists tend to stay longer, thus increasing the money spent during the trip (Richards, 2011). So, because they travel for longer periods in general, young people also spend

a greater proportion of their total budget at the destination. In fact, they spend on average € 2 867 per trip, while the average spending by all travelers for 2018 was considerably lower - € 1 035 (WYSE Travel Confederation, n.d.). Moreover, this study also found that 58% of the youth tourists are very willing to go back to destinations they have visited. This data demonstrates that youth tourism is an important segment of tourism in general.

The Internet has an enormous impact on the way we purchase and consume everything, and the same goes for tourism products. However, the Internet is not only used for obtaining information about products and purchasing them, but it also enables people to access first-hand knowledge about travel destinations and tourism experiences (Gretzel, 2006). While planning their trips, travelers have access to plentiful information online. For instance, there are social media platforms aimed at tourists specifically, such as TripAdvisor or VirtualTourist, offering valuable and easily-accessible information to travelers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Thus, social media greatly affects people's decision-making during travel planning (Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012).

Furthermore, there is a great potential for more efficient tailoring of youth tourism marketing offers since young people make up the largest share of social media users (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). Therefore, social media is an inevitable tool for information search on tourism destinations for young people. In fact, Schlegelmilch & Ollenburg (2013) discovered that one of the most efficient ways to target youth travelers is viral marketing, which is obtained through social media platforms. The effect of social media on tourism has been extensively researched. Although tourists' decision-making and travel intentions have been studied before, there is insufficient research on the fast-growing youth segment. So, we aim to determine how social media affects young tourists' intentions to plan travel, by involving the cultural aspect as a moderator.

Culture greatly influences how people consume nowadays, and this applies to travel and tourism products as well. As companies become more international, understanding cultures soon becomes a necessity for them (Podrug, Pavičić & Bratić, 2006). Tourism involves experiencing different cultures, so one cannot think of traveling without considering culture. So, culture could be seen as a contextual variable in a tourist's decision-making process (Frías et al., 2012). Furthermore, different kinds of tourists, such as risk-averse and risk seekers, choose destinations based on the level of perceived risk (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). So, in this case, the uncertainty avoidance index from the Hofstede insights could be instrumental to distinguish between the two types. Moreover, the individualism versus collectivism dimension could be used to assess tourists who prefer visiting destinations with a similar or different culture to their own (Jackson, 2001), as well as ones who prefer to travel alone or in groups. The impact of culture on the relationship between social media usage and consumer's decision-making has not been extensively studied on a global level (Abălăesei, 2016). Also, there is a need for a better understanding of the way that cultural differences explicitly influence the content on social media (Ngai et al., 2015).

Our topic can contribute to the literature in consumer behavior in tourism (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Mansfeld, 1992; Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002; Jang et al., 2009; Hennessey, Yun & MacDonald, 2010; Chen & McCain, 2011; Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014) and social media in the tourism industry (Hsu & Lin, 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Parra-López et al., 2011; Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012; Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013; Schlegelmilch & Ollenburg, 2013; Chung & Koo, 2015;

Ravindran, Nagamalar & Uma Rani, 2018; Gupta, 2019) by examining the distinctions in youth tourists' use of social media platforms through exploring cultural differences. So, the research includes two of Hofstede's dimensions of culture - the uncertainty avoidance index and individualism versus collectivism dimensions, under the name of cultural differences. They moderate the effect of social media on the youth tourists' intention to plan travel.

## 1.2 Purpose

In order to perform this research and develop the complexity of the topic, we focus on four main streams of literature - consumer behavior, social media marketing, youth tourism, and culture. It is estimated that the number of social media users is between 2.9 (eMarketer, 2019) and 3.2 billion (Emarsys, 2019), which means that over 40% of the world population uses social media. For example, in December 2019 there were almost 2.5 billion active users of Facebook only (Statista, 2019). However, when looking at the social media usage, 90.4% of the Millennials are considered active users, which is almost double than the Baby Boomers, who stand at 48.2% (eMarketer, 2019). It is estimated that over 1,8 billion of the world's population are Millennials (Tilford, 2018).

According to Foot and Stoffman (1998), Millennials were born between 1980 and 1995. Millennials have become dependent on technology at an earlier age compared to other generations and they enjoy using technology (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Nevertheless, people that use technology from an early age tend to become more skillful than people who start utilizing it later in life (Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010). So, the use of social media is essential and natural for them (Smith & Nichols, 2015). However, one of the drawbacks of technological advancement of the millennial generation is their expectations for instant solutions since they are used to the internet providing them easy and fast access to answers (Behrens, 2009; Cahill & Sedrak, 2012; Smith & Nichols, 2015).

Digital technologies became a critical channel for both governments and companies during the pandemic (United Nations, 2020). Therefore, COVID-19 is expected to accelerate the digital transformation of companies and make them reconsider their business models for the future (Marr, 2020). For instance, during the outbreak of SARS in China, a Chinese company Alibaba started its digital journey to enable its employees to perform work safely through their online platform, which ended up in launching an online shopping platform Taobao, which in the end has heavily boosted the e-commerce industry in China (Alibaba Group, 2020). Furthermore, concerning social media platforms, another great example of a company gaining vast popularity in the youth segment during the COVID-19 pandemic is TikTok. For some time it had already started gaining exposure mainly to Millennials, but in the first months of 2020, during the lockdowns, its usage skyrocketed (Kale, 2020).

Unlike TripAdvisor or VirtualTourist for example, who developed into primary travel information sources from their inception (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), the majority of social media platforms were only used as pure communication tools (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2012). Therefore, the purpose of Snapchat, Facebook or Instagram was not to be a major travel information source, however, they

have become some of the most important travel industry promotion tools (Királ'ová & Pavlíček, 2015). Internet influencers and social media content greatly impact millennial consumers' purchases, and their daily usage of Facebook is 77% (Loeb, 2020). Although youth tourists use social media extensively and are exposed to advertising on social media on a daily basis (Mayrhofer et al., 2020), this segment has not been researched to a greater extent. We recognize that the term "youth traveling" is relatively new and young tourists are an emerging segment, so we aim to contribute to the literature by exploring the influence of social media content on their intentions to plan travel.

So, our research focuses on the influence of social media content on youth tourism by assessing differences between perceptions of youth travelers from four countries - Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Figure 1 (Hofstede insights, 2020), which can be found in the literature review, displays the similarities and differences between these countries. For the two researched dimensions, uncertainty avoidance index and individualism versus collectivism, the cultural differences insights show the following: the Netherlands and Sweden both score much lower (respectively 53 and 29) than Bulgaria and Croatia (respectively 85 and 80) on uncertainty avoidance index, and much higher on individualism versus collectivism: the Netherlands and Sweden (respectively 80 and 71), Bulgaria and Croatia (respectively 30 and 33) (Hofstede insights, 2020).

### 1.3 Research question

This study is focused on exploring how several factors: Perceived usefulness, Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest, influence the intention of youth tourists to plan travel by using social media channels. Since social media is one of the main information sources for the youth nowadays (Királ'ová & Pavlíček, 2015), it is important to ensure that companies are aware of its power in the tourism sector. Also, as stated earlier, the youth tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing segments (UNWTO, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to uncover whether the social media marketing strategy should, as the other channels, be more carefully evaluated. Our study is also focused on testing whether the cultural differences of the two pairs of researched countries: Bulgaria and Croatia, and Sweden and the Netherlands, have an effect on the behaviors and attitudes. So, we focus on two main research questions. The first one is exploring whether social media positively influences youth tourists' intention to plan travel, while the second one aims to discover if cultural differences have an influence on those relationships.

### 1.4 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of seven main chapters. It begins with a thorough introduction where the relevance of the phenomenon is explained. This section also incorporates the purpose of the study,

as well as the research question. The second chapter of this paper is devoted to an extensive literature review, which consists of four research streams. Then we proceed with the theoretical framework, which explains the proposed model and hypotheses. It is followed by the methodology of the research and the data collection design. The fifth chapter reflects upon the analysis of the data and interpretation of the results. Furthermore, the discussion chapter relates our findings to existent research in the field. Finally, the seventh and last section provides the reader with the conclusions of the study, managerial implications, as well as limitations and opportunities for further research.

## 2 Literature review

The literature review aims to present existing research to enable an easier understanding of the paper's academic background. It consists of four literature streams: consumer behavior, social media marketing, youth tourism, and culture. The first section describes consumer behavior and further explains it in the tourism industry context. Then, the second chapter explains the relevance of social media marketing nowadays, with the third chapter incorporating both social media and youth tourism together. Youth tourism is the fourth chapter of this paper and it embodies existing literature to develop comprehension of the phenomenon and link its relevance to the previous chapter. Lastly, we observe culture as an aspect that influences one's behavior. So, this chapter provides us a solid base for establishing a theoretical framework that assists us in developing an interesting study in which we combine these concepts.

### 2.1 Consumer behavior

Consumer behavior considers all activities that are involved in acquiring, consuming and disposing of products and services, which also involves the decision-making before and after these actions (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995). Therefore, when one decides to undertake travel, they firstly collect information for their decisions, such as destination, travel arrangements, hotels, etc. One can gather that information from various sources, such as friends, family, and the Internet.

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), the behavior could be foreseen by the intentions, and the intentions are a product of a person's attitudes. Moutinho (1987) claims that behavioral intention immediately precedes the behavior and it occurs due to the following factors: evaluative beliefs, situational factors, and social factors that provide a set of normative beliefs. This conclusion arises from the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In this case, behavioral beliefs arise from the underlying influence on a person's attitude to carry out a behavior, and normative beliefs affect a person's subjective norm on performing a behavior (Jang et al., 2009). Moreover, Day (1969) concluded that the intentional measure is more useful than the behavioral one since it can capture a consumer's mindset and enable a better understanding of their purchases.

### 2.1.1. Consumer behavior in the tourism industry

Often, consumer behavior in the tourism industry is referred to as ‘travel behavior’ or ‘tourist behavior’ (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014). Typically, tourist’s behavior can be predicted by their intention, and studying intention is often more effective than studying the actual behavior (Jang et al., 2009). Travel motivation is popularly studied in tourism research, but the relationship between travel motivation and behavioral intention has not been studied thoroughly yet (Jang et al., 2009). Hence, Mansfeld (1992) argues that travel motivation is the key stage because it activates travel decisions before the actual travel. So, once people are motivated to travel, they start acquiring information about their planned travels (Mansfeld, 1992).

For example, Iso-Ahola (1980) found that leisure behavior can be forecasted by one’s attitude. Furthermore, Woodside and Dubelaar (2002) suggested a framework of tourism consumption system, consisting of a series of travel intentions, decisions, and behaviors that occur before, during, and after the trip. Also, Shim, Gehrt, and Siek (2005) discovered that adult travelers who see themselves as “younger” are inclined to have a more positive emotional attitude since they have experience in travel in the past, and also tend to have stronger intentions to travel in the future.

Marketers aim to predict the behavioral intentions of tourists, in order to be able to cater to them better (Hennessey, Yun & MacDonald, 2010). This is why studying the intentions to plan touristic activities is essential. Peter and Olson (1996) claim that people act according to the perceived benefits from the action. Furthermore, one’s intentions could change over time and depend on how certain they are (Moutinho, 1987). However, decision-making in the tourism industry is complex because it involves numerous decisions on a large variety of elements of the vacation itinerary, which are not only made prior to travel but at the destination as well (Choi et al., cited in Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014). Furthermore, decision-making in the travel industry is often motivated by situational factors (Chen & McCain, 2011).

Hsu and Lin (2008), Parra-López et al. (2011), and Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013) studied the behavioral intention to use or create social media content related to travel planning. For instance, Hsu and Lin (2008) explored the intentions to write in a blog. On the other hand, Parra-López et al. (2011) and Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013) studied the intention to use social media and consumer-generated media when planning touristic activities. This is why the intentions variable could be instrumental in exploring consumer behavior and attitudes. Since, in this research, our aim is to discover how the use of social media influences the intentions to plan travel, we are convinced that the intentions variable could be instrumental in studying the attitudes of youth tourists.

### 2.1.2 Consumer culture theory

Since our research incorporates the cultural perspective, we study the CCT in order to be able to get a broader picture of the phenomenon. Consumer culture theory is not a unified theory, but rather a group of theoretical perspectives that explain the complexity of relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). CCT is a relatively new term, and the concept of culture in CCT is “dynamic, interactive and paradoxical – always

under construction” (Bajde, 2014). Namely, CCT does not look at culture as a system of homogenous values and meanings that are shared within a group, but rather a “multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader socio-historical frame of globalization and market capitalism” (Arnould & Thompson, 2018).

Moreover, CCT is a method of evaluating consumption in an exceptional way, which does not include typical frames, such as economics and psychology, but ensures a parted perspective of cultural meaning, including transformation caused by large social and cultural forces (Hannerz, 1992). CCT is not controlled by stereotypical conceptions of social forms, and it is influenced by capitalism and globalization (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, Slater (2002) concluded that consumers look for products for their symbolic and cultural meanings, rather than for its utilitarian value, and we can argue that the same firmly goes for consumption of tourism products and services.

## 2.2 Social media marketing

The content in Web 2.0, also known as the “social web”, allows users to freely generate and publish content, since it encourages more democratic use of Web than the preceding Web 1.0 (Kamel Boulos & Wheeler, 2007). Also, it favors content creation over content consumption while being open to changes and updates of the content (Kamel Boulos & Wheeler, 2007). It incorporates a social dimension that is often simply called “social media”. Web 2.0 supports group interaction since it is based on encouraging a more human approach to interactivity on the Web (Sharp, cited in Kamel Boulos & Wheeler 2007). Examples of Web 2.0 applications and websites include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, TripAdvisor, Pinterest, TikTok, Flickr, WordPress, Blogger, etc.

Social media is an inseparable part of a modern marketing strategy since it gives organizations new possibilities to interact with the consumers (Constantinides, 2014). Organizations utilize social media platforms to create content and reach the consumers, with the goal to increase the customer base and the popularity of their brand (Bansal, Masood & Dadhich, 2014). Social media marketing has many advantages, such as low costs, effective engagement, and interaction with customers (Bansal, Masood & Dadhich, 2014). Organizations can use the passive approach on social media to get information from the consumers or use the active approach to create publicity, customize the products to the needs and wants of the consumers, and engage them by giving them a chance to take part in the innovation process (Constantinides, 2014). Also, it allows organizations to stand out from the competition, as well as attract and retain customers by creating a strong bond with them (Constantinides, 2014). However, one of the main challenges in social media marketing is to keep customers engaged in the long-run, rather than focusing solely on the short-term revenue (Barger, Peltier & Schultz, 2016). For this reason, many companies are struggling to cater properly to their customers.

Human beings are profoundly communal and are in need of interaction, so social media enables them to socialize online (McHaney, 2012). Evidently, these social media platforms are widely used



by the youth segment, in order to communicate and exchange opinions. In the following paragraphs, we examine closely two of the most relevant terms to our research - user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth, which are key in our assessment of the youth tourists' attitudes and behaviors. The majority of people engaged in user-generated content are young adults (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). As active users of social media, youth tourists often share their travel experiences on different social platforms where they not only communicate but also promote destinations and influence their peers (Morrisey, 2012). In general, the youth segment is very dynamic and influenced by trends, so our study intends to fill in the gaps, in order to help companies retain and keep engaged their youth consumers in the long-run.

Even though some characteristics of the youth segment have been studied before, there are only a few studies that assessed the power of social media in the tourism industry with a focus on cultural differences (Gretzel, Kang & Lee, 2008; Jackson & Wang, 2013; Amaro & Duarte, 2017). While examining the youth tourism segment, we can conclude that there is a need for further research on the attitudes and behaviors of the youth tourists, while also taking into account their cultural background, which is to be explained further in this paper.

### 2.2.1 User-generated content

User-generated content, consumer-generated media, or user-created media are terms that are used interchangeably. With the inception of Web 2.0, the term UGC has been popularized. However, there is no universal definition for this concept due to its evolving nature (Christodoulides, Jevons & Bonhomme, 2012). UGC can be defined as content that is available through public accessible transmission media that reflects a degree of creative effort and is freely created outside of professional routines and practices (Christodoulides, Jevons & Bonhomme, 2012). UGC could be any type of content, such as text, videos, images, or audio, which is created by the users on different online platforms, such as social media (Berthon et al., 2015). UGC is a global phenomenon that has an extreme impact on the way users acquire and share information on tourism-related products online (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). So, it has created a shift in power from companies to consumers (O'Hern & Kahle, 2013). Therefore, one should not underestimate the power of the content created by users.

### 2.2.2 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) advertising makes use of UGC since it represents content created by non-professionals online (Eastin, Daugherty & Burns, 2011). User reviews are one of the most common user-generated content on the Internet. It represents an important form of Consumer-to-Consumer communication and examines the impact of such reviews as a type of promotion, such as buzz creation about some product or brand (O'Hern & Kahle, 2013). Moreover, Yu, Carlsson, and Zou (2014) discovered that the eWOM intention and the overall social media are influenced mostly by credibility and how interesting the user-generated content is. Also, high credibility is often placed on WOM information as it is believed that the person providing the

WOM information has nothing to lose and is, therefore, more likely to offer honest advice (Chatterjee, 2001).

Since word-of-mouth is an extremely important driver of the tourism industry, emerging eWOM has greatly affected the travel industry. Burgess et al. (2009) discovered that tourists tend to have a high level of trustworthiness and reliability towards UGC because they perceive that content as “real” experiences by independent and “real” people. On the other hand, one’s level of reliability and trustworthiness of content may be low if people perceive it to be fake (Burgess et al., 2009). Moreover, UGC opinions tend to have higher perceived credibility than traditional information sources in the tourism industry (Sarks, 2007). To investigate the significance of UGC to young tourists, we will investigate the relation of Perceived trustworthiness of the social media content to the intention to plan travel - variables, which we will introduce later in the paper.

Chen, Shang, and Li (2014) found that the subjective information attributes of blog content can significantly influence the destination choice when consumers search for information on travel blogs. So, they conclude that tourists usually only consult blogs that they perceive relevant to their information needs and focus on this limited information to build the image of a destination (Chen, Shang & Li, 2014). Furthermore, Dolan, Seo, and Kemper (2019) suggest that “each instance of complaining can result in either co-creation or co-destruction”. Customers who complain on social media, depending on the nature of the complaint, can either undermine the organization they are complaining of or help it make its service better (Dolan, Seo & Kemper, 2019). Therefore, when customers complain in social media, this is not necessarily negative, because the organizations have the chance to realize their weaknesses and create value both for themselves and the consumers (Dolan, Seo & Kemper, 2019). These studies closely relate to our research topic. Since UGC is an inseparable part of social media marketing, we closely assess the perceived trustworthiness of the information and perceived similarity of interest, as other independent variables in our adapted model.

### 2.2.3 Perspectives of social media marketing

When discussing social media marketing, one should always study it from both the consumer and the organization's perspective. Literature in social media marketing by Alves, Fernandes, and Raposo (2016) highlights that from an organizational perspective, social media could be a very powerful tool that organizations can use to increase popularity, sales and interact with their customers. Also, social media sentiment often has a larger impact than other types of media, and microblogs and social networks are the most used means (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016).

As mentioned, young people make up the largest share of social media users (Statista, 2019). This is why we focus specifically on Social media marketing because it is one of the most relevant types of marketing to our studied segment. Living in the digital age has made reaching and engaging with the youth easier than ever, mainly because using social media is their routine activity performed daily (Dunlop, Freeman & Jones, 2016). Therefore, targeting youth and simple content creation allows fast and easy engagement with shared materials (Dunlop, Freeman & Jones, 2016). According to Alves, Fernandes, and Raposo (2016), from a consumer perspective, social media

content leads to increased consumption, conversation, and better attitudes towards the brand or organization. However, there has still not been comprehensive research on the perceptions of youth travelers and specifically on their attitudes about the travel industry.

## 2.3 Tourism and social media marketing

Tourism is defined as “activities of people who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business or other purposes” (World Tourism Organization, 1991). Social media marketing, on the other hand, is a valuable tool for businesses in various spheres, and the same goes for the tourism industry. A study by Xiang and Gretzel (2010) claims that social media websites are “ubiquitous” in terms of online search of travel information since they occur everywhere, no matter what keywords one searches for. Some social media platforms, such as TripAdvisor or VirtualTourist, were very popular because they have evolved into primary travel information sources (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Since travelers long for creative and interactive communication that includes emotions, they are interested in participating in tourism products, as well as maintaining a relationship with the providers (Királ'ová & Pavlíček, 2015). Therefore, social media can help destinations to stay competitive on the market since they allow them to create content and maintain interactive communication (Királ'ová & Pavlíček, 2015). Furthermore, Schlegelmilch & Ollenburg (2013) revealed that one of the most efficient ways to target youth travelers is viral marketing, which is obtained through social media platforms. Given the high importance of social media in the travel industry, especially to the youth segment, in our research, we aim to gather a thorough perspective on how social media influences the youth tourists' intentions to plan travel. Therefore, all organizations in the tourism industry could benefit from a clearer understanding of the influence of social media on customer's perception and its impact on their choices and behavior (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014), which is youth tourists in this case.

### 2.3.1 Effects of social media on the decision-making process in the tourism industry

Gupta (2019) evaluated the effect of social media on the decision-making process of the consumers for the hotel industry, confirming the claim of Fotis, Buhalis, and Rossides (2012) that social media has a significant impact on tourists' decision-making. However, since people on social media are exposed to an abundance of opinions, the decisions of individuals could change after acknowledging the beliefs of other people (Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012). In addition to this, the findings of the study by Gupta (2019) show that people extensively use social media platforms to support their choices in booking hotels. Also, the author claims that they frequently use both

social media and conventional websites, since they want to verify the information of the consumer-generated content.

Moreover, Gupta (2019) concludes that the positive effects of social media in traveling outweigh the negative ones. Therefore, by using social media for planning a vacation, one gets an overview of options available and possible alternatives, which is time-saving and enables them to get all the information easily by only using their device (Gupta, 2019). Also, the author states that it is important to consider the degree of trustworthiness of the social media used, as well as the source and the accuracy of the content because they are some of the main determinants in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, Ravindran, Nagamalar, and Uma Rani (2018) identified the factors that influence tourists' preferences for social media in their decision-making process regarding tourism. The study showed that people with different demographic characteristics preferred distinct types of social media to support their decision-making for tourism services. For example, there were significant differences between married and unmarried tourists, and travelers with different types of occupations (Ravindran, Nagamalar & Uma Rani, 2018). These findings are important to our research because we examine in what ways youth tourists act differently, by incorporating the cultural component. Since it has already been found that there are significant differences between people with various demographic characteristics, we consider the cultural aspect to be an area that is worth exploring.

### 2.3.2 Intention to plan travel

A study by Parra-López et al. (2011) explored the factors which determine the intentions of travelers to use social media when planning their holiday. So, the authors related the term “social media” to consumer-generated content, such as blogs, photos, and comments online, which are posted before, during, or after a trip. This study discovered that consumers decide whether or not to use social media in their planning primarily based on the perceived benefits of the use - functional, psychological, hedonic, and social. Other incentives, which also encourage the use of social media in the information search before traveling are altruism, availability of technology, personal skills of the tourists, and the degree of trustworthiness of the content (Parra-López et al., 2011).

Moreover, Chung and Koo (2015) evaluated the values of the use of social media in obtaining information before traveling, but from a slightly different perspective. The authors discovered that consumers are motivated by intrinsic factors when making decisions, so when tourists perceive positive value regarding searching for information, they increase their searches (Chung & Koo, 2015). Furthermore, the authors state that information reliability and enjoyment are two main benefits of social media since they substantially influence the perceived value of it. Finally, similar to the study by Parra-López et al. (2011), Chung and Koo (2015) concluded that complexity and perceived effort showed a negative influence on the perceived value of social media, but they did not have a significant influence on social media usage. These two research are valuable to us since they implement a similar model to the adapted TAM model that we use. However, they focus much

more on the different benefits and costs of using social media when planning traveling, whereas we explore the attitudes of the youth segment and look at them through the cultural prism. Thus, our research uses some main concepts that originate from the TAM model, incorporating culture as a moderating variable.

According to Pennington-Gray, Schroeder, and Kaplanidou (2011), past experiences can also have a significant effect on the perceived risk in the first stages of the decision-making process. Their study suggests that negative information about a certain destination found online reduces the intentions of tourists to travel there. The researched risk aspect is related to the uncertainty avoidance feature of the cultural perspective of our research. Since we explore the differences between the youth tourists from four different countries, we find the uncertainty avoidance index and individualism versus collectivism dimensions extremely important.

## 2.4 Youth tourism

The majority of the studies conducted on youth tourism explain the typology of youth tourism (Mois, 2010; Demeter & Bratucu, 2014), and youngsters' motivations for travel (Çakar & Seyitoğlu, 2016; Todorović & Jovičić, 2016; Yousaf, Amin & Santos, 2018; Yunusovich, 2018). However, there are only a few studies that examined the power of social media in the tourism industry with a focus on cultural differences (Gretzel, Kang & Lee, 2008; Jackson & Wang, 2013; Amaro & Duarte, 2017). For example, it has been proven that individuals from individualistic societies tend to be more inclined to informational benefits rather than using the Internet as a form of social communication, which is more present within groups of people from collectivistic societies (Chau et al., 2002; Chu & Choi, 2011; Ayele et al., 2016; Amaro & Duarte, 2017).

Research on the correlation between social media and culture concerning decision-making is slowly emerging (Abălăesei, 2016). However, to have a clearer understanding of this phenomenon, more research is needed. Also, some claim that there is a lack of understanding of how cultural differences explicitly influence the content on social media (Ngai et al., 2015). The impact of social media content on consumer's decision-making varies from culture to culture, and there is no extensive research on social media marketing implications at a global level (Abălăesei, 2016).

Furthermore, Gretzel and Yoo (2008) argue that some kinds of travel technologies could be more flourishing in particular markets, but also should be adapted to the specific national environment and the market's culture. Therefore, we believe that investigating the influence of social media on youth tourists' intention to plan travel would be very valuable for companies engaging in tourism activities. Cultural differences ought to be understood better regarding UGC's influence on decision-making depending on the country of interest (Abălăesei, 2016). These findings would help companies to target their customers better, especially since the majority of people engaged in UGC content are young adults (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). So, travel websites could benefit from our findings because they could take advantage of UGC to extensively engage their customers in their content (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

## 2.4.1 Definition of youth tourism

The term “youth” can be described as a transition between the dependence period of childhood to adulthood independence, but also as becoming aware of our interdependence as members of the community (World Economic Forum, 2013). However, Seekings (1995) argues that there is no definition of “young”. On the other hand, Schott (2004) claims that, although youth is a complex term to define, there is a need for its definition to establish an accepted understanding of the term, and for now, it can only be determined by age. Nevertheless, some claim that youth as a concept has never been strictly defined through an age range because youth portrays an aspect of a social position of a person, which can only partially be determined by one’s age (Clarke, 1992).

Although the term “youth tourism” has been broadly defined in the literature, there is no clear definition that is universally accepted. The term youth tourism is defined differently depending on the organization. For example, the United Nations defines “youth” as persons aged between 15 and 24 (UNESCO, 2019). However, the World Tourism Organisation (1991) states that young tourists are people between 15 and 26 years old. On the other hand, WYSE Travel Confederation states that young tourists are 15 to 29 years old (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2012). Nevertheless, this can also depend on the country. For example, Uzbekistan defines youth tourists as people aged 16 to 30 (Yunusovich, 2018). Youth tourists may be defined as individuals motivated to travel to construct the experience of meeting a new culture and to benefit from new learning opportunities, both formal and informal, in an environment that is unknown to them and is considered different than their everyday life (Ghete, 2015).

## 2.4.2 What differentiates youth tourists?

Youth tourists belong to a young age group, so they tend to have lower incomes, which makes them more sensitive to prices (Demeter & Bratucu, 2014). Since the majority of them are not working full-time, most of them are traveling on a constrained budget and look for affordable accommodation options so that they can extend their journey as much as possible. However, the majority of their travel funds are spent on various activities, such as nature, adventure, and culture (Maoz, 2007). Also, the majority of young tourists are students, hence they have more free time than employed people. Although travelers in their 20s and mid-30s are the ones whose lives revolve around technology, they still enjoy socializing, but in less affordable ways (Morrisey, 2012).

Some argue that youth tourists tend to socialize more with other travelers during their trips (Obenour et al., 2006). Moreover, youth tourists tend to share their experiences on different social platforms which they use not only for communicating, but for promoting and influencing as well (Morrisey, 2012). There are various reasons why young tourists are willing to travel more frequently nowadays. Several studies conducted by UNWTO have shown that young people travel more often than other tourists, and are less likely to avoid traveling due to political disruption, disease, or a natural disaster (Yunusovich, 2018). Moreover, young tourists are the ones that want to be introduced to new and undiscovered territories, as well as willing to contribute to the development of those territories (Yunusovich, 2018).

## 2.5 Culture

The last theoretical stream in this literature review is about cultural differences in the international context. Culture is a difficult term to define. Hofstede (1984) described it as "The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". Also, some say that "Culture consists of patterns of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). We use the cultural aspect as a moderator in our research to examine the youth tourists' intentions to plan travel. This section of the paper is vital since culture constitutes our moderator variable.

According to Hofstede (2001), cross-border cultural patterns do exist, and culture does not begin and end at national borders. Although House et al. (2004) concluded that national culture is stable over time, one can wonder how stable culture can be. Culture is affected by changes that occur in trade and economy, as well as the new ideas, thoughts, and realities which shift cultural perspectives (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, national culture might eventually change and Hofstede's findings might not be relevant anymore (Kelley, MacNab, & Worthley, 2006).

To refrain from undesirable consequences, modern companies need to understand the idea of culture. If a company is aware of cultural differences, they can improve their understanding of international partners and competitors (Podrug, Pavičić & Bratić, 2006). Therefore, companies can understand the situations they initially perceive as odd or difficult to understand (Podrug, Pavičić & Bratić, 2006). However, some say that cultural differences in decision-making styles are often sidelined (Yousef, 1998).

However, people are not only exposed to other cultures, but they export their own culture as well. This happens when they cross national borders and trade goods and assets, communicate, and exchange ideas (Reisinger & Crofts, 2010). Therefore, they become more similar in terms of their values, tastes, needs, behavior, etc. Even though it is common to think that cultural patterns are very mixed today and could not be defined with national borders, Hofstede's framework is often considered to be the most reliable measure of national culture (Kolman et al., 2003; Yenyurt & Townsend, 2003; Gong, 2009; Sabiote, Frías & Castañeda, 2012).

Moreover, research has shown that inside a country, there might be significant differences between the various regions, so in some cases the differences in a state could be compared to differences with other countries (Kaasa, Varblane, & Vahl, 2014). However, the authors claim that some countries are also very homogenous in terms of culture. For instance, all the countries that are to be researched in this study: Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden, and the Netherlands, prove to be very homogeneous in terms of culture within the country (Kaasa, Varblane, & Vahl, 2014). Figure 1 (Hofstede insights, 2020) displays the similarities and differences between the four countries that are included in our research.

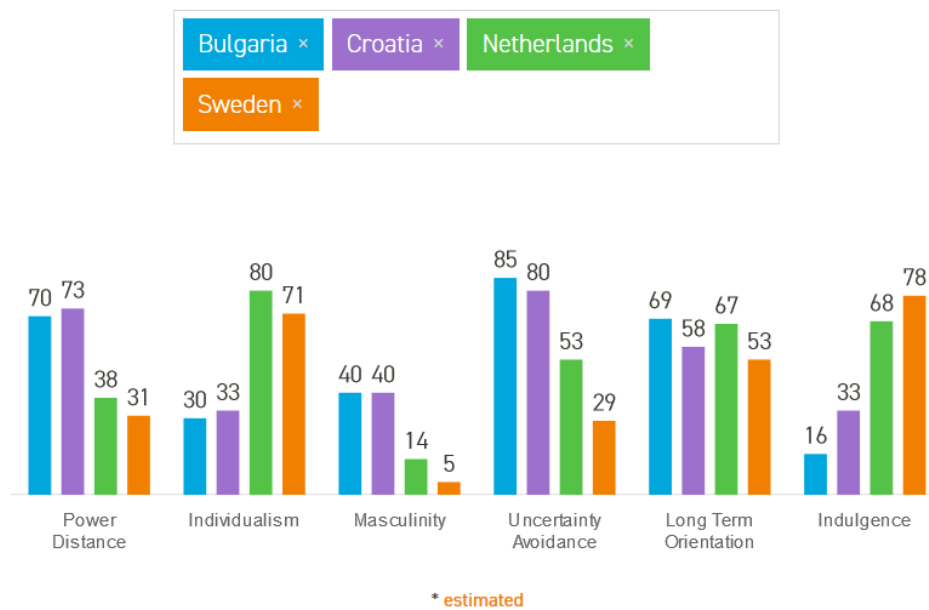


Figure 1. Hofstede's insights – Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden and the Netherlands (2020)

### 2.5.1 The effect of culture on the tourism industry

Previous researchers have already assessed the role of culture in the tourism industry. Decisions regarding travel are often very complex, and typically, complex decisions are consequences of cultural values in every individual (Adler, 1991). According to a study by Frías et al. (2012), culture could be seen as a mitigating variable in a tourist's decision-making process. The authors argue that the image that a tourist form about a destination before visiting it depends on the level of uncertainty avoidance of the culture that the tourist originates from. In this study, culture was used as a moderator on the formation of the image of a tourist destination. However, in our research, we use culture as a moderator, but from a youth tourist perspective on the use of social media when planning travel.

Furthermore, Sonmez and Graefe (1998) distinguished two kinds of tourists: risk-averse and risk seekers. The study has shown that risk-averse individuals were more likely to choose destinations that they perceive as safe. On the other hand, risk seekers were expected to care less about selecting destinations based on safety factors. A study by Jackson (2001) found that people that come from highly individualistic countries favor culturally similar tourist destinations, whereas people from highly collectivistic societies tend to prefer culturally distinct destinations.

People from highly individualistic societies tend to have a greater urge for affiliation and depend less on their in-groups (Franzoi, 1996). Some research has shown that the individualism versus collectivism dimension in Hofstede's framework could demonstrate how people from different cultures use social media (Kim, Lee & Chung, 2011; Ayeh et al., 2016). So, since the effect of culture on the tourism industry, in general, has already been thoroughly investigated, we believe that examining the moderating effect of culture on youth tourism as an emerging segment of



tourism could be valuable. Since nowadays youth tourists are the ones using social media the most (Mayrhofer et al., 2020), we explore its influence on intentions to plan travel.

Manrai and Manrai (2011) used individualism versus collectivism and the uncertainty avoidance index Hofstede dimensions to analyze the travelers' attitudes. March (2000) described the Japanese tourists as a generally collectivistic group that is obliged to comply with the culturally acceptable behaviors and attitudes. Also, the Japanese score high on uncertainty avoidance index, so they prefer to travel in groups to reduce the perceived risk (Manrai & Manrai, 2011). This aspect incorporates both their uncertainty avoidance index and individualism versus collectivism dimensions. Moreover, Jackson (2000) discovered that Australian travelers prefer destinations with a similar culture to their own, and Australia as a tourist destination mostly attracted tourists with comparable cultural backgrounds.

According to Crofts (2004), with the increase of the cultural distance between a tourist and the host country, the level of risk-reducing behavior by the tourist also increases. Therefore, when travelers go to countries with a very different culture from their own, they tend to extensively plan their trip, purchase more activities organized by agencies or tour operators, as well as travel with more people, for a shorter time, and to fewer destinations (Crofts, 2004). Also, Manrai and Manrai (2011) confirmed Croft's findings and stated that tourists from cultures with high uncertainty avoidance index engage in risk-reducing behaviors more than people from cultures with low uncertainty avoidance index.

Some studies have already been conducted on the comparison of intentions to plan travel based on Hofstede's framework (Litvin, Crofts & Hefner, 2004; Manrai & Manrai, 2011). They are focused on examining how culture affects the tourists' behavior and intention to travel. However, they were conducted before social media marketing evolved to such an influential information search channel. Therefore, we believe that, since social media is an inseparable part of one's life nowadays, studying its influence on youth tourists' intention to plan travel, moderated by culture, could be a valuable contribution to the existing literature.

In this research, we focus on two aspects of culture - the cultural differences related to uncertainty avoidance and individualism versus collectivism since they are the ones that could impact the tourism industry the most. So, as mentioned before, social media is extensively used during the stage of travel planning, which is nowadays mostly done through digital channels. Therefore, we believe that it is worth analyzing the two pairs of countries and finding whether they differ in their behavior in using social media to plan travel.

## 3 Theoretical framework

The following section reviews the research model used for developing the framework, as well as the hypotheses that are derived from the framework. So, the proposed model is shown, consisting of four independent variables, a moderating variable, and one dependent variable. The majority of the framework is derived from the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989), which is thoroughly explained in the research model section. Furthermore, eight hypotheses are presented in this chapter, ending with a figure of the proposed model.

### 3.1 Research model

To measure the intentions to plan travel of youth tourists, we opted for some variables of Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which is extensively used in the evaluation of the integration of new technologies. Although it was previously used only as a computer use behavior explanation tool (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989), it has been applied in a variety of studies related to acceptance of IT, and social media is one of them. Since social media is used voluntarily for both socialization and entertainment, it is important to study the user's attitude (Lin, 2006). Some studies have already proven the factors that lead to the adoption of social media by using TAM (Shin & Kim, 2008; Willis, 2008; Lee, 2010; Zhou, 2011; Dixit & Prakash, 2018). For example, Willis (2008) used TAM to explain social media platform usage and confirmed the existence of a positive relationship.

Furthermore, Dixit and Prakash (2018) concluded that TAM may be used as a model to explain social networking behavior, and if companies are aware of it, they might profit from its unique and multilateral usage. Originally, the model consisted of only two variables: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis et al., 1989). However, some claim that the user's motivation in TAM may be explained by three constructs: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and intention to use social media for collaborative learning (Al-Rahimi, Othman & Musa, 2013). However, TAM theory did not take into account the influence of other users on an individual's attitude and behavior.

#### 3.1.1 Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is one of the most widely known theoretical models and it has been applied and adapted in various research contexts (Lee, Kozar & Larsen, 2003). Originally, TAM was designed to explain behaviors concerning computer use (Davis et al., 1989). A table

adapted from Davis (1989) is displayed in Figure 2. Although it is a research model based on psychology, it is mostly used as a model to explain IT’s user acceptance (Davis, 1993). Furthermore, the TAM model is robust, and it has been applied in diverse research contexts, not only in the user acceptance prediction but also in the adoption of social network sites technologies (Weerasinghe & Hindagolla, 2018). However, some argue that the TAM model does not remain equal when applied across cultures (Gefen & Straub 1997; Straub, Keil & Bernner, 1997; Zakour, 2004; McCoy, Everard & Jones, 2005). In the beginning, TAM (Davis, 1986, 1989) had only two primary factors that influenced a person’s intention to use new technology, which were perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

According to Rauniar et al. (2014), TAM initially assumed that the information systems (IS) were used to improve workers’ efficiency in organizational settings. However, the author claimed that IS could not be used by individual users incorporating an “entertainment” element for the users. Rauniar et al. (2014) concluded that the TAM theory does not consider the roles of other users in impacting an individual's attitude and behavior towards social media. This could be problematic since previous research has shown that the behavior of an individual is influenced by the behavior of people that surround them (Rauniar et al., 2014).

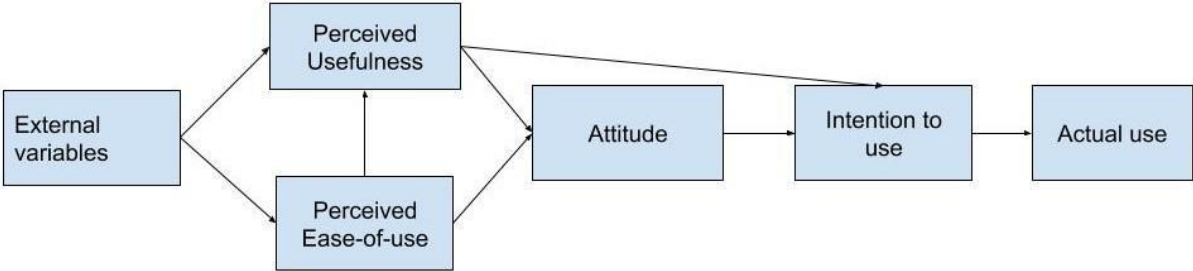


Figure 2. Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989)

Although previous studies demonstrated that TAM mostly works with task-based technologies, Willis (2008) concluded that this model can be used to predict the acceptance of relationship-focused technologies as well. Also, professional relationships that were previously maintained through telephones or in personal communication, have now shifted to social media due to the progress in its ease of use (Willis, 2008). There is a strong connection between TAM and social media networks (Lane & Coleman, 2012). Therefore, with the emergence of social media, this phenomenon is gaining more attention whereas TAM is a commonly used theoretical approach concerning social media adoption by its users (Wirtz & Göttel, 2016).

## 3.2 Hypotheses

To carry out this research, we examine how the independent variables (Perceived usefulness, Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest) affect the dependent variable - the Intention to plan travel. Since the cultural differences are our moderator with two dimensions (Uncertainty avoidance index and Individualism versus collectivism), we also explore whether they could affect the results. We firstly examine the direct effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable (hypotheses 1-4). Then, we include the cultural differences as a moderator (hypotheses 5-12) to assess whether culture affects the relationships stated in the first four hypotheses.

Some studies have shown that perceived usefulness of computer technology may moderate the influence of cultural dimensions of one's country on their intention to use that technology (Straub, 1994; Hill et al., 1998; Harris & Davidson, 1999; Akour et al., 2006). Studies by Igarria et al. (1997) and Adams (2002) have concluded that perceived usefulness is positively related to computer usage and literacy, and typically, persons from a low uncertainty avoidance culture are more prone in opportunities to be innovative and computer literate, as well as willing to explore new computer use (Fandy, 2000). On the other hand, a study by Oyibo and Vassileva (2020) has shown that collectivistic cultures have a significantly stronger intention to use an application determined by perceived usefulness, compared to the members of an individualistic society. Therefore, we aim to predict if the perceived usefulness of social media content might positively influence the intention to plan travel. We also consider the effect of the cultural differences moderator on this relationship. The proposed hypotheses are the following:

**H1 - There is a positive relationship between Perceived usefulness and youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.**

**H2 - The Cultural differences moderate Perceived usefulness' effect on youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.**

Furthermore, there has been insufficient research on the influence of culture on the relationship between perceived enjoyment and behavioral intention. For example, Ayeh, Au & Law (2016) found that the intention to use reviews as UGC for travel planning is more influenced by perceived enjoyment by Americans than Singaporeans. However, the authors state that this might not come from Americans being more individualistic, but from the indulgence dimension. In this research, we relate the perceived enjoyment variable to the intention to plan travel and include the cultural differences moderator to extend the available literature regarding this matter. The proposed hypotheses in our model are the following:

**H3- There is a positive relationship between Perceived enjoyment and youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.**

**H4 – The Cultural differences moderate Perceived enjoyment's effect on youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.**

The trustworthiness variable has been related to the cultural differences in several studies (Pye, 1985; Nisbett, 2003; Golesorkhi, 2006; World Values Survey, 2015; Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2018). A study by Hallikainen and Laukkanen (2018) revealed that “23% of the variance in an individual’s trusting disposition is explained solely by culture”. Furthermore, Golesorkhi (2006) argues that while certain matters may be considered fair, trustworthy, and reliable in some cultures, they might be perceived as the contrary in others. In general, different cultures trust others to various extents (Downes et al., 2002; Kirs & Bagchi, 2012). Also, people from some cultures might have much more trust for people from their own culture than from distinct ones (Nisbett, 2003). An example given by Pye (1985) is the Chinese people, who completely trust only their family members and have conditional trust to other people, with whom they do not have such a strong connection. Therefore, in this study, we relate the Perceived trustworthiness variable to the Intention to plan travel and explore whether the Cultural differences moderate the relationship in the youth tourism segment.

This variable is also related to the intention since the level of trustworthiness of a source is positively related to the intention to use that source (Ohanian, 1991). So, when a source is perceived as trustworthy, it might change the intention or attitude of the person who is looking at it (Ohanian, 1991). Since when writing UGC content, the authors do not have any personal interest, their content is potentially considered trustworthy (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013). Hence, the authors assume that tourist’s perceived trustworthiness towards UGC will positively affect their attitudes towards using UGC during their travel planning. Based on the relationship between the perceived trustworthiness and the intention variable, in this research, we propose the following hypotheses:

**H5 - There is a positive relationship between Perceived trustworthiness and youth tourists’ Intention to plan travel.**

**H6 - The Cultural differences moderate Perceived trustworthiness’ effect on youth tourists’ Intention to plan travel.**

The last independent variable in this study is the Perceived similarity of interest. In general, if a tourist interacting with UGC perceives their interest similar to the UGC creators’, they will be more likely to interact with that media (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013). Hence, we aim to investigate if there is a positive relationship between the degree of perceived similarity of interest and the intention to plan travel by using social media. Furthermore, in some cultures, the perceived similarity is more important than in others (Nisbett, 2003), but in many cases cultural differences could reduce the social contact between certain groups if they do not share similar interests (Carley, 1991). Also, people from different cultures do not manifest signs which are related to a culture different than theirs (Goffman, 1951). Therefore, culture could affect the decisions related to the Perceived similarity of interest and the Intention to plan travel, so we study it as a moderator of the relationship. The following hypotheses are proposed:

**H7 - There is a positive relationship between Perceived similarity of interest and youth tourists’ Intention to plan travel.**

**H8 - The Cultural differences moderate Perceived similarity of interest’s effect on youth tourists’ Intention to plan travel.**

Based on our model, the proposed hypotheses are displayed in the following table:

Table 1. Proposed hypotheses

H1	There is a positive relationship between Perceived usefulness and youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H2	The Cultural differences moderate Perceived usefulness' effect on youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H3	There is a positive relationship between Perceived enjoyment and youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H4	The Cultural differences moderate Perceived enjoyment's effect on youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H5	There is a positive relationship between Perceived trustworthiness and youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H6	The Cultural differences moderate Perceived trustworthiness' effect on youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H7	There is a positive relationship between Perceived similarity of interest and youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.
H8	The Cultural differences moderate Perceived similarity of interest's effect on youth tourists' Intention to plan travel.

Our proposed model is displayed in Figure 2, and it helps us distinguish whether there are differences provoked by the effect of culture on the intentions to plan travel of young tourists.

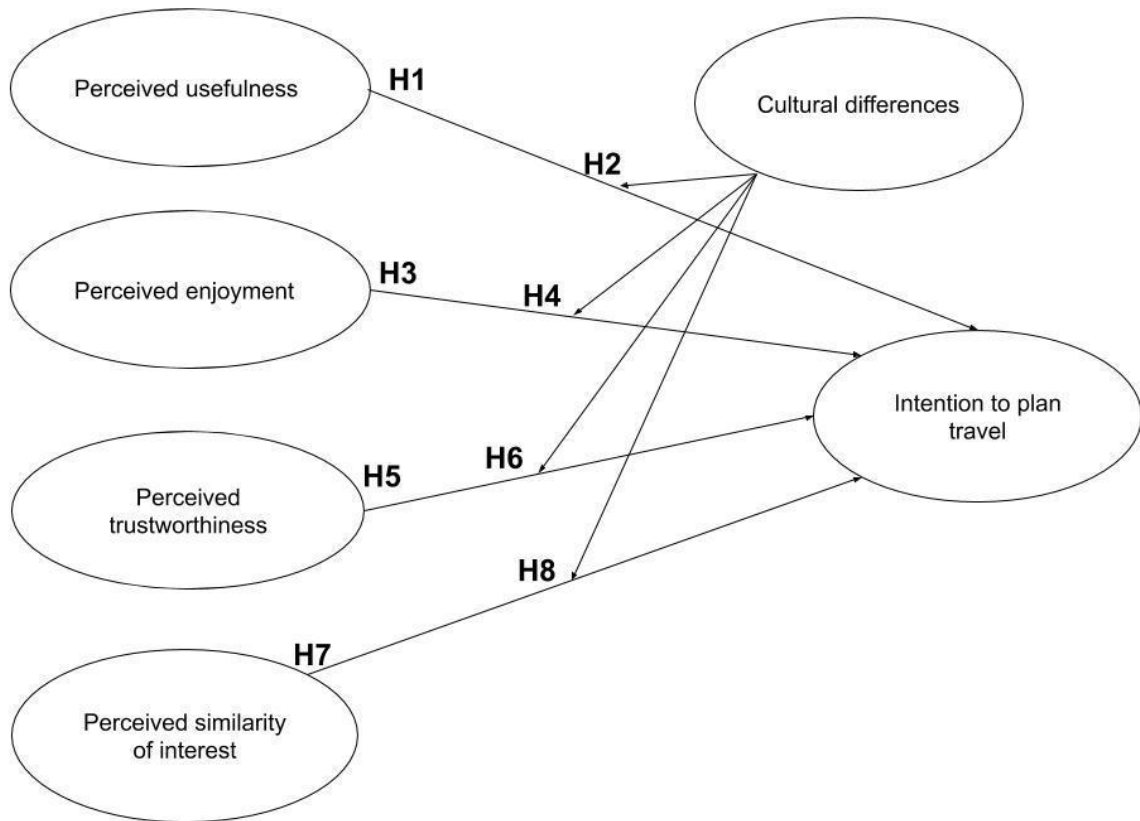


Figure 3. Proposed model for youth tourist's intentions to plan travel, moderated by cultural differences

## 4 Methodology

The following section of the paper describes the methods used to test the established theoretical framework and the hypotheses stated. The dependent, independent, and moderating variables are explained in detail. So, as previously mentioned, our dependent variable is Intention to plan travel, and our independent variables are: Perceived usefulness, Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest. Furthermore, the research design is stated and developed, and the strategy of the data collection is determined. Moreover, the variables and scales in the questionnaire are stated in a table. Lastly, the research design is developed with elaboration on how the data was collected.

### 4.1 Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the one that changes with the manipulation of the independent variables (Burns & Burns, 2008). It is the variable of most interest in the study since it could be altered by the other independent variables to obtain meaningful insights. In this research, the dependent variable is Intention to plan travel, which is affected by the independent ones that are to be explained further in the paper. This variable is instrumental in helping us determine the attitudes and behaviors of our studied segment, so in this section, we focus on the particularities of Intention to plan travel.

#### 4.1.1 Intention to plan travel

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), behavioral intention is a predictor of the actual behavior of a person. Also, Ajzen (1991) stated that the intention represents the extent to which one would put effort into performing a behavior. The variable intention to plan travel was inspired by different intention variables, such as behavioral intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Oliver, 1997), purchase intention (Keller, 2001), travel intention (Hennessey, Yun & MacDonald, 2010), and intention to use UGC for travel planning (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013).

In particular, the intention to travel could be defined as the probability of a tourist to visit a specific destination during a certain time (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994). As mentioned before, one can predict tourist's behavior by their intention, so studying intention is often better than examining the actual behavior (Jang et al., 2009). Although travel motivation is often studied in tourism



research, the relationship between travel motivation and behavioral intention has not been extensively investigated yet (Jang et al., 2009).

The intention to use social media for travel purposes has been studied by both Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013) and Parra-López et al. (2011). They explored the intention of tourists to use social media and consumer-generated media when planning their trips. According to Hennessey, Yun and MacDonald (2010), the decision-making process related to the intention to travel is compiled by several other variables, such as “travel stimuli, personal and social determinants of travel behaviors of socioeconomic status, personality features, social influences, and attitudes and values”. Finally, other external variables, such as financial costs, time, past experiences, and image of the destination, are also considered important while considering the intention to travel (Hennessey, Yun & MacDonald, 2010). Evidently, many factors influence the intention to travel.

## 4.2 Independent variables

Independent variables are often called predictor or experimental variables (Burns & Burns, 2008). These variables are being manipulated to observe if there is an effect on the dependent variable, which is sometimes named an outcome variable. The independent variables in our model are the following: Perceived usefulness, Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest. We aim to predict if the variables mentioned can affect the dependent variable, the Intention to plan travel. The following sections thoroughly explain each dependent variable and corresponding hypotheses.

### 4.2.1 Perceived usefulness

Perceived usefulness is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (Davis, 1989), where the user assumes a positive use-performance relationship. It has been found that there is a relationship between the perceived usefulness variable and the intention since people, in general, develop intentions to do activities that they regard as useful (Davis, 1993). However, in the social media context, Rauniar et al. (2014) claim that perceived usefulness is a degree to which the social media user is convinced that using a particular social media platform helps them meet their goal-driven needs. Furthermore, Gumpo et al. (2020) concluded that users' attitudes towards the use of Instagram positively impact the intention to use that social media platform. Nevertheless, a study by Singh and Srivastava (2019) on the use of social media while traveling showed that 80% of the tourists use social media while planning travel, while 60% of them use it during travel to modify the itinerary. So, the majority of them perceived social media to be useful during both stages. Moreover, Ayeh, Au & Law (2013) related the perceived usefulness of using UGC to the intention to use UGC for travel planning.

#### 4.2.2 Perceived enjoyment

The variable perceived enjoyment comes from an assumption by Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw (1992), who claimed that the behavior of Internet users depends on their motivation type, which can be either extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is an instinct to perform a behavior to realize some goal or a reward (Deci & Ryan, 1987). On the other hand, intrinsic motivation means that one is carrying out an activity for its natural satisfaction, rather than doing it for the action's consequence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, when one's motivation is intrinsic, they are performing an act of, for example, fun or challenge, rather than because of a reward (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Perceived enjoyment is a post-adoption belief of a user, which leads to greater user satisfaction, as well as greater continuance intention (Pelling & White, 2009). Also, Moon and Kim (2001) found that users enjoying a web system are more likely to view their interactions with the system positively. For example, perceived enjoyment was discovered to be a key determinant of usage intention of sports websites (Hur, Ko & Claussen, 2012), as well as online gaming websites (Lee & Tsai, 2010). Typically, a mixture of perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness has a significantly positive impact on the intention to use technology (Sago, 2013). So, the combination of the two variables simply and potentially explains the main impacts on the usage intentions of computers (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1992). Moreover, Curran and Lennon (2011) found that perceived enjoyment was the most significant factor influencing the user's attitude and their desire to continue using existing social networks and joining other ones.

#### 4.2.3 Perceived trustworthiness

Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) define trustworthiness as an extent to which the communicator is confident that their claim is most valid. Trustworthiness is one of the two factors of source credibility, along with expertise (Wiener & Mowen, 1986). Since there are large quantities of data and information online, whose origin is not always identified, there is a need for reliability of the sources (Wang, Teo & Wei, 2007). In order for information to be trustworthy, it should not be biased, it has to be truthful, and shared with a good intention (Tseng & Fogg, 1999).

Furthermore, McGuire (1985) concluded that, when the content is communicated, the communicator has to believe in it themselves, otherwise trustworthiness could not be built. The author also argued that the communicator has to be transparent and share personal opinions with evidence of the communicated information. It is important to note that a communicator being anonymous does not influence the degree of perceived trustworthiness of the content (Chesneya & Sub, 2010). Moreover, Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides & Alarcón-del-Amo (2011) found that trust was a direct determinant influencing attitude of social media users. Also, sometimes the content is not as important to the level of perceived trustworthiness as the medium where it was shared (Schultz, Utz & Goritz, 2011).

#### 4.2.4 Perceived similarity of interest

The last variable is called perceived similarity of interest, also known as homophily, and it is defined as the degree to which individuals are alike, in terms of their attributes being similar, such as gender, age, education, or lifestyle (Rogers, 1983). However, a more recent view on the term is that homophily represents shared interests and mind-set (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007). The degree of perceived similarity mainly depends on the strength of the social ties among people, so when the tie is strong, the individuals share a higher degree of similarity between each other (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987). When the individuals are similar, they tend to trust and understand each other more than they would if they were not as similar (Ruef, Aldrich, & Carter, 2003).

Furthermore, some define it as the extent to which pairs of persons who interact are similar in particular attributes (Ferber & Pugliese, 2000). So, individuals have a tendency to interact with people that they perceive similar to themselves (Schacter, 1959). This is how the majority of online communities have been formed since people tend to look for others with similar mindsets and interests as their own (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013).

### 4.3 Moderating variable

In general, the moderating variable is a variable that may strengthen, reduce, revoke, or change the relationship between the independent and dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). So, this variable may alter the relationship between the variables. Behavioral researchers often claim that culture can be used to explain behavior, but there is little evidence on why culture frequently shapes behavior (Cronk, 2017). Culture as a moderator often evolves from the social influence model (Strong, 1968) and is adapted by using Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions. Many scholars consider Hofstede's framework as the most reliable measure of national culture (Kolman et al., 2003; Yenyurt & Townsend, 2003; Gong, 2009; Sabiote, Frías & Castañeda, 2012).

#### 4.3.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Individual's behavior and beliefs are greatly influenced by the cultural dimensions (Hasan & Ditsa, 1999). In order to assess the moderating effect of culture in this research, we focus on two of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. They have been developing since the 1980s when Hofstede came up with the first four dimensions to distinguish how cultures differ (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede (1981) attempted to classify cultures by using several broad dimensions that are connected to management practice (Gooderham, 2001). That way cultures may be clustered and coming up with standardized management approaches may be feasible (Gooderham, 2001).

Hofstede's insights have faced criticism, for instance, some claim that his study is unreliable because culture cannot be limited to national borders (Michael, 1997; McSweeney, 2000; Jones,

2007). Furthermore, Tayeb (1996) argued that Hofstede's methodology is inaccurate since it is solely based on an attitude-survey questionnaire, which is the least suitable method of studying culture. Nevertheless, some argue that this kind of survey is highly efficient for comparative purposes (Gooderham, 2001). Another criticism is the sample not being representative, due to its respondents being middle-class workers from a single company (Robinson, 1983). Moreover, some claim that his research is outdated (Mead, 1994).

However, the validity of the dimensions has been proved by numerous replications. For example, by 1994 there were 61 replications done (Søndergaard, 1994). They aimed at either finding support or validating Hofstede's conclusions (Søndergaard, 1994). So, the new, matching groups of respondents were tested and the majority of the studies confirmed Hofstede's findings either fully or partially (Maldonado, 1983; Ashkanini, 1984; Pooyan, 1984; Dunphy & Shi 1986; Westwood & Everett, 1987; Yeh, 1988; Punnett & Withaney, 1988; Shackleton & Ali 1990; Hoppe, 1990; Chow, Shields & Chan, 1991; Huo & Randall 1991; Chew & Putti, 1993; Fidalgo, 1993; Lowe, 1994). Therefore, we can conclude that Hofstede's findings are still relevant. However, some may argue that globalization has made young people more converging around some common set of values (Gooderham, 2001).

The present model involves six dimensions - power distance, uncertainty avoidance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, short versus long term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint. Given previous research on the effect of culture in the tourism industry (Franzoi, 1996; Jackson, 2000; Kim & Lee, 2000; Jackson, 2001; Litvin, Crofts & Hefner, 2004; Manrai & Manrai, 2011), we determined that studying only two of the dimensions, the uncertainty avoidance index and individualism versus collectivism, is suitable for examining the cultural differences in the effect of social media on youth travelers from different cultures.

In our empirical study, we focus on the Hofstede dimension rankings of four countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden, and the Netherlands. So, we do not distinguish whether the impact of the cultural differences on the intention to plan travel is caused by uncertainty avoidance or individualism versus collectivism. On the other hand, we suggest that the differences in the behavior of the youth segment could be impacted by either of the two traits, which are the only cultural dimensions that are closely related to traveling.

#### 4.3.2 Uncertainty avoidance index

Uncertainty avoidance is characterized by one's effort to "minimize unstructured situations" (Hofstede, 2011). Although it is not the same term as risk avoidance (Sitkin & Weingart, 1995), which could be easily attributed to the travel industry, the uncertainty avoidance index is also significantly related to our research. Kozak, Crofts, and Law (2007) claim that there is a relationship between Uncertainty avoidance index and risk perceptions related to travel, depending on the types of risk perceived by different nations. Also, it impacts the form of channels that are used for information search during travel planning, but also other behaviors connected to the minimization of risks (Money & Crofts, 2003; Litvin, Crofts & Hefner, 2004). Uncertainty avoidance relates to the "level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future" (Hofstede,

2011). It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in disorganized situations (Hofstede, 2011).

Cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance index tend to minimize the possibility of occurrence of such a situation, and they try to achieve that by laws, rules, strict norms of behavior, and disapproval of opinions that are considered “abnormal” (Hofstede, 2011). People from this kind of society are more emotional and tend to be motivated by their inner nervous energy (Hofstede, 2011). Furthermore, societies with strong uncertainty avoidance tend to believe that they ought to work hard and often have higher levels of anxiety (Gooderham, 2001). On the other hand, countries that score low on uncertainty avoidance index tend to be more accepting of different opinions and usually have fewer rules, as well as being more phlegmatic and contemplative than uncertainty avoidance cultures (Hofstede, 2011).

Nowadays, modern technology has changed the way people avoid uncertainty so the majority of societies, laws, rules, and policies tend to avoid uncertainties in the behavior of individuals (Irfan, 2016). Typically, persons coming from a culture of higher uncertainty avoidance are less prone in possibilities to be innovative and computer educated, as well as willing to explore new computer use (Fandy, 2000). So, unlike low uncertainty countries, core values of high uncertainty avoidance cultures are usually not aligned with the fundamentals of computer technology (Straub, Keil & Bernner, 1997; Fandy, 2000). The internet and computer technologies in general are considered disruptive by collectivistic countries (Hofstede, 1997). Therefore, Hofstede (2001) concluded that cultures scoring high on uncertainty avoidance index tend to accept and implement new types of technologies more slowly.

### 4.3.3 Individualism versus collectivism

The individualism versus collectivism cultural dimension is characterized as “the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups” (Hofstede, 2011). Individualism originates from Lynn and Hampson’s (1975) study, in which they concluded that individualism is strongly correlated with the national wealth of a country. In individualistic cultures, one is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family, while the collectivistic ones have much stronger ties with their extended families and tend to stick to their groups (Hofstede, 2011). In an individualistic culture, one is expected to have their own self-image “I”, while in the collectivistic ones it is more of a “we” (Irfan, 2016).

In the tourism industry, this dimension could be attributed, for instance, to people who prefer to travel alone or in groups. Moreover, the extent to which tourists make decisions - separately or together as a group, could also be linked to the degree of individualism versus collectivism (Franzoi, 1996; Manrai & Manrai, 2011). Usually, the Internet and computer technologies in general are considered disruptive by collectivistic countries (Hofstede, 1997).

Finally, the uncertainty avoidance index and individualism versus collectivism are two of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, which could be closely related to the social media usage in the tourism industry and specifically to the intention to plan travel. Therefore, we are convinced that

these cultural differences are an adequate mediator in our model.

#### 4.3.4 Cultural differences as a moderating variable

In the proposed model, our moderating variable is called Cultural differences. Even though all five of Hofstede's dimensions could be moderating the youngster's intention to plan travel by using social media, our study focuses on investigating the moderating effect of individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance index. Individualism versus collectivism dimension is most often used by scholars when they aim to discover differences between two or more cultures (Cohen & Avrahami, 2006). Also, this dimension is more often used as a moderator since it enables making more robust empirical evidence for building hypotheses, as well as making stronger conclusions (Jang et al., 2018).

In general, more individualistic societies prefer challenges from which they can get personal accomplishments, which often come from perceived usefulness and innate enjoyment (Gouveia & Ros, 2000). Typically, highly individualistic cultures tend to score low on power distance as well (Schwartz, 1994; Gouveia & Ros, 2000). Therefore, in research, the dimension power distance is often not used (Sánchez-Franco, Martínez-López & Martín-Velicia, 2009). Moreover, one of the reasons why we decided not to use, for example, the power distance dimension, is due to the high interrelatedness between power distance and individualism versus collectivism dimensions. This has been already pointed out by some scholars because studying them together would be more complicated due to issues of multicollinearity (Jang et al., 2018).

The other cultural dimension used in this study is the uncertainty avoidance index. Often, users' intention to use a technology is mediated by uncertainty avoidance (Sánchez-Franco, Martínez-López & Martín-Velicia, 2009). Uncertainty avoidance cultures are more anxious about the risks associated with using a technology (Hofstede, 1980). Also, cultural uncertainty avoidance negatively influences user's innovativeness (Steenkamp, Hofstede, & Wedel, 1999). However, some claim that moderate to low uncertainty avoidance societies are more motivated to use a technology because they perceive it as intrinsically enjoyable (Anandarajan, Simmers, & Igbaria, 2000). Also, low uncertainty avoidance countries often have weaker power distance dimension and score high on individualism, so these cultures are more positively related to creativity (Sánchez-Franco, Martínez-López & Martín-Velicia, 2009).

According to Hofstede's insights, Bulgaria and Croatia could be categorized as countries with high uncertainty avoidance index, whereas Sweden and the Netherlands score much lower in this dimension (Hofstede insights, 2020). Furthermore, Bulgaria and Croatia are considered rather collectivistic societies, and Sweden and the Netherlands are more individualistic (Hofstede insights, 2020). Therefore, in our model, we consider the two pairs with similar cultural characteristics and evaluate the cultural differences in the behavior compared to the other pair. For instance, Sánchez-Franco, Martínez-López, and Martín-Velicia (2009) also used those dimensions in their study and named them "cultural differences" to explore the differences between Nordic and Mediterranean countries in relation to web-based electronic learning.

The scales used to measure the variables are shown in the following table:

Table 2. Variables and scales

Variable name	Scale	Reference	Likert scale
Perceived usefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improves my travel planning</li> <li>● Helps me plan trips more efficiently</li> <li>● Makes my travel planning easier</li> <li>● Enables me to reach travel-related decisions faster</li> <li>● Is useful for my overall travel planning</li> </ul>	Davis (1986), Ayeh, Au & Law (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strongly disagree</li> <li>● Disagree</li> <li>● Somewhat disagree</li> <li>● Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>● Somewhat agree</li> <li>● Agree</li> <li>● Strongly agree</li> </ul>
Perceived enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enjoyable</li> <li>● Pleasant</li> <li>● Interesting</li> <li>● Fun</li> <li>● Entertaining</li> </ul>	Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw (1992)	
Perceived trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dependable</li> <li>● Honest</li> <li>● Reliable</li> <li>● Sincere</li> <li>● Trustworthy</li> </ul>	Hovland et al. (1953)	
Perceived similarity of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reflects my own interests</li> <li>● Is similar to my own interests</li> <li>● Represents interests I can identify with</li> <li>● Is not very different from my own interests</li> <li>● Is created by someone with whom I share common interests</li> </ul>	Rogers (1983), Ayeh, Au & Law (2013)	
Intention to plan travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would not hesitate to use it in my travel planning</li> <li>● I would use it to seek travel advice</li> <li>● Expect to use the content</li> <li>● Intend to use this type of content for my travel planning</li> <li>● Would be very likely to use this type of content for my travel planning</li> </ul>	(Davis, 1989; Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989, 1992; Ohanian, 1991; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Kleijnen et al., 2009; Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013)	

## 4.4 Research design

This quantitative study employs a convenience sampling method. The respondents are from four countries - Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Since the targeted age group is 15-29, we also had to comply with the national rules for parental consent. Therefore, since for the Netherlands, the legal age at which we do not need parental consent is 16, we used data only from the older age group, which is 23-29 (Consent to Use Data on Children, 2018). The data collection method for this study is an online questionnaire compiled of 11 questions. It was performed via an online survey platform called SoSci Survey ([www.soscisurvey.de](http://www.soscisurvey.de)). It was open for responses from 30 April 2020 to 10 May 2020. During this period we had 469 respondents in total. The data were inspected to get only valid responses. Therefore, we removed the responses that were inaccurate, such as ones with a survey completed in a time frame that was unusually short, not completed until the end, or ones that were completed in a clear pattern. So, we have arrived at 311 valid responses for our research.

### 4.4.1. Data collection

The questionnaire consists of five demographic questions, which help us obtain a general overview of the respondents, and seven scale questions, which contribute to the evaluation of the variables and making conclusions about the hypotheses. The scale questions enable measuring the attitudes of respondents related to all the independent variables and the dependent variable in our model, which are depicted in Table 2. The responses are measured with a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree.

Before answering the scale questions, the respondents saw two pictures. The chosen content represented popular methods of travel-related interaction on social media platforms. The first picture was a post from Instagram (Fe & Snow, 2019), made by influencers promoting a tourist destination. It included the photo, the text written by the influencers, and some comments of the users. In general, influencer marketing is one of the newer ways to endorse brands online and promote them to the target audience (Freberg et al., 2011), while providing the newest information to their followers (Liu et al., 2012). They are often seen as opinion leaders because they can greatly influence the behavior of their followers (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014; Jalilvand, 2017). Therefore, travelers' opinions on influencer content could be very closely related to our studied variables.

The second picture displayed online reviews on the official Facebook page of Yosemite National Park in the United States (Yosemite National Park - Reviews, 2020). The online reviews are also instrumental in studying our independent variables since they are among the main UGC types of content (Fang et al., 2016). Statistics show that 65% of the tourists look for information online before choosing a destination and 69% of their plans are based on reviews (Collie, 2014, cited in Fang et al., 2016). Therefore, online reviews are an important source of information, because tourists take into account the experiences of previous travelers (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). So, the influencer post and the page of online reviews were shown to the respondents before answering the



questionnaire in order to give them a clear idea about what type of social media content they should take into account when submitting their answers. The pictures and survey questions could be consulted in Appendix 1.

## 5 Results

### 5.1. Sample characteristics

The profile of the respondents of the survey is displayed in Table 3. In total, there were 311 valid respondents who have completed the survey. Over two-thirds of the sample were female (76.2%). The majority of respondents were in the older age group, which is 23 to 29 years old, making up 80.4% of the sample. However, in the grouping by nationality, there were 29.6 % Croats, 27% Bulgarians, 22.8% Dutch, and 20.6% Swedes. When looking at the level of education and occupation of the sample, the majority of the respondents obtained a bachelor's degree (45.7%) and were students (52.4%).

Table 3. Demographic characteristics

Profile category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	74	23.8
	Female	237	76.2
Age	15-22	60	19.3
	23-29	250	80.4
	Prefer not to say	1	0.3
Nationality	Bulgarian	84	27
	Croatian	92	29.6
	Dutch	71	22.8
	Swedish	64	20.6
Education	Middle school	3	1
	High school	84	27

	Bachelor level	142	45.7
	Master level or higher	82	26.4
Occupation	Student	163	52.4
	Employed	121	38.9
	Unemployed	23	7.4
	Other	4	1.3

## 5.2 Reliability test

To test the internal consistency of the model, we ran a reliability test in SPSS to get the Cronbach's alpha. It is commonly used for developing scales, which are used to measure attitudes, as well as other affective constructs (Taber, 2018). It is used to measure the interrelatedness of the items in a test and is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. Typically, if Cronbach's alpha values are 0.7 or higher, they indicate acceptable internal consistency (Cortina, 1993). Values of the Cronbach's alpha in our test range from 0.904 to 0.936, which means that they range from reliable (0.84–0.90) to excellent (0.93–0.94). On the other hand, the loadings of all items on their factors are larger than 0.7, which indicates reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 4. Reliability test and factor loadings

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's alpha
Perceived usefulness	Improves my travel planning	0.860	0.904
	Helps me plan trips more efficiently	0.883	
	Makes my travel planning easier	0.878	
	Enables me to reach travel-related decisions faster	0.779	
	Is useful for my overall travel planning	0.855	
Perceived enjoyment	Enjoyable	0.899	0.928
	Pleasant	0.904	

	Interesting	0.848	
	Fun	0.869	
	Entertaining	0.896	
Perceived trustworthiness	Dependable	0.685	0.914
	Honest	0.892	
	Reliable	0.924	
	Sincere	0.901	
	Trustworthy	0.901	
Perceived similarity of interest	Reflects my own interests	0.900	0.936
	Is similar to my own interests	0.925	
	Represents interests I can identify with	0.908	
	Is not very different from my own interests	0.908	
	Is created by someone with whom I share common interests	0.825	
Intention to plan travel	Would not hesitate to use it in my travel planning	0.695	0.910
	I would use it to seek travel advice	0.603	
	Expect to use the content	0.761	
	Intend to use this type of content for my travel planning	0.830	
	Would be very likely to use this type of content for my travel planning	0.799	

### 5.3 Analysis of the results

To test the hypotheses H1, H3, H5, and H7, we created indices for the independent variables (Burns & Burns, 2008). The five independent variables: Perceived usefulness, Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest, and the dependent variable

Intention to plan travel, all contain five items in their scales. Therefore, we combined them with the help of the indices and tested the independent variables in relation to the dependent variable Intention to plan travel. Table 5 depicts the Pearson correlations and the adjusted  $R^2$  of the relationships. In this test, we used all valid responses from the sample. For instance, Perceived usefulness has a strong correlation with the Intention to plan travel (0.747), whereas the rest are moderately correlated (ranging from 0.620 to 0.630). All of the correlations have a high significance of 0.000, so they are significant to the 0.01 level. Therefore, by obtaining the Pearson correlations, we can conclude that all of the independent variables are positively correlated with the dependent variable.

Furthermore, Perceived usefulness has the highest adjusted  $R^2$  (0.557), which shows that 55.7% of the variance in Intention to plan travel could be explained by the linear relationship between Perceived usefulness and Intention to plan travel. The lowest adjusted  $R^2$  is related to the Perceived trustworthiness, whose variance contributes by only 38.2% to the variance of the dependent variable. However, the other two independent variables, Perceived enjoyment and Perceived similarity of interest have similar adjusted  $R^2$  (respectively 0.394 and 0.395). Moreover, all the relationships show normal distribution and homoscedasticity. Lastly, since all the correlations are positive, we can propose that all the independent variables have an effect on the Intention to plan travel, and H1, H3, H5, and H7 are supported.

Table 5. Pearson correlations and adjusted  $R^2$  of the independent variables in relation to the Intention to plan travel

Independent variable related to the Intention to plan travel	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Adjusted $R^2$	Sig.
Perceived usefulness	0.747	0.000	0.557	0.000
Perceived enjoyment	0.629	0.000	0.394	0.000
Perceived trustworthiness	0.620	0.000	0.382	0.000
Perceived similarity of interest	0.630	0.000	0.395	0.000

To test the hypotheses H2, H4, H6, and H8, we applied the Fisher's Z-transformation to test for the significance of two Pearson correlations, with two independent samples (Cohen et al., 2003). We divided the sample into two different groups, depending on the cultural differences determined by two Hofstede's dimensions: Individualism versus collectivism and Uncertainty avoidance. So, one sample was represented by the responses of Bulgarians and Croatians, whereas the other sample was with Dutch and Swedes. To compare the answers of the respondents from the two pairs of countries, we obtained the Pearson correlations for each group and tested them by using Fisher's test to examine if there are any significant differences between the two samples (Cohen et al.,

2003). The significance was tested using a 1-tailed test. The correlations and associated p-values are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Differences in the correlations between Group 1 (Bulgaria and Croatia) and Group 2 (Sweden and the Netherlands)

Independent variable related to the Intention to plan travel	Pearson correlation Group 1: Bulgaria and Croatia	Pearson correlation Group 2: Sweden and the Netherlands	Associated p-value (1-tailed Fisher's test)	Significantly different?
Perceived usefulness	0.760	0.705	0.15149	No
Perceived enjoyment	0.670	0.532	0.02973	Yes*
Perceived trustworthiness	0.649	0.522	0.04620	Yes*
Perceived similarity of interest	0.664	0.556	0.06731	Yes**

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ . \*\*Significant at  $p < 0.1$ .

By observing the data, we can conclude that both groups have positive correlations between all the independent variables and the dependent variable. Once again, the Perceived usefulness is more strongly correlated than the other independent variables. For Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest, we see moderate correlations to the dependent variable for both groups of countries. Fisher's test, which tests the difference between the two groups, proves insignificance of the Perceived usefulness variable ( $p$ -value=0.15149). However, for Perceived enjoyment ( $p$ -value=0.02973) and Perceived trustworthiness ( $p$ -value=0.04620), the test shows significant differences at the 0.05 level. Moreover, the difference regarding the Perceived similarity of interest ( $p$ -value=0.06731) is still significant at the 0.10 level.

These discoveries show that the two groups do not have significant differences related to Perceived usefulness, but are significantly different regarding Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest. Nevertheless, both groups show positive correlations to the dependent variable. However, for Bulgaria and Croatia, the correlation for Perceived enjoyment, Perceived trustworthiness, and Perceived similarity of interest is slightly more pronounced than for Sweden and the Netherlands. Therefore, Table 7 displays all the hypotheses with the conclusion that the findings support H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, and H8, but reject H2.

Table 7. Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Supported?
H1 - Perceived usefulness → Intention to plan travel	Yes
H2 - Cultural differences moderate Perceived usefulness → Intention to plan travel	No
H3 - Perceived enjoyment → Intention to plan travel	Yes
H4 - Cultural differences moderate Perceived enjoyment → Intention to plan travel	Yes
H5 - Perceived trustworthiness → Intention to plan travel	Yes
H6 - Cultural differences moderate Perceived trustworthiness → Intention to plan travel	Yes
H7 - Perceived similarity of interest → Intention to plan travel	Yes
H8 - Cultural differences moderate Perceived similarity of interest → Intention to plan travel	Yes

## 6 Discussion

By extending existing literature and providing a thorough understanding of the tourism industry, this study reflects on how social media content influences youth tourists in their travel planning. The findings contribute to several research streams, such as consumer behavior, social media, and youth tourism, while reflecting on cultural differences. The direct relationships of social media to the behavioral intention mainly concur with previous studies. However, in this research, the elements are studied in the context of the tourism industry and only the youth segment. Furthermore, we present novel discoveries regarding the cultural differences, which had not been researched thoroughly so far.

Firstly, this study reveals that perceived usefulness is strongly correlated with the Intention to plan travel in both groups that were studied, thus confirming claims by Parra-López et al. (2011) that users decide to use particular social media in their travel planning only if they perceive it as useful. In relation to this, consistent with recent studies on the usefulness of social media (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013; Rauniar et al., 2014; Chung and Koo, 2015; Gumpo et al., 2020), we may confirm that there is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to plan travel. Specifically, we have identified that perceived usefulness is considered the most influential variable in the determination of the use of social media in travel planning because it improves travel planning by making it easier and more efficient, which in the end enables users to reach travel decisions faster.

However, the major conclusion of our study regarding perceived usefulness is that cultural differences do not influence young tourist's perceptions towards intention to plan travel. This means that the relationship between perceived usefulness and a youngster's intention to plan travel by using social media platforms is not affected by the degree of individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance index. The insignificance of the perceived usefulness variable when observing the two groups was confirmed by using Fisher's test (Cohen et al., 2003). This finding contributes to the literature in social media and tourism, so we may claim that social media as an information source for travel planning is perceived as useful regardless of their culture.

Both perceived usefulness and enjoyment have a positive relationship with the intention to plan travel. This finding is in line with conclusions by Sago (2013), who stated that the mixture of perceived enjoyment and perceived usefulness positively influences the intention to use technology, which is social media in this context. Therefore, we can confirm that the intention to use social media sites to plan travel is indeed directly and positively impacted by perceived usefulness and enjoyment. The results indicate that users find content on social media to be enjoyable, pleasant, interesting, fun, and entertaining. Our findings concur with the ones by Chung & Koo (2015), confirming that tourists are motivated by intrinsic factors when making decisions,



so in case of perceived positive value regarding searching for information, they are more likely to increase their searches.

The analysis concludes that youth tourists tend to use social media platforms for fun and challenge, rather than getting a reward from it. This result concurs with the findings of previous studies conducted by Ryan and Deci (2000), Moon and Kim (2001), and Curran and Lennon (2011). So, users tend to enjoy social media platforms and perceived enjoyment is a significant factor that influences their desire to continue using the platform for travel planning. The results of this study show that the cultural differences moderate perceived enjoyment of youth tourists when using social media content in travel planning. However, for Bulgaria and Croatia, the relationship between perceived enjoyment and the intention is slightly stronger than for Sweden and the Netherlands, indicating that they are slightly more homogeneous as a group. Therefore, based on this finding, we can conclude that in terms of perceived enjoyment in social media use for travel planning, youngsters from Croatia and Bulgaria are more similar than their counterparts in Sweden and the Netherlands.

Furthermore, this study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived trustworthiness and intention to plan travel. This finding is in line with previous research by Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides, and Alarcón-del-Amo (2011), who found that trust was a direct determinant influencing the attitude of social media users. Our conclusion is also consistent with Ohanian's (1991) claim that the level of trustworthiness of a source is positively related to the intention to use that source, in our case, social media platforms. Therefore, when a source is perceived as trustworthy, it might influence the intention of the user (Ohanian, 1991).

In relation to UGC, which is one of the main types of social media, our finding also coincides with existing research. For instance, Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013) stated that when creating UGC, the authors do not have any personal interest, so their content is usually considered sincere. Furthermore, our study also reveals that the respondents find social media content dependable and sincere, which is in line with the claim by Burgess et al. (2009) that tourists tend to have a high level of trustworthiness and reliability towards UGC because they perceive that content as "real" experiences by independent and "real" people. Hence, as our results suggest, this level of perceived trustworthiness of the UGC content positively influences young tourists' intention to use social media to plan travel.

Also, supporting our finding that the use of social media for travel planning is considered as reliable and honest, Chatterjee (2001) and Yu, Carlsson, and Zou (2014), discovered that WOM information is often perceived to be highly credible, since it is assumed that the person providing it has no personal interest, therefore is highly likely to be honest. With regard to the cultural differences, our study found that there is a significant difference in the relationship of perceived trustworthiness to the intention to plan travel of Bulgaria and Croatia, and Sweden and the Netherlands. By conducting Fisher's test (Cohen et al., 2003), we obtained the result that, perceived trustworthiness is more strongly correlated to the intention to plan travel for Bulgarian and Croatian tourists.

Regarding the Perceived similarity of interest, our study discovered that this variable is also significant and has a strong positive impact on the intention to plan travel. This result concurs with

the findings of a study conducted by Ayeh, Au, and Law (2013), stating that in the tourism industry if a tourist interacting with UGC perceives their own interest similar to the UGC creators', they will be more likely to interact with that media.

Furthermore, concerning the cultural differences, our findings reveal that there is a significant difference between the two studied groups of countries. So, the collectivistic countries in this study, Bulgaria and Croatia, showed a more pronounced relationship between perceived similarity of interest and intention to plan travel. This finding is in line with the existing research since McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1987) suggested that the degree of perceived similarity is highly influenced by the strength of the social ties among people, hence when the tie is strong, the individuals share a higher degree of similarity.

Also, Hofstede (2011) claimed that the collectivistic societies have much stronger ties with their in-groups. On the other hand, the more individualistic countries studied in this research have shown a slightly weaker relationship, which holds with the statement that people from highly individualistic societies depend less on their in-groups (Franzoi, 1996), so the perceived similarity might not be that critical to them. These findings contribute to the literature on cross-cultural communication, mainly in the context of tourism and hospitality.

## 7 Conclusion

After we have discussed and concluded the findings of the paper, we focus on implications and future research. Firstly, the implications for both theory and practice are discussed. They provide insights into the study which might be valuable for academia and companies in the field of marketing, branding, and tourism. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are stated, followed by suggested future research avenues.

### 7.1 Implications for theory and practice

This study validates the influence of social media on youth tourists' intention to plan travel. It also incorporates the cultural differences as a relevant factor, which has an effect on the behavior of the researched segment. It also extends the TAM framework to the tourism industry and assesses whether the youth tourists' attitudes towards the use of social media content could be influenced by culture.

Our main findings relate to several literature streams. For instance, we contribute to the research on social media by incorporating the youth tourists' perspective on the intention to use social media in planning travel. Several studies examined the effect of perceived usefulness (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013; Rauniar et al., 2014; Chung & Koo, 2015; Gumpo et al., 2020), perceived enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001; Curran & Lennon, 2011; Sago, 2013), perceived trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1991; Chatterjee, 2001; Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides & Alarcón-del-Amo, 2011; Yu, Carlsson & Zou, 2014; Gupta, 2019), and perceived similarity of interest (Schacter, 1959; Ferber & Pugliese, 2000), which may influence one's decision to use social media in travel planning. Furthermore, McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1987) and Franzoi (1996) investigated the effect of cultural differences on perceived similarity. Nevertheless, we explore the effects of the cultural differences on all variables, thereby contributing to the literature on culture. Finally, we extend the studies by focusing specifically on the tourism industry and the youth segment.

Our study found moderate to strong positive relationships between all the independent variables: perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, perceived trustworthiness and perceived similarity of interest, and the dependent variable, intention to plan travel. It is also discovered that culture has a moderating effect on the relationship. In this regard, Bulgarians and Croats, who are assumed to be more collectivistic and score high on uncertainty avoidance index (Hofstede insights, 2020), have more pronounced correlations between the independent variables and the dependent one, than Swedes and Dutch.

This study could be instrumental to managers to help them understand the importance of perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, perceived trustworthiness, and perceived similarity of interest to youth tourists in tailoring their travel offers. In general, marketers aim to predict the behavioral intentions of tourists, in order to be able to improve their offers (Hennessey, Yun & MacDonald, 2010). So, the results of this research provide fruitful avenues for improvement of the operations of different tourist establishments, such as hotels, airlines, destination management organizations, travel agencies, etc. They could focus on the improvement of the studied variables in their business to maximize the possibility that a young tourist would consider to use and interact with their social media content for their travel planning.

However, we suggest that firms and managers from collectivistic and high uncertainty avoidance societies should focus on these factors even more since the respondents show more pronounced correlations in the study. Therefore, while building their company's social media presence, managers have to ensure that their platform is perceived as useful and enjoyable to their potential customers. Moreover, the information given should be viewed as trustworthy to be relevant to the users. Lastly, the results suggest that perceived usefulness is the most strongly correlated variable to intention to plan travel, so the companies could focus on functionality and accuracy, among other values, to make a seamless user experience.

## 7.2 Limitations

Since we faced budget constraints, as well as our available time being restricted, some limitations of this thesis were identified. Due to limited time, our web-based questionnaire was available for responses for the time of less than two weeks. Therefore, if there was more time available to gather responses, we would have been able to acquire a larger sample and achieve a more accurate portrayal of the target population. The next limitation is about the constrained budget, which did not allow us to explore different research processes that otherwise could have been chosen for this research. The non-probability sampling method used in this research was convenience sampling. So, most participants in this study were student volunteers. Although this sampling method is inexpensive and simple, its main disadvantage is a lack of clear generalizability, which might lead to a sample being biased (Burns & Burns, 2008). For example, the sample would have a more equal gender and age distribution if a probability sampling method was chosen. Therefore, the ability to generalize is undermined.

The two examples of social media content displayed in the questionnaire were limited to only two social media platforms: Instagram and Facebook. This might have caused repercussions on the related influence of beliefs regarding usefulness, enjoyment, and trustworthiness on the intention to plan travel. Although we attempted to establish a sound research design within the limits of our study, there are still possible vulnerability problems, such as non-response and self-selection. These two are standard issues that one encounters when conducting an online survey. For example, out of 1001 clicks on the survey link, only 351 of the users completed the survey until the last page. However, it is common to have many non-responses in online surveys. Our focal group was users

of social media that traveled at least once in the last 12 months prior to participating in the survey. Lastly, there might be an influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on respondents' attitudes. So, their willingness to travel might have been influenced by lockdowns occurring worldwide and halting international travel for the past months. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of this study.

### 7.3 Future research avenues

After conducting this study, we have identified several avenues for further research. Firstly, future studies could concentrate on exploring the relationships between the independent variables to gain deeper insights into the attitudes of the segment. For instance, it has been discovered that when the individuals are similar, they tend to trust and understand each other more than they would if they were not as similar (Ruef, Aldrich, & Carter, 2003). So, the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and perceived similarity of interest could be explored in the context of youth tourists and social media as a marketing channel.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore other industries that relate to the youth segment. Since it is a specific group of people, it could be insightful to differentiate it from the main segment in more sectors than tourism. Moreover, more specific social media platforms could be explored to find out the most influential platform, depending on the culture studied. Since people are not only exposed to other cultures, but they export their own culture as well (Reisinger & Crofts, 2010), it might be valuable for future research to also focus on some other dimensions of cultural differences. Also, other countries could be studied as well, to verify the results of this research. Lastly, given the uncertain prospects on the tourism industry due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the rise of popularity of digital platforms is expected. Therefore, our findings may be relevant for researchers and practitioners in the tourism industry by indicating that understanding cultural differences right now is of high importance due to companies' needs to implement multi-domestic strategies. So, future research could also emphasize further on the importance of cultural differences to adjust their business strategies towards different markets.

# References

- Abălăesei, M. (2016). The influence of culture on the role of social media in decision making, *Discourse As A Form Of Multiculturalism In Literature And Communication: Social sciences*, pp. 600-612
- Adams, N. (2002). Educational Computing Concerns of Postsecondary Faculty, *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 285-303
- Adler, N. (1991). *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, Boston, Mass, PWS-KENT Pub. Co
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 179-211
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall
- Akour, I., Alshare, K., Miller, D. & Dwairi, M. (2006). An Exploratory Analysis of Culture, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, and Internet Acceptance: The Case of Jordan, *Journal of Internet Commerce*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 83–108
- Alibaba Group (2020). History and milestones: 2003, AliBaba Group, Available online: <https://www.alibabagroup.com/en/about/history?year=2003> [Accessed 12 May 2020]
- Al-Rahimi, W. M., Othman, M. S. & Musa, M. A. (2013). Using TAM Model To Measure The Use Of Social Media For Collaborative Learning, *International Journal of Engineering Trends and Technology*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 90-95
- Alves, H., Fernandes, C. & Raposo, M. (2016). Social Media Marketing: A Literature Review and Implications, *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 33, no. 12, pp. 1029–1038
- Amaro, S. & Duarte, P. (2017). Social Media Use for Travel Purposes: A Cross Cultural Comparison between Portugal and the UK, *Information Technology & Tourism*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 161–181
- Anandarajan, M., Simmers, C., & Igbaria, M. (2000). An exploratory investigation of the antecedents and impact of Internet usage: An individual perspective, *Behaviour and Information Technology*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 69–85

Arnould, E. J. & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 868–882

Arnould, E. J. & Thompson, C. J. (2018). *Consumer Culture Theory*, Los Angeles: Sage

Ashkanani, M. G. A. (1984). A cross-cultural perspective on work related values. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, International University, San Diego

Assoturismo. (2020). Assoturismo-CST, nel 2020 si perderanno oltre 260 milioni di presenze turistiche (-60%). Ripresa solo nel 2021, forse Interventi inconsistenti per le imprese turistiche. Cancellato più di mezzo secolo di turismo, Federazione Italiana del Turismo, Available online: <http://www.assoturismo.it/assoturismo-cst-nel-2020-si-perderanno-oltre-260-milioni-di-presenze-turistiche-60-ripresa-solo-nel-2021-forse.html> [Accessed 2 May 2020]

Au, A. K. M., Ramasamy, B. & Yeung, M. C. H. (2005). The Effects of SARS on the Hong Kong Tourism Industry: An Empirical Evaluation, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 85–95

Ayeh, J. K., Au, N. & Law, R. (2013). Predicting the Intention to Use Consumer-Generated Media for Travel Planning, *Tourism Management*, vol. 35, pp. 132–143

Ayeh, J. K., Au, N. & Law, R. (2016). Investigating Cross-National Heterogeneity in the Adoption of Online Hotel Reviews, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, vol. 55, pp. 142–153

Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models, *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 74-94

Bajde, D. (2014). Consumer Culture Theory: Ideology, Mythology and Meaning in Technology Consumption, *International Journal of Actor-Network Theory and Technological Innovation*, vol.6, pp. 10-25

Bansal, R., Masood, R. Z. & Dadhich, V. (2014). Social Media Marketing-A Tool of Innovative Marketing, *Journal of Organizational Management*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1-7

Barger, V., Peltier, J. W. & Schultz, D. E. (2016). Social Media and Consumer Engagement: A Review and Research Agenda, *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 268–287

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 51, no. 6, pp. 1173-1182

BBC (2020). Ryanair warns refunds to take up to six months as it axes jobs, BBC, Available online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52498691> [Accessed 12 May 2020]

Behrens, W. C. (2009). Managing millennials: they're coming to a workplace near you, *Marketing Health Services*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 19-21

- Berthon, P., Pitt, L., Kietzmann, J. & McCarthy, I. P. (2015). CGIP: Managing Consumer-Generated Intellectual Property, *California Management Review*, vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 43–62
- Bertot, J. C. , Jaeger, P. T. & Grimes, J. M. (2012). Promoting Transparency and Accountability through ICTs, Social Media, and Collaborative E-government, *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 78–91
- Brown, J., Broderick, A. J. & Lee, N. (2007). Word of mouth communication within online communities: conceptualizing the online social network, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp.1-20
- Burgess, S., Sellitto, C., Cox, C., & Buultjens, J. (2009). User-generated content (UGC) in tourism: Benefits and concerns of online consumers. Information systems in a globalising world: challenges, ethics and practices, *Proceedings of the 17th European Conference on Information Systems*, Available online: [https://epubs.scu.edu.au/comm\\_pubs/278/](https://epubs.scu.edu.au/comm_pubs/278/) [Accessed 28 March 2020]
- Burns, R. B. & Burns, R. A. (2008). *Business Research Methods and Statistics Using SPSS*, Los Angeles; London: Sage
- Cahill, T. F. & Sedrak, M. (2012). Leading a Multigenerational Workforce: Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Millennials, *Frontiers of Health Services Management*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 3–15
- Çakar, K. & Seyitoğlu, F. (2016). Youth Tourism: Understanding the Youth Travellers' Motivations, *Multidisciplinary Academic Conference*, Available online: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304251211\\_Youth\\_Tourism\\_Understanding\\_the\\_Youth\\_Travellers%27\\_Motivations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304251211_Youth_Tourism_Understanding_the_Youth_Travellers%27_Motivations) [Accessed 18 April 2020]
- Carley, K. (1991). A Theory of Group Stability, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 56, pp. 331-354
- Chatterjee, P. (2001). Online Reviews – Do Consumers Use Them?, *Proceedings, Association for Consumer Research*, pp. 129-134
- Chau, P. Y. K., Cole, M., Massey, A. P., Montoya-Weiss, M. & O’Keefe, R. M. (2002). Cultural Differences in the Online Behavior of Consumers, *Communications of the ACM*, vol. 45, no. 10, pp. 138–143
- Chen, S. P. & McCain, S. L. C. (2011). How Situational Factors Influence Boomers’ Travel Intentions, pp.12
- Chen, Y.-C., Shang, R. A. & Li, M. J. (2014). The Effects of Perceived Relevance of Travel Blogs’ Content on the Behavioral Intention to Visit a Tourist Destination, *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 30, pp. 787–799
- Chesneya T., & Sub D. (2010). The impact of anonymity on weblog credibility, *Int. J. Hum-Comput. Stud.*, vol. 68, no.10, pp. 710-718



- Chew, I. K. H., & Putti, J. (1993). A comparative study of work-related values of Singaporean and Japanese managers in Singapore. Working Paper, Nanyang Technological University
- Chow, C. W., Shields, M. D., & Chan, Y. K. (1991). The effects of management controls and national culture on manufacturing performance, *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 209-226
- Christodoulides, G., Jevons, C. & Bonhomme, J. (2012). Memo to Marketers: Quantitative Evidence for Change: How User-Generated Content Really Affects Brands, *Journal of Advertising Research*, vol. 52, no. 1, pp. 53–64
- Chu, S. & Choi, S. (2011). Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Social Networking Sites: A Cross-Cultural Study of the United States and China, *Journal of Global Marketing*, vol. 24, pp. 263-281
- Chung, N. & Koo, C. (2015). The Use of Social Media in Travel Information Search, *Telematics and Informatics*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 215–229
- Clarke, J. (1992). A marketing spotlight on the youth ‘four S’s’ consumer, *Tourism Management*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 321-327
- Cohen, A., & Avrahami, A. (2006). The Relationship between individualism, collectivism, the perception of justice, demographic characteristics and organisational citizenship behaviour, *The Service Industries Journal*, vol. 26, no. 8, pp. 889–901
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G. & Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp.49
- Cohen, S. A., Prayag, G. & Moital, M. (2014). Consumer Behaviour in Tourism: Concepts, Influences and Opportunities, *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 17, no. 10, pp. 872–909
- Consent to Use Data on Children. (2018). *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights*, Available online: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/mapping-minimum-age-requirements/use-consent> [Accessed 14 May 2020]
- Constantinides, E. (2014). Foundations of Social Media Marketing, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 148, pp. 40–57
- Cortina, J. M. (1993). What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications, *Journal of applied psychology*, vol. 78, no. 1, pp. 98-104
- Cronk, L. (2017). Culture’s Influence on Behavior: Steps toward a Theory., *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 36–52
- Crotts, J. (2004). The Effect of Cultural Distance on Overseas Travel Behaviors, *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 43, pp. 83-88

- Curran, J. M. & Lennon, R. (2011). Participating in the conversation: Exploring usage of social media networking sites, *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 21-38
- Davis, F. D. (1986). A technology acceptance model for empirically testing new end-user information systems: theory and results. Doctoral dissertation, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Available online: <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/15192> [Accessed 22 April 2020]
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology, *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 319-340
- Davis, F. D. (1993). User acceptance of information technology: system characteristics, user perceptions and behavioral impacts, *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 475-487
- Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., & Warshaw, P. R. (1989). User acceptance of computer technology: a comparison of two theoretical models, *Management Science*, vol. 35, no. 8, pp. 982-1003
- Davis, F.D., Bagozzi, R.P., & Warshaw, P.R. (1992). Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to use computers in the workplace, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 1111-1132
- Day, G. S. (1969). A two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty, *Journal of Advertising Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 29-35
- Deal, J. J., Altman, D. G., Rogelberg, S. G. (2010). Millennials at Work: What We Know and What We Need to Do (If Anything), *Journal of Business and Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 191-199
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1987). The support of autonomy and the control of behavior, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 53, no. 6, pp. 1024–1037
- Demeter, T. & Brătucu, G. (2014). Typologies of Youth Tourism, *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 115-122
- Dixit, R. V. & Prakash, G. (2018). Intentions to Use Social Networking Sites (SNS) Using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): An Empirical Study, *Paradigm*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 65–79
- Dolan, R., Seo, Y. & Kemper, J. (2019). Complaining Practices on Social Media in Tourism: A Value Co-Creation and Co-Destruction Perspective, *Tourism Management*, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 35–45
- Downes, M., Hemmasi, M., Graf, L. A., Lane, K., & Huff, L. (2002). The propensity to trust: A comparative study of United States and Japanese managers, *International Journal of Management*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 614–621
- Drabek, T. (2010). Key residuals: The state of tourism crisis management. First Annual Tourism Crisis Management Leadership Workshop. Gainesville, FL

- Dunlop, S., Freeman, B. & Jones, S. C. (2016). Marketing to Youth in the Digital Age: The Promotion of Unhealthy Products and Health Promoting Behaviours on Social Media, *Media and Communication*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 35-49
- Dunphy, D., & Shi, J. (1986). A comparison of enterprise management in Japan and the People's Republic of China. Working Paper, Australian Graduate School of Management
- Eastin, M. S., Daugherty, T. & Burns, N. M. (2011). Handbook of Research on Digital Media and Advertising: User Generated Content Consumption, [e-book] IGI Global, Available Online: <http://services.igi-global.com/resolvedoi/resolve.aspx?doi=10.4018/978-1-60566-792-8> [Accessed 24 March 2020]
- eMarketer. (2019). Global Social Network Users: More than 3 Billion People Worldwide Will Use Social Networks in 2020, Emarketer, Available online: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-social-network-users> [Accessed 4 May 2020]
- Emarsys. (2019). Top 5 Social Media Predictions for 2019, Emarsys, Available online: <https://emarsys.com/learn/blog/top-5-social-media-predictions-2019/> [Accessed 4 May 2020]
- Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, R. W. (1995). Consumer behavior. Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press
- EY. (2020). Beyond COVID-19: Will you define the new normal or watch it unfold?, EY, Available online: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_gl/covid-19/will-you-define-the-new-normal-or-watch-it-unfold](https://www.ey.com/en_gl/covid-19/will-you-define-the-new-normal-or-watch-it-unfold) [Accessed 25 May 2020]
- Fandy, M. (2000). Information Technology, Trust, and Social Change in the Arab World, *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 378-393
- Fang, B., Ye, Q., Kucukusta, D. & Law, R. (2016). Analysis of the Perceived Value of Online Tourism Reviews: Influence of Readability and Reviewer Characteristics, *Tourism Management*, vol. 52, pp.498–506
- Faulkner, B. (2001). Towards a framework for tourism disaster management, *Tourism Management*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 135-147
- Fe, M. & Snow J. (2019). Elephant Pool, December 16 2019, Available online: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B6Iv4JygdWQ/> [Accessed 5 May 2020]
- Ferber, P. H., & R. R. Pugliese. (2000). Partisans, proximates, and poker players: The impact of homophily and proximity on communication patterns of state legislators, *Polity*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 401-414
- Fidalgo, A. (1993). Comparative study in work-related values between Portuguese managers using the value survey module (VSM) designed by Hofstede (1980). Unpublished M. A. thesis, Fairleigh Dickinson University

- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behaviour: An introduction to theory and research*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA
- Foot, D.K., and Stoffman, D. (1998). *Boom, Bust and Echo 2000: Profiting from the Demographic Shift in the New Millennium*. Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross
- Fotis, J., Buhalis, D. & Rossides, N. (2012). Social Media Use and Impact during the Holiday Travel Planning Process, in M. Fuchs, F. Ricci, & L. Cantoni, *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2012*, Vienna, 2012, Vienna: Springer, Available Online: [http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-7091-1142-0\\_2](http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-7091-1142-0_2) [Accessed 20 April 2020].
- Franzoi, S. (1996). *Social Psychology*. Madison, WI: Brown and Benchmark
- Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality, *Public Relations Review*, vol. 37, pp. 90–92
- Frías, D. M., Rodríguez, M. A., Castañeda, J. A., Sabiote, C. M. & Buhalis, D. (2012). The Formation of a Tourist Destination's Image via Information Sources: The Moderating Effect of Culture, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 437–450
- Gefen, D. and Straub, D. (1997). Gender Differences in the Perception and Use of e-mail: An extension of the Technology Acceptance Model, *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 389-400
- Ghete, A. M. (2015). The Importance Of Youth Tourism, *Annals of Faculty of Economics, University of Oradea*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 688-694
- Goffman, E. (1951). Symbols of Class Status, *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 2, pp. 294-304
- Golesorkhi, B. (2006). Gender differences and similarities in judgments of trustworthiness, *Women in Management Review*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 195-210
- Gong, W. (2009). National Culture and Global Diffusion of Business-to-consumer E-commerce, *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 83–101
- Gooderham, P. (2001). Are cultural differences in Europe on the decline. *European Business Forum*
- Gostin, L. O. & Wiley, L. F. (2020). Governmental Public Health Powers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stay-at-Home Orders, Business Closures, and Travel Restrictions, *JAMA*, Available online: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764283> [Accessed 27 May 2020]
- Gouveia, V. V., & Ros, M. (2000). The Hofstede and Schwartz models for classifying individualism at the cultural level: Their relation to macro-social and macro-economic variables, *Psicothema*, vol. 12, pp. 25–33

Gretzel, U. & Yoo, K. H. (2008). Use and Impact of Online Travel Reviews, in P. O'Connor, W. Höpken, & U. Gretzel, *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008*, [e-book] Vienna: Springer Vienna, Available Online: [http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-211-77280-5\\_4](http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-211-77280-5_4) [Accessed 13 April 2020]

Gretzel, U. (2006). The Transformation of Consumer Behaviour, *Tourism Business Frontiers*, [e-book] Elsevier, Available Online: <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/B9780750663779500092> [Accessed 31 March 2020]

Gretzel, U., Kang, M. & Lee, W. (2008). Differences in consumer-generated media adoption and use: a cross-national perspective, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, vol. 17, no.2, pp. 99-120

Guliciuc, V. (2014). Complexity and Social Media. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*.

Gumpo, C. I. V., Chuchu, T., Maziriri, E. T. & Madinga, N. W. (2020). Examining the Usage of Instagram as a Source of Information for Young Consumers When Determining Tourist Destinations, *SA Journal of Information Management*, vol. 22, no. 1, Available online: <http://www.sajim.co.za/index.php/SAJIM/article/view/1136> [Accessed 10 May 2020]

Gupta, V. (2019). The Influencing Role of Social Media in the Consumer's Hotel Decision-Making Process, *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 378–391

Hallikainen, H., Laukkanen T. (2018). National culture and consumer trust in e-commerce, *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 38, pp. 97–106

Hannerz, U. (1992) *Cultural Complexity*, New York: Columbia University Press

Harris, R. & Davidson. R. (1999). Anxiety and Involvement: Cultural Dimensions of Attitudes Toward Computer in Developing Societies, *Journal of Global Information Management*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 25-38

Hasan, H. and Ditsa, G. (1999). The Impact of Culture on the Adoption of IT: An Interpretive Study, *Journal of Global Information Management*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 5-15

Henley, J. (2020). Covid-19 throws Europe's tourism industry into chaos, *The Guardian*, Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/02/covid-19-throws-europes-tourism-industry-into-chaos> [Accessed 2 May 2020]

Hennessey, S. M., Yun, D. & MacDonald, R. (2010). Determinants of Travel Intentions to a Neighboring Destination, *2010 ttra International Conference*, Available online: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Determinants-of-Travel-Intentions-to-a-Neighbouring-Yun-Macdonald/8114e14ef3a67f4dfc7d50b06de6910953878310> [Accessed 23 April 2020].

Hill, C., Loch, K., Straub, D., & El-Sheshai, K. (1998). A Qualitative Assessment of Arab Culture and Information Technology Transfer, *Journal of Global Information Management*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 29-38

- Hoffman, D. L & Novak, T. P. (2012). Toward a Deeper Understanding of Social Media, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 26, pp. 69–70
- Hofstede insights. (2020). Country comparison tool, Available online: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com> [Accessed 28 February 2020]
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. (1981). Do American theories apply abroad? A reply to Goodstein and Hunt. *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 63-68
- Hofstede, G. (1984). National cultures and corporate cultures. In L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter. *Communication Between Cultures*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
- Hofstede, G. (1997). Culture and Organization: Software in Mind. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill
- Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's Consequences. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context, *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 3-26
- Hoppe, M. H. (1990). A comparative study of country elites: international differences in work-related values and learning and their implications for management training and development'. Ph.D thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC
- House, R., P. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. Dorfman & V. Gupta. (2004). GLOBE, Cultures, Leadership, and Organizations: GLOBE Study of 62 Societies. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). Communication and persuasion. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hsu, C. L. & Lin, J. C. C. (2008). Acceptance of Blog Usage: The Roles of Technology Acceptance, Social Influence and Knowledge Sharing Motivation, *Information & Management*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 65–74
- Huo. P. Y.. & Randall, D. M. (1991). Exploring subcultural differences in Hofstede's value survey: the case of the Chinese, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 159-173
- Hur, Y., Ko, Y.J., & Claussen, C.L. (2012). Determinants of using sports web portals: An empirical examination of the sports website acceptance model, *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 169-188
- Igbaria, M., Zinatli, N., Cragg, P., and Cavaye, A. (1997). Personal Computing Acceptance Factors in Small Firms: A Structural Equation Model, *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 279-305

International Labour Organization. (2020). ILO: As job losses escalate, nearly half of global workforce at risk of losing livelihoods, International Labour Organization, Available online: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_743036/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_743036/lang--en/index.htm)

[Accessed 24 May 2020]

Irfan, M. I. M. (2016). Cultural Dimensions of Hofstede and Their Impact on Organizational Performance in Sri Lanka, *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, vol. 2, no. 10, pp. 1160-1169

Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1980). *The social psychology of leisure and recreation*. Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.

Jackson, J. K., Weiss, M. A., Schwarzenberg, A. B. & Nelson, R. M. (2020). Global Economic Effects of COVID-19, Congressional Research Service, p.78

Jackson, L.A. & Wang, J.L. (2013). Cultural Differences in Social Networking Site Use: A Comparative Study of China and the United States, *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 910-921

Jackson, M. (2001). Cultural Influences on Tourist Destination Choices of 21 Pacific Rim Nations, *CAUTHIE national research conference*, Available online: <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=278477997658809;res=IELBUS>

[Accessed 20 April 2020]

Jackson, M. S. (2000). Predicting Australian Mass Tourism Flow Using Hofstede's Cultural Model, *CAUTHE 2000: Peak Performance in Tourism and Hospitality Research; Proceedings of the Tenth Australian Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference*, Available online: <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=361674214326672;res=IELBUS;type=pdf>

[Accessed 26 April 2020]

Jalilvand, M. R. (2017). Word-of-mouth vs. mass media: Their contributions to destination image formation, *Anatolia*, vol.28, no. 2, pp. 151–162

Jang, S. C. S., Bai, B., Hu, C. & Wu, C.-M. E. (2009). Affect, Travel Motivation, and Travel Intention: A Senior Market, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 51–73

Jang, S., Shen, W., Allen, T. D. & Zhang, H. (2018). Societal Individualism-Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance as Cultural Moderators of Relationships between Job Resources and Strain, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 507–524

Jones, M. L. (2007). Hofstede - Culturally Questionable?, Oxford Business & Economics Conference, Available online: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/commpapers/370/> [Accessed 12 May 2020]

Kaasa, A., Varblane, U. & Vadr, M. (2014). Regional Cultural Differences Within European Countries Evidence from MultiCountry Surveys, *Management International Review*, vol 54, no. 6, pp. 825-852

Kale, S. (2020). How coronavirus helped TikTok find its voice, *The Guardian*, Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/apr/26/how-coronavirus-helped-tiktok-find-its-voice> [Accessed on 16 May 2020]

Kamel Boulos, M. N. & Wheeler, S. (2007). The Emerging Web 2.0 Social Software: An Enabling Suite of Sociable Technologies in Health and Health Care Education: Web 2.0 in Health and Health Care Education, *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 2–23

Keller, K. L. (2001), Building customer-based brand equity: creating brand resonance requires carefully sequenced brand-building efforts, *Marketing Management*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 15-19

Kelley, L., B. MacNab, and R. Worthley (2006). Crossvergence and Cultural Tendencies: A Longitudinal Test of the Hong Kong, Taiwan and United States Banking Sectors, *Journal of International Management*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 67-84

Kim, C., & Lee, S. (2000). Understanding the Cultural Differences in Tourist Motivation between Anglo American and Japanese Tourists, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, np. 9, vol. 1, pp. 153-170

Kim, M. J., Lee, C. & Chung, N. (2011). The effect of perceived trust on electronic commerce: Shopping online for tourism products and services in South Korea, *Tourism Management*, vol. 32, pp. 256-265

Kirářová, A. & Pavlíček, A. (2015). Development of Social Media Strategies in Tourism Destination, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 175, pp. 358–366

Kirs, P., & Bagchi, K. (2012). The impact of trust and changes in trust: A national comparison of individual adoptions of information and communication technologies and related phenomenon, *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 431–441

Kleijnen, M., Lievens, A., de Ruyter, K., & Wetzels, M. (2009). Knowledge creation through social networks and its impact on intentions to use innovative mobile services, *Journal of Service Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 15-35

Kolman, L. K., Noorderhaven, N. G., Hofstede, G., & Dienes, E. (2003). Cross-cultural differences in Central Europe, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 76-88

Kozak, M., Crotts, J.C., & Law, R. (2007). The impact of the perception of risk on international travellers. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 233-242

Kroeber, A. L., & Kluckhohn, C. (1952). *Culture: a critical review of concepts and definitions*. Cambridge, Mass, The Museum



- Lane, M. & Coleman, P. (2012). Technology ease of use through social networking media, *Journal of Technology Research*, vol. 3, pp. 1-12
- Lee, M. (2010). The effect of cognitive absorption and network externalities on technology acceptance: an empirical study of social networking sites in Indonesia (Theses and dissertations). Taipei: Business Administration Department, University of Ming Chuan
- Lee, M.C., & Tsai, T.R. (2010). What drives people to continue to play online games? An extension of technology model and theory of planned behavior, *International Journal of Human-Computer Interactions*, vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 601-620
- Lee, Y., Kozar, K. A. & Larsen, K. R. T. (2003). The Technology Acceptance Model: Past, Present, and Future, *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, Available Online: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol12/iss1/50> [Accessed 14 April 2020]
- Leikas, J., Ylikaupila, M., Jokinen, J., Rousi R., & Saariluoma, P. (2011). Understanding Social Media Acceptance and Use in the Context of Technology Generations and Life-Based Design, *INFuture2011: Information Sciences and e-Society*, Available online: <http://infoz.ffzg.hr/INFuture/2011/papers/4-01%20Leikas%20et.al.,%20Understanding%20Social%20Media%20Acceptance.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2020]
- Lin, H.-F. (2006). Understanding behavioral intention to participate in virtual communities, *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 540–547
- Litvin, S., Crotts, J. & Hefner, F. (2004). Cross-cultural tourist behaviour: A replication and extension involving Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 29 - 37
- Liu, B. F., Jin, Y., Briones, R., & Kuch, B. (2012). Managing turbulence in the blogosphere: Evaluating the blog-mediated crisis communication model with the American red-cross, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 353–370
- Loeb, W. (2020). Social Media Plays A Big Role In How Millennials Shop, But So Do Stores, *Forbes*, Available online: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/walterloeb/2020/01/21/why-millennials-shop-on-social-media-but-also-like-to-shop-in-stores/#520de790350c> [Accessed 20 April 2020]
- Lorenzo-Romero, C., Constantinides, E. & Alarcón-del-Amo, M. (2011). Consumer Adoption of Social Networking Sites: Implications for Theory and Practice, *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, vol. 5, no. 2/3, pp.170–188.
- Lowe, S. (1994). Hermes Revisited. 1994 International Symposium on Pacific Asian Business, 7th Annual Proceedings: The Dynamics of Global Cooperation and Competition, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
- Lynn, R. & Hampson, S. L. (1975). National differences in extraversion and neuroticism, *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 223-240

- Maldonado, E. M. (1983). Mexican-American participation in law enforcement in California. Law enforcement the impact of cultural related value differences. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont
- Manrai, L. A. & Manrai, A. K. (2011). Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Tourist Behaviors: A Review and Conceptual Framework, *Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science*, vol. 16, no. 31, pp. 25-45
- Mansfeld, Y. (1992). Group-Differentiated Perceptions of Social Impacts Related to Tourism Development, *The Professional Geographer*, vol. 44, pp. 377-392
- Maoz, D. (2007). Backpackers' motivations: the role of culture and nationality, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 122-140
- March, R. (2000). The Japanese Travel Life Cycle, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 185-200
- Marr, B. (2020). How The COVID-19 Pandemic Is Fast-Tracking Digital Transformation In Companies, *Forbes*, Available online: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2020/03/17/how-the-covid-19-pandemic-is-fast-tracking-digital-transformation-in-companies/#6e6e956fa8ee> [Accessed 12 May 2020]
- Mayrhofer, M., Matthes, J., Einwiller, S. & Naderer, B. (2020). User Generated Content Presenting Brands on Social Media Increases Young Adults' Purchase Intention, *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 166–186
- McCoy, S., Everard, A., & Jones, B. (2005). An Examination of the Technology Acceptance Model in Uruguay and the US: A Focus on Culture, *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 27-45
- McGuire W. (1985). Attitudes and attitude change. In Lindzey, G. and Aronson, E. (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- McHaney, R. (2012). *Web 2.0 and Social Media for Business*, United States, Ventus Pub. ApS, Available online: <http://bookboon.com/en/textbooks/it-programming/web-2-0-and-social-media-for-business> [Accessed 24 March 2020]
- McPherson, J. M., & Smith-Lovin, L. (1987). Homophily in Voluntary Organizations: Status, Distance and the Composition of Face-to-Face Groups, *American Sociology Review*, vol. 52, pp. 370–379
- McSweeney, B. (2000). The Fallacy of National Culture Identification. 6th Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Accounting Conference, Manchester, UK
- Mead, R. (1994). *International Management-Cross-Cultural Dimensions*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers

- Michael, J. (1997). A conceptual framework for aligning managerial behaviors with cultural work values, *International Journal of Commerce & Management*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 81-101
- Mohamed, B., Omar, S. I. & May, L. P. (2010). Malaysian Youth Tourism Market: A Lucrative But Overlooked Tourist Segment, *Malaysian Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1-21
- Mois, C. O. (2010). Aspects of the youth travel demand, *Annales Universitatis Apulensis Series Oeconomica*, no. 12, vol. 2, pp. 575-582
- Money, R.B., & Crofts, J.C. (2003). The effect of uncertainty avoidance on information search, planning, and purchases of international travel vacations. *Tourism Management*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 191-202
- Moon, J. & Kim Y. (2001). Extending the TAM for a worldwide-web context, *Information Management*, no. 38, vol. 4, pp. 217– 230
- Morrisey, J. (2012). The New York Times. The Millennials Check In, 12 March, Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/13/business/young-travelers-drive-changes-in-hotel-industry.html> [Accessed 30 March 2020]
- Moutinho, L. (1987). Consumer behavior in tourism, *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 2, no. 10, pp. 5-44
- Murphy, P.E., & Bayley, R. (1989). Tourism and disaster planning, *Geographical Review*, vol. 79 no. 1, pp. 36-46
- Ngai, E. W. T., Moon, K. K., Lam, S. S., Chin, E. S. K. & Tao, S. S. C. (2015). Social Media Models, Technologies, and Applications: An Academic Review and Case Study, *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, vol. 115, no. 5, pp. 769–802
- Niestadt, M. (2020). European parliament: COVID-19 and the Tourism Sector, Available online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/649368/EPRS\\_ATA\(2020\)649368\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/649368/EPRS_ATA(2020)649368_EN.pdf) [Accessed 2 May 2020]
- Nisbett, R.E. (2003). *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently and Why*, The Free Press, London
- O'Hern, M. S. & Kahle, L. R. (2013). The Empowered Customer: User-Generated Content and the Future of Marketing, *Global Economics and Management Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 22–30
- Obenour, W., Patterson, M., Pedersen, P. & Pearson, L. (2006). Conceptualization of a meaning-based research approach for tourism service experiences, *Tourism Management*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 34-41
- Ohanian, R. (1991). The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on consumers' intention to purchase, *Journal of Advertising Research*, pp. 46-53

- Oliver, R. L. (1997). *Satisfaction CA Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Oyibo, K. & Vassileva, J. (2020). HOMEX: Persuasive Technology Acceptance Model and the Moderating Effect of Culture, *Frontiers in Computer Science*, vol. 2, pp.1-17
- Parra-López, E., Bulchand-Gidumal, J., Gutiérrez-Taño, D. & Díaz-Armas, R. (2011). Intentions to Use Social Media in Organizing and Taking Vacation Trips, *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 640–654
- Pelling E , White K . (2009). The theory of planned behavior applied to young people’s use of social networking web sites, *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, vol. 12, no. 6, pp. 755–759
- Pennington-Gray, L., Schroeder, A. & Kaplanidou, K. (2011). Examining the Influence of Past Travel Experience, General Web Searching Behaviors, and Risk Perceptions on Future Travel Intentions, *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism/Hospitality*, vol. 1, pp. 64-89
- Peter, J. P., & Olson, J. C. (1996). *Consumer Behavior and Marketing Strategy (5th ed.)*, Toronto: Irwin McGraw-Hill
- Pine, R. & Mckercher, B. (2004). The impact of SARS on Hong Kong’s tourism industry. International, *Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol. 16, pp. 139-143
- Podrug, N., Pavičić, J. & Bratić, V. (2006) Cross-cultural comparison of Hofstede's dimensions and decision-making Style within CEE context. The Program Committee ICES2006. From transition to sustainable development: the path to European integration
- Pooyam, A. (1984). Acculturation, acculturative stress and their relationships to both work and non-work outcomes. Unpublished Ph.D Management Science, University of Texas at Dallas
- Punnett, B. J., & Withaney, S. (1988). Testing the validity of Hofstede’s value indices, Unpublished Paper, University of Windsor
- Pye, L.W. (1985). *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*, The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA
- Rauniar, R., Rawski, G., Jei, Y. & Johnson, B. (2014). Technology acceptance model (TAM) and social media usage: An empirical study on Facebook, *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, vol. 27
- Ravindran, D., Nagamalar, M., Uma Rani, P. (2019). Social Media Sources influence on Tourism Choice Decisions, *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, vol. 13, pp. 177-182
- Reisinger, Y. & Crotts, J. C. (2010). Applying Hofstede’s National Culture Measures in Tourism Research: Illuminating Issues of Divergence and Convergence, *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 153–164

Richards, K. (2011). An economic contribution that matters: The Power of Youth Travel, WYSE Travel Confederation, pp. 7-8

Robinson, R.V. (1983). Geert Hofstede: Culture's consequences: International differences in work related values, *Work and Occupations*, vol. 10, pp. 110–15

Rogers, E. M. (1983). Diffusion of innovations. 3rd ed. New York: Free Press

Rogers, E. M. (1983). Diffusion of innovations. New York, NY: The Free Press

Ruef, M., Aldrich, H. E., & Carter, N. M. (2003). The Structure of Founding Teams: Homophily, Strong Ties and Isolation Among U.S. Entrepreneurs, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 68, pp. 195–222

Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 54–67

Sabiote, C. M., Frías, D. M. & Castañeda, J. A. (2012). Culture As A Moderator Of The Relationship Between Service Quality And The Tourist'S Satisfaction With Different Distribution Channels, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, vol. 29, no. 8, pp. 760–778

Sago, B. (2013). Factors Influencing Social Media Adoption and Frequency of Use: An Examination of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google+, *International Journal of Business and Commerce*, vol. 3, no.1, pp. 1-12

Sánchez-Franco, M. J., Martínez-López, F. J. & Martín-Velicia, F. A. (2009). Exploring the Impact of Individualism and Uncertainty Avoidance in Web-Based Electronic Learning: An Empirical Analysis in European Higher Education, *Computers & Education*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 588–598

Sarks, G. (2007). Consumer generated content in travel: a roadmap for bringing consumers into the conversation. Web-seminar presentation, 16 April, Compete, Inc

Schacter, S. (1959). The Psychology of Affiliation: Experimental Studies of the Source of Gregariousness. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press

Schlegelmilch, F. & Ollenburg, C. (2013). Marketing the Adventure: Utilizing the Aspects of Risk/Fear/Thrill to Target the Youth Traveller Segment, *Tourism Review*, vol. 68, no. 3, pp. 44–54

Schott, P. K. (2004). Across-Product Versus Within-Product Specialization in International Trade, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 119, no. 2, pp. 647–678

Schroeder, A., Pennington-Gray, L., Donohoe, H., Kioussis, S., Mandala, L. (2016). Do Cultural Differences Influence Tourists' Likelihood to Seek Information Via Social Media in the Event of a Crisis?, Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally, pp.

11

- Schultz F., Utz S., & Goritz A. (2011). Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via twitter, blogs and traditional media, *Public Relat. Rev.*, vol. 37, no.1, pp. 20-27
- Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Cultural dimensions of values: Toward an understanding of national differences. In U. Kam, H. C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S. C. Choi, & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and application* (pp. 85–119). Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Seekings, J. (1995) *Europe's Youth Travel Market: Market Profile*. London: English Tourist Board/British Tourist Authority Insights
- Shackleton, V. J. and Ali, A. H. (1990). Work-Related Values of Managers: A Test of the Hofstede Model, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 109–118
- Shah, K. (2020). 'Mostly empty': Covid-19 has nearly shut down world's busiest airport, *The Guardian*, Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/13/atlanta-hartsfield-jackson-coronavirus-airport-shut-down> [Accessed 12 May 2020]
- Shim, S., Gehrt, K. C., & Siek, M. (2005). Attitude and behavior regarding pleasure travel among mature consumers: A socialization perspective, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 69-81
- Shin, D. H., & Kim, W. Y. (2008). Applying the technology acceptance model and flow theory to Cyworld user behavior: implication of the Web 2.0 user acceptance, *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 378–382
- Singh, S. & Srivastava, P. (2019). Social Media for Outbound Leisure Travel: A Framework Based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), *Journal of Tourism Futures*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 43–61
- Sitkin, S. B. & Weingart, L. R. (1995). Determinants of Risky Decision-Making Behavior: A Test of the Mediating Role of Risk Perceptions and Propensity, *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 38, no. 6, pp. 1573-1592
- Slater, D. (2002). Making Things Real, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 19, no. 6, pp. 227–245
- Smith, T. J. & Nichols, T. (2015). Understanding the Millennial Generation, *Journal of Business Diversity*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 39-47
- Søndergaard, M. (1994). Hofstede's consequences: A study of reviews, citations and replications, *Organization Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 447-456
- Sönmez, S. F. & Graefe, A. R. (1998). Determining Future Travel Behavior from Past Travel Experience and Perceptions of Risk and Safety, *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp.171–177

- Statista. (2019). Average number of social media accounts per internet user as of July 2019, by age group, Statista Available online: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/381964/number-of-social-media-accounts/> [Accessed 28 February 2020]
- Steenkamp, J. B. E. M., Hofstede, F. T., & Wedel, M. (1999). A cross-national investigation into the individual and national cultural antecedents of consumer innovativeness, *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 55–69
- Straub, D.(1994). The Effect of Culture on IT Diffusion: E-Mail and Fax in Japan and the U.S., *Information System Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 23-47
- Straub, D., Keil, M., and Bernner, W. (1997). Testing the Technology Acceptance Model Across Cultures: A Three Country Study, *Information & Management*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 1-11
- Strong, S. R. (1968). Counseling: An interpersonal influence process, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 215–224
- Taber, K. S. (2018). The Use of Cronbach’s Alpha When Developing and Reporting Research Instruments in Science Education, *Research in Science Education*, vol. 48, no. 6, pp. 1273–1296
- Tayeb, M. H. (1996). *The Management of a Multicultural Workforce*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Tilford, C. (2018). The millennial moment in charts, Financial times, Available online: <https://www.ft.com/content/f81ac17a-68ae-11e8-b6eb-4acfcfb08c11> [Accessed 6 May 2020]
- Todorović, N. & Jovičić, D. (2016). Motivational Factors of Youth Tourists Visiting Belgrade, *Journal of the Geographical Institute Jovan Cvijić SASA*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 273–289
- Tourism Crisis Management Institute (TCMI). (2012). 2011-2012 Annual Report, Tourism Crisis Management Institute, Available online: <http://tcmi.hhp.ufl.edu/wp-content%5Cuploads/TCMI-Fifth-Annual-Report.pdf> [Accessed 15 May 2020]
- Tseng H., & Fogg B. (1999). Credibility and computing technology, *Commun. ACM*, vol. 42, no.5, pp. 39-44
- UNESCO (2019). By youth, with youth, for youth, Available online: <https://en.unesco.org/youth> [Accessed 20 March 2020]
- United Nations (2020). Digital technologies critical in facing COVID-19 pandemic, United Nations, Available online: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/policy/digital-technologies-critical-in-facing-covid-19-pandemic.html> [Accessed 12 May 2020]
- United Nations. (2020). Protecting and mobilizing youth in COVID-19 responses, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Available online: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/news/2020/05/covid-19/> [Accessed 24 May 2020]

- UNWTO. (2016). WYSE Travel Confederation: Global Report on the Power of Youth Travel 2016, March 2016, Available online: <https://www.wysetc.org/research/reports/global-report-on-the-power-of-youth-travel-2016/> [Accessed 27 March 2020]
- UNWTO. (2020). Why Tourism?, Available online: <https://www.unwto.org/why-tourism> [Accessed 31 March 2020]
- Uzunoğlu, E., & Kip, S. M. (2014). Brand communication through digital influencers: Leveraging blogger engagement, *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 34, no. 5, pp. 592–602
- Valor, J. & Sieber, S. (2003). Uses and Attitudes of Young People Toward Technology and Mobile Telephony, *SSRN Electronic Journal*, Available online: <http://www.ssrn.com/abstract=459222> [Accessed 23 May 2020]
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: toward a unified view. *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 425-478
- Wang, X., Teo, H. H., & Wei, K. K. (2007). The acceptance of product recommendations from web-based word-of-mouth systems: Effects of information, informant, and system characteristics. In *Proceedings of 28th International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS2007)*, 12 December. Montreal
- Weerasinghe, S. & Hindagolla, M. (2018). Technology acceptance model and social network sites (SNS): a selected review of literature, *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, vol. 67
- Westwood, R. G., & Everett, J. E. (1987). Culture's consequences: a methodology for comparative management studies in Southeast Asia, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 187-202
- Wiener, J. L. & Mowen, J. C. (1986). Source Credibility: on the Independent Effects of Trust and Expertise, *Advances in Consumer Research Volume*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 306-310
- Willis, T. J. (2008). An evaluation of the technology acceptance model as a means of understanding online social networking behavior (Theses and Dissertations, Paper 568). Tampa, FL: University of South Florida. Retrieved from <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/568>
- Wirtz, B.W. & Göttel, V. (2016). Technology acceptance in social media: Review, synthesis and directions for future empirical research, vol. 17, pp. 97-115
- Woodside, A. G., & Dubelaar, C. (2002). A general theory of tourism consumption systems: A conceptual framework and an empirical exploration, *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 120-132



Woodside, A. G., & MacDonald, R. (1994). General System Framework of Customer Choice Processes of Tourism Services. In R.V. Gasser & K. Weiermair (Eds.), *Spoilt for choice. Decision-Making Process and Preference Change of Tourist: Intertemporal and Intercountry Perspectives* (pp. 30-59). Thaur, Germany: Kulturverlag

World Economic Forum. (2013). The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013. Available online: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_TT\\_Competitiveness\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TT_Competitiveness_Report_2013.pdf) [Accessed 20 March 2020]

World Health Organization. (2020). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Pandemic, World Health Organization, Available online: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> [Accessed 2 May 2020]

World Tourism Organization (1991). International conference on youth tourism, New Delhi (India): Final report. 18-21 November 1991, Available online: [http://www.atlaseuro.org/pages/pdf/Student\\_Youth\\_Travel\\_Bibliography.pdf](http://www.atlaseuro.org/pages/pdf/Student_Youth_Travel_Bibliography.pdf) [Accessed 20 March 2020]

World Tourism Organization (2020). UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, January 2020, *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 1–48

World Values Survey. (2015). Available online: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp> [Accessed 20 May 2020]

WYSE Travel Confederation. (2012). Youth and student travellers age 15 to 29 represent 23% of international tourist arrivals, WYSE Travel Confederation, Available online: <https://www.wysetc.org/2015/09/youth-and-student-travellers-age-15-to-29-represent-23-of-international-tourist-arrivals/> [Accessed 21 March 2020]

WYSE Travel Confederation. (n.d.). Facts and Stats, WYSE Travel Confederation, Available online: <https://www.wysetc.org/about-us/facts-and-stats/> [Accessed 31 March 2020]

Xiang, Z. & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of Social Media in Online Travel Information Search, *Tourism Management*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 179-188

Yeh, R. (1988). Values of American, Japanese and Taiwanese managers in Taiwan: atest of Hofstede's framework. 48th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Anaheim. Academy of Management Best Papers Proceedings

Yeniyurt, S. & Townsend, J. (2003). Does Culture Explain Acceptance of New Products in a Country?, *International Marketing Review*, vol. 20, pp. 377-396

Yeniyurt, S., & Townsend, J. D. (2003). Does culture explain acceptance of new products in a country? An empirical investigation, *International Marketing Review*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 377–396

Yosemite National Park - Reviews. (2020). Available online: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/YosemiteNPS/reviews/> [Accessed 6 May 2020]

- Yousaf, A., Amin, I. & C. Santos, J. A. (2018). Tourist's Motivations ToTravel: A Theoretical Perspective on the Existing Literature, *Tourism and hospitality management*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 1–15
- Yousef, D. A. (1998). Predictors of decision making styles in a non-western country, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, vol. 19, no. 7, pp. 366-373
- Yu, G., Carlsson, C. & Zou, D. (2014). Exploring the Influence of User-Generated Content Factors on the Behavioral Intentions of Travel Consumers, 25th Australasian Conference on Information Systems, p.12
- Yunusovich, S. S. (2018). Youth Tourism as a Scientific Research Object, *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, vol. 07, no. 05, Available online: <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/youth-tourism-as-a-scientific-research-object-2167-0269-1000378-105095.html> [Accessed 24 March 2020]
- Zakour, A. (2004). Cultural Differences and Information Technology Acceptance, Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Southern Association for Information Systems, Available online; [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228608927\\_Cultural\\_differences\\_and\\_information\\_technology\\_acceptance/citations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228608927_Cultural_differences_and_information_technology_acceptance/citations) [Accessed 15 April 2020]
- Zhou, T. (2011). Understanding online community user participation: A social influence perspective, *Internet Research*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 67–81
- Zollo, P. (2004). Getting wiser to teens: more insights into marketing to teenagers. [New update]. ed. Ithaca, N.Y.: New Strategist Publications

# Appendix



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

0% completed

Dear respondent,

We are two master students from the MSc International Marketing and Brand Management program at Lund University. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. It will take approximately 5 minutes.

This survey is directed to people aged 15-29 from Bulgaria, Croatia, Sweden and the Netherlands who have traveled at least once in the past 12 months. If you are not from any of these countries, not in this age group, or have not traveled in the past 12 months, we kindly ask you to end the survey here. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of youth tourists' attitudes towards social media marketing content in their intention to plan travel.

Your responses will be handled with confidentiality and will be anonymous. You can end the survey at any point. The data will be used only while processing the results of the study.

Kind regards,

Iva Pervan and Nadezhda Tsankova

Next

[Nadezhda Tsankova](#) – 2020 [Iva Pervan](#) – 2020

**1. How old are you?**

- 15-22
- 23-29
- Prefer not to say

**2. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**3. What is your highest level of completed education?**

- Middle school
- High school
- Bachelor level
- Master level or higher
- Prefer not to say

**4. What is your current occupation?**

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Other

**5. What is your nationality?**

- Bulgarian
- Croatian
- Dutch
- Swedish

Next

Below you can find two examples of travel-related content on social media. Please, think of other similar content that you have encountered. For instance, think about such content not only on Facebook and Instagram but also on other social media platforms, such as Twitter, Pinterest, Trip Advisor, etc.



**mariefeandjakesnow** • Последван  
Manyeleti, Limpopo, South Africa

**mariefeandjakesnow** • Последван  
Manyeleti, Limpopo, South Africa

**mariefeandjakesnow** • ELEGANT POOL

It's one thing to have a once in a lifetime experience on your own, it's another to share that experience with the love of your life 🥰❤️ And then it's a whole 'nother level to be able to share it with thousands of beautiful people around the world 🌍🥰

This was hands down one of the best, most breathtaking experiences we've ever had 🥰 We are so grateful to be able to share it together as a couple and together with YOU 🥰 Adding to your bucket list? 🥰

@honeyguidecamps

43,402 харесвания  
16 ДЕКЕМВРИ 2019 Г.

**travel\_juanito\_ovo** wonderful vacation destination! this is the dream 🥰🔥  
17 седми. Отговор

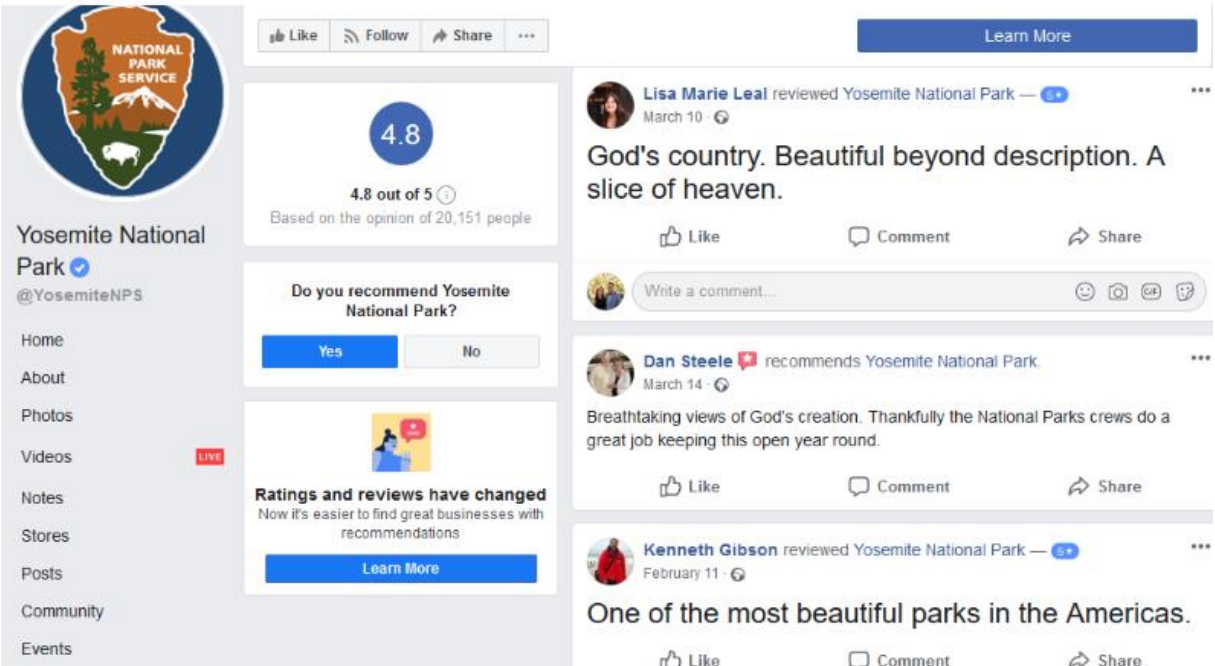
**miruna.haicn** Such a nice view!  
15 седми. Отговор

**seryfortu @fedesbarbi** honeymoon goals ❤️  
15 седми. Отговор

**faceless.gnomad** This looks magical 🥰🥰  
18 седми. Отговор

**ihavewickedtalents** Quite adventurous pool 😊..awesome 🥰  
18 седми. Отговор

**brittnoelle.co** This is insane and my absolute dream !!!!!!!  
18 седми. Отговор



**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**Yosemite National Park** ✓  
@YosemiteNPS

Home  
About  
Photos  
Videos  
Notes  
Stores  
Posts  
Community  
Events

Like Follow Share ...

**4.8**  
4.8 out of 5  
Based on the opinion of 20,151 people

Do you recommend Yosemite National Park?  
Yes No

**Ratings and reviews have changed**  
Now it's easier to find great businesses with recommendations  
Learn More

**Lisa Marie Leal** reviewed Yosemite National Park — 6+  
March 10 · 🌐

God's country. Beautiful beyond description. A slice of heaven.

Like Comment Share

Write a comment...

**Dan Steele** recommends Yosemite National Park.  
March 14 · 🌐

Breathtaking views of God's creation. Thankfully the National Parks crews do a great job keeping this open year round.

Like Comment Share

**Kenneth Gibson** reviewed Yosemite National Park — 6+  
February 11 · 🌐

One of the most beautiful parks in the Americas.

Like Comment Share

**6. This type of social media content could:**

	strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
Improve my travel planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help me plan trips more efficiently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make my travel planning easier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enable me to reach travel-related decisions faster	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be useful for my overall travel planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. I find such content:**

	strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
Enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertaining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. I find such content:**

	strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
Dependable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**9. I believe that this type of content:**

	strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
Reflects my own interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is similar to my own interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Represents interests I can identify with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is not very different from my own interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is created by someone with whom I share common interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**10. After seeing such content, I:**

	strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
Would not hesitate to use it in my travel planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use it to seek travel advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expect to use the content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intend to use this type of content for my travel planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would be very likely to use this type of content for my travel planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

---

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire!**

---

[Nadezhda Tsankova](#) – 2020 [Iva Pervan](#) – 2020