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Spanish Millennials affected by influencers' new trend in the  
tourism and hospitality sector.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this degree thesis is to analyse the power of the Spanish influencers on the tourism sector and how the companies are collaborating with them in order to grow and become more competitive.

Through the years it's been more and more clear the importance of implementing new technologies in the companies such as modern web pages or applications. Nowadays Social Media has reached remarkable significance when talking about the different marketing and promotional strategies for all sectors, including tourism and hospitality. It has become one of the best ways of advertising and one of the reasons that have caused the emergence of Influencers. The theoretical part will be focused on social media marketing and the changes that have experimented during the years, including also the generations more affected by new trends. On the other hand, to support the research, some interviews and surveys have been done.

In this theses is analysed the impact of the influencers on the Spanish tourism sector in order to get a deeper view of the actual situation.

## **KEYWORDS**

Social Media

Millennials

Influencers

Tourism

New trends

Applications

Hospitality

Social Media Marketing

Spain

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Context of the research

During the last 20 years the market has experimented lots of changes because of the innovations on technology and the new trends. Little by little the use of social media has become one of the main tools of advertising and a key element on the marketing plans. The interest of companies to make their brands known through these online communities is growing every day. Therefore more and more brands search for Influencers in order to promote their products and services to concrete target groups in the main social media platforms (Fackler. A., 2018).

In recent years we have been able to observe a significant growth in the influence generated by those individuals who, taking advantage of the potential of the Social Media, reach millions of followers. Actually is not only enough to have a large number of followers, it is even more important, the engagement it produces with its followers and that their image is in line with the company. According to the 2016 Influencer Marketing report, “66% of the marketers have already introduced an influencer marketing strategy” and “during 2017 50% of the brands approximately have increased their investments on influencer marketing” (Forbes, 2017).

In the tourism field many companies share the opinion that the marketing they use mostly done online. Even though the relevance of new technologies, the companies know the importance of personal relations and the huge impact of the word of mouth from friends and families in hospitality sector. However, they are able to recreate those personal recommendations through the figure of an influencer. Nowadays, most tourism brands are actively using social media and look for durable customer loyalty, direct contact with customers, and also for addressing new audience. Hence, influencer marketing has become highly demanded and accepted as a Marketing tool. As stated by Alina Fackler in her book “Benefits of Influencer Marketing in Tourism”: “No industry produces as more Influencer Marketing than tourism” (Fackler. A., 2018).

The aim of the present work is to define Influencer Marketing and to get to know the advantages for the tourism industry, as well as the impact

## **1.2. Identification of the research problem**

Social media can be defined as the group platforms that create online communications between different people, building interactions, share of content and in many cases collaboration. SixDegrees.com is known as the first social network site and was launched in 1997.

On it the users could create profiles and list their friends, but it finally close in 2000, giving way to new platforms as LinkedIn in 2003, Facebook in 2004 or Instagram 2010, among other examples (Ellison. N., 2013).

Those new platforms have brought to companies different ways of advertising products and services. Influencer marketing is one of the most relevant in the present. Although it has been practiced for years, this prototype focused on social networks still lacks specialized theoretical and professional publications. Through this work we will see how over the last few years, touristic companies have sought a change on how they promote their products.

## **1.3. Originality and contribution to knowledge**

Being a very current issue, there have not been too many studies on the effect of the Influencers in a generation like the Millennials. During the last years Influencers have become part of the life of many youth, therefore the impact these people have in society it cannot be ignored (Del Fresno G. et al., 2016).

The development of this trend has extended barriers. The beginning of it was mainly related to fashion and aesthetics but these ambits have been increasing year by year up to the point to reach brands related with technology and food companies, beside others (Llorca A., 2015).

In this research it will be studied one of those relatively new sectors working with influencers: Tourism. As in this field, there are more and more Influencers that share content about their trips mentioning agencies and collaborators, as well as their stays in hotels or experiences in restaurants.

## **1.4. Aim and objectives**

The current situation of this tourism industry is permanently changing due to the appearance of new technologies and trends. The aim of this degree thesis is to analyse how the influencers impact to the tourism and hospitality industry within new young generations.

By the study of one of the main generations, the Millennial and the one that follows it: Generation Z; it will be possible to detect the changes between older generations and the technological one.

The objectives that are needed to be achieved with this study are various. First of all comprehend the power of social media focusing on the main Apps used by Millennials and where Influencers are present

nowadays. Moreover, to investigate this generation and the difference it has with others such as Generation Z. At the same time, focusing on the touristic field, know what the opinions of consumers (Millennials) and influencers are in order to understand this trend, and the future vision of it from both sides in the market.

The purpose of the paper is to answer these questions:

- Which have been the main changes on Social Media Marketing?
- Which are the main characteristics of the modern generations like Millennials and Generation Z?
- How the new trends have affected the tourism industry?
- How much power do the influencers have on the behaviour of the customers as decision making process?
- Which are the main influencers in Spain? Do they have any future on the tourism industry?

After responding to these questions it will be able to have a wider picture of the tourism market and the future of it. The research will take as example the most used platform by influencers, Instagram. In order to get the information needed some interviews and surveys will be prepared and translated afterwards. Interviews for influencers, pointing out question about their jobs and the power on the different brands, including tourism; and surveys to the customers, in order to reflect the power that all this new trends and ways of selling are affecting them.

### **1.5. Structure of the study**

In order to fulfil the research, gap this article progresses through different steps. First of all, it makes a general overview about social media marketing, introducing thereby the most relevant Applications used nowadays. These are followed by an explanation of the different innovations and trends within the hospitality sector. Afterwards, both generations most related with the new marketing strategies are developed: Generation Y and Generation Z. To finish the theoretical research there are two points related with the emergence of the new concept of influencers, the phenomenon that leads all the study. The following point is all related with the methods used to do the empirical research of this study: Mixed methodology using quantitative and qualitative data. Here it is explained the difference of those, and moreover it can be found the analysis of the sample obtained.



In findings and discussions, it is exposed the collection of all the results obtained. Using tools as graphics or tables, it is provided a deeper analysis of the research.

To end up with the paper, it is concluded with the resolution of the objectives and with some recommendations and limitations found during the study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Literature map

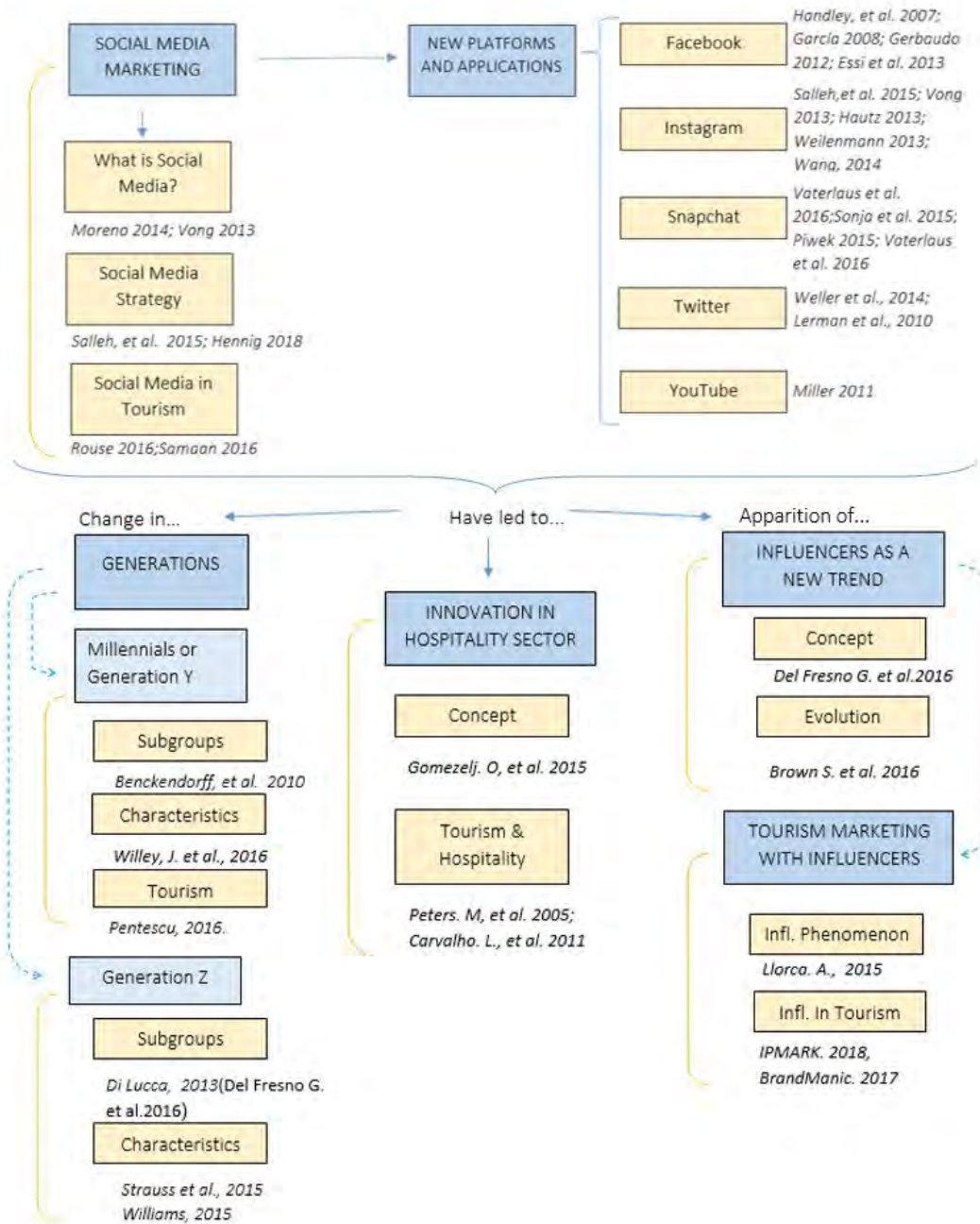


Figure 1 Literature map

Source: Own elaboration

## 2.2. Conceptual framework

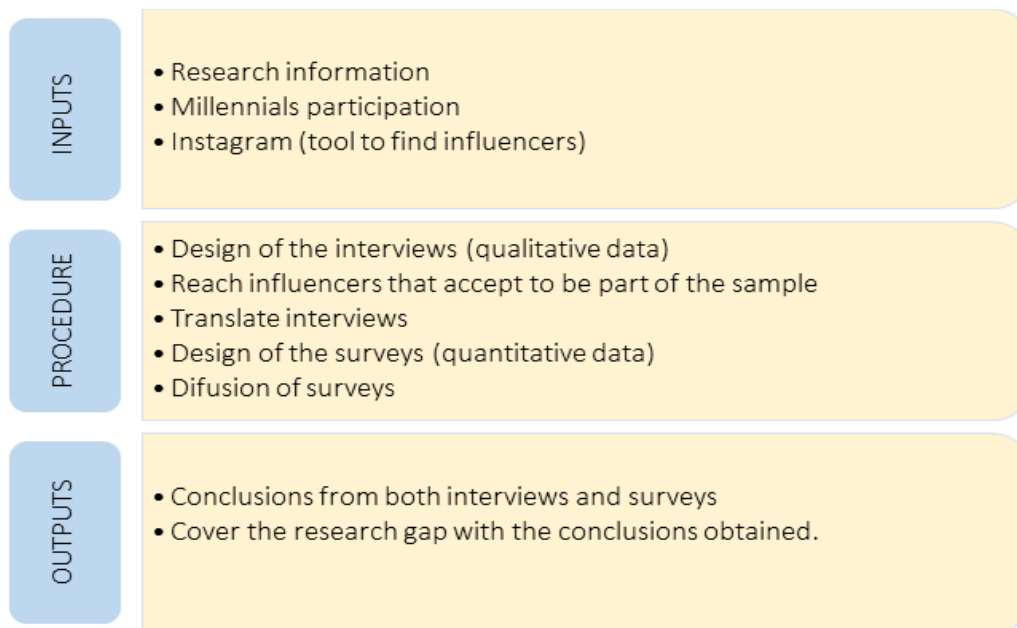


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

Source: Own elaboration

## 2.3. Social Media Marketing

Marketing as has been known for many years is over now. Due to the innovation on new technologies the companies, as well as the tourism sector, have had to adapt themselves to this new connected world. The profound changes that have impacted the communication market of the twenty-first century have led to the appearance of a new paradigm. That change, which transforms traditional relationships, calls for a redefinition of the professional scenarios, the communication agents, when relating to information and brands (Fernández. E, et al., 2017). Nowadays the printing press, radio and television are not anymore the main channels of communication, Social Media has adopted this role. As stated by M. Moreno in his book “El Gran libro del community manager” : “ Social media are all those tools that allow us to speak, listen, dialogue and interact with other individuals, companies and institutions; those that put us in contact with a community formed by people with similar interests to ours or those of the company for which we work; and those that destroy the traditional transmitter and receiver scheme and encourage interaction among all users, proposing a new communication paradigm” (Moreno. M., 2014).

Social Media tools are online platforms that allow functions to anyone so people can express their opinion and get their message across to other individuals, companies or institutions. This makes a difference with traditional media such as radio or television (Moreno. M. 2014). Another aspect that

has changed due to these new platforms is the way how consumers pursue information, evaluate products, and give product feedback (Vong. K. 2013). One of the main variances between the old marketing and Social Media marketing is that the companies now have direct contact with their customers via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other Applications and furthermore the frequency on content is updated every minute and companies have to be aware of that.

Realizing the importance of Social Media for business, many operators now engage consumer attention and stay connected with their customers (Salleh. S. et al. 2015). In order to have a good performance in this field is primordial to develop a detailed Social Media Strategy, the more advanced it is, the better its Social Media performance. This strategy can be defined as the implementation of a written background that sets objectives and describes how the company and its customers will collaborate to achieve the goals and co-create long-term value for the brand. Moreover, taking into account that each Social Media Application (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube...) has particular advantages, they all need to have a clear and differentiated path to cover also the purpose of the company (Hennig, T. 2018).

Social media marketing in the tourism field have taken advantage of the fast develop of the new technologies, meaning that hotels and restaurant are now on the spotlight and have wider and more direct relationships with customers (Rouse, 2016). It has been investigated that the interactions between the consumers in the tourism sector, have led to more commitment to a brand than in the past (Samaan, A. 2016).

#### **2.4. Social Media new platforms and Application**

It is important to point out that nowadays the consumers are the key players on how the companies can advertise themselves. This is because after being exposed to all kind of advertising, for example in television, radio and press, the knowledge of marketing and publicity is huge, and companies efforts to engage people through the traditional way is now nullify.

Due to the creation of Social Media online platforms the communication between people from all over the world is possible 24/7. The actual society co-lives with a constant development and innovation of Applications, by analysing of some of the most important platforms it can be seen the huge impact of them (Fernández. E, et al., 2017).

*Facebook* was created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. He was a computer programmer and before creating Facebook he had already created at university several social networking websites such as

Coursematch and Facemash. The first user was freshmen students of Harvard University and little by little Zuckerberg expanded Facebook to other universities. After 2006 the platform was extended to anyone that had an email account, not only to university students. Nowadays Facebook is one of the most important platforms use also as a way of advertising (Handley. C. et al. 2007). Facebook defines itself as "a social tool that connects you with people around you". When entering the system, only enter an e-mail account and a password. And from there, Facebook starts to work as a network, offering the possibility of including as "friends" anyone who is on our list of contacts and who already has Facebook. It is difficult not to keep up with the news that the network offers. Moreover, when we enter our Facebook account, we have a record with the latest actions carried out by our contacts. If the information provided in advance is not enough, there is also the option to click on the name of a contact to see her or his profile and know more about it. A factor of success of Facebook is the protection and security it offers to users who register in the social network (García. A. 2008).

This Application and other social media have emerged as very powerful means of communication and mobilization (Gerbaudo. P., 2012). Furthermore, a big potential of this social network is in education ambience, because Facebook is also a collaborative space (Handley. C. et al. 2007).

Companies' Facebook pages have arisen as a commonly used marketing channel and their importance as a sales channel is likely to increase (Essi. P. et al. 2013).

*Instagram* was launched in October 2010 by Mike Systrom and Kevin Krieger. From this starting point, Systrom and Krieger added photo manipulation features to their mobile application, offering users a variety of filters that could be applied to photographs and the capability to add captions, tags and comments. Instagram has become in few years one of the most popular image-based social medium for smartphones (Salleh. S. et al. 2015).

Instagram is a relatively new form of communication, it is one of the popular photo-based social media sites for businesses to share images and videos with their customers (Vong. K. 2013). As mentioned in a journal of interactive marketing "photos and videos help attract customer intention to purchase" (Hautz. J. et al. 2013). Thus Instagram is a good tool to improve a photo by manipulating it through photographic techniques using filters and frames, and creating different forms of artistic expression (Weilenmann. A. et al. 2013).



*Figure 3 Facebook Icon*

*Source: Google Images*



*Figure 4 Instagram Icon*

*Source: Google Images*

Particularly the restaurant industry has been more remarkable than other businesses in using photo-based social media such as the Instagram. Photos in gastronomy blogs and restaurant advertisement for instance, help tourists to experience sensory appeal, creating mental impression and inspire them to plan visit to the restaurant (Wang. H. 2014).

In recent years, Instagram has added the possibility to publish photos during 24 hours called “stories”, becoming a direct competitor with Snapchat, which has lost a big part of its consumers due to this Instagram actualization.

*Snapchat*: created in 2011 by three friends called Evan Spiegel, Reggie Brown and Bobby Murphy. Snapchat is a social media platform that allows users to send images, videos, and text with a definite amount of time for the receiver view the content before it becomes permanently inaccessible to the receiver (Vaterlaus, M. et al. 2016). Snapchat provides its users a higher level of privacy because of its uniqueness of erasing the messages several seconds after they have been sent (Sonja, U., et al. 2015).



Figure 5 Snapchat Icon

Source: Google Images

The use of Snapchat has been quickly growing among adolescents. Users mainly share “selfies”, typically includes text and it is primarily used for communication with close friends and family as an easy and funny alternative to other instantaneous messaging services (Piwek, L., et al. 2015). It is also used within young adult interpersonal relationships (Vaterlaus, M. et al. 2016). Every story uploaded on the applications has duration of 24 hours. Nowadays and due to the constant updates on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, Snapchat has been left little by little aside in the framework of phone applications.

*Twitter*: Created on 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone y Evan Williams. Twitter is a popular social site that allows registered users to post and read short (at most 140 characters) text messages. Over the years, various additional features have been included, such as the facilities for picture upload and display, or the automatic shortening of URLs to save characters in tweets (Weller et al., 2014). The most remarkable aspect about twitter is that a user can also retweet or comment on another user’s post. People can express their opinions and thoughts. Is the most used platform for users to complain about any kind of problems they may have with companies or brands (Lerman. K. et al., 2010).



Figure 6 Twitter Icon

Source: Google Images

Twitter is used as a font of real-time information and a place for discuss about news, politics, business, and entertainment. Furthermore Twitter can become a medium for direct communication, for example

celebrities or media personalities can share personal comments with fans, and fans may address them directly in their response.

This platform uses the idea of “following”. Becoming a follower of a user is similar to subscribing to their updates, so their tweets will appear in your personal timeline. Opposing to social network sites such as Facebook, where social relationships are required to be reciprocal, the “follow relationship” relationship does not necessarily have to be unilateral. Besides the following concept, Twitter affords the formation of relations between users and through the use of hashtags, which contain the “#” symbol followed by a word or phrase. As hashtags are searchable by the interface, they connect tweets from users who have no previous “follow relationship”. Any user can and use them, giving rise to a wide diversity of hashtags. This results in “trending topic” functionality, which promotes a shared use of particular hashtags for current events, cultural expression, or engagement in ongoing conversations (Weller et al., 2014).

*YouTube:* Created in February 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim. They realized there was a real need for a service that enabled the process of uploading, watching and sharing videos.

It is a video sharing site owned by Google. YouTube is a useful tool as we are becoming less a society of readers

and more one of watchers. It lets anyone post videos online about any type content that anyone else can watch. It is a popular site ranked in the top five of all sites in the Web with more than 130 million visitors per month (Miller, M. 2011). It can be included a lot of information in a short three-minute video, and it can be presented in an entertaining and engaging way. People like to be amused, cultured and informed and online video can do all three things.

The low cost of entry makes YouTube attractive to business. The cost of making a video is next to nothing; there is no need of much more than a video recorder and a computer. Therefore most of the videos on YouTube are amateurish, produced by non-professionals with simple webcams, it is personal but at the same time stuff that people like to watch. Nowadays there are an increasing number of more professional clips, many designed to service or promote a specific product or business.

Small and large businesses have discovered YouTube. In fact, YouTube is the modern medium for online marketing; if a business has an online constituent it is a good option to promote it via YouTube videos. Done effectively a YouTube video can add a viral component to a company’s web marketing strategy. When a video is posted in YouTube, that video takes on a life of its own. It can be viewed by thousands



*Figure 7 YouTube Icons*

*Source: Google Images*

of users, posted to numerous websites and blogs, emailed around the Internet. Any user watching your video is now a potential customer (Miller, M. 2011).

## **2.5. Innovation in the hospitality sector**

As stated by Cruz, Vargas, Montes, and Torres in 2016 innovation can be defined as the creation of value, resources effectiveness, and implementation of a competitive management and innovation in inside and outside culture of the market level.

In 1934 Schumpeter introduced this concept for the first time. The concept was dividing 5 different categories : Product or service innovation by creating and introducing a new product on an existing market; Organizational innovation by creating a new business model; Process innovation by implementing new methods of creations already existing products; New resources and Marketing innovation within it can be found new trends on the marketing management and utilization (Gomezelj. O, et al. 2015).

Nowadays is crucial that companies inside the hospitality sector evolve constantly in order to improve the quality of the services that they are providing (Ottenbacher. M. 2005). This evolvment is the consequence of being one of the most productive sector in mostly all the developed countries (Gomezelj. O, et al. 2015). In order to increase competitiveness innovations is a key element on every company to grow and be sustainable in economic terms.

Focusing innovation more in depth in the services sector, it is possible to establish three different ways of doing it. The first one is to innovate in products, both for customers or suppliers. In the second place, innovation on the way that the service is provided to the customer and last but not least of new ways to communicate with clients as they pertain to different generations (Peters. M. et al. 2005).

Is also important to point out that the tourist profile is changing. Nowadays due to the influence of globalization, the number of tourist and the easier access to information is making the tourism sector is grow continuously. Therefore, innovation is indispensable in this sector, all strategies, products or services need the use of new technologies, the integration the latest trends and push the boundaries (Carvalho. L., et al. 2011).

## **2.6. Millennials or Generation Y**

In a few years the world will be ran by the generation called Millennials, and for that reason all the companies are becoming aware that they need to create new product and ways of selling in order to get them interested.



Is important to take into account that this generation is the new workforce entering on the market, as well as the tourism sector. Millennials, also known as generation Y, are people born between 1982 and 2002 (Benckendorff. P. Et al, 2010).

BIRTH YEARS	GENERATION NAME
1943 - 1960	Baby Boomers
1961-1981	Generation X
1982-2002	Generation Y
2003 - Present	Generation Z

*Figure 8 Summary of living Birth Generations*

*Source: Benckendorff, Moscardo and Pendergast, 2010, p.2*

Within the Generation Y, there are three subgroups: Generation Why (born 1982-1985), Millennials (MilGens; born 1985 - 1999), iGeneration (born 1999-2002). Members of the Generation why unit are on the peak of the X generation, so people within this group share some common characteristics with that generation (Benckendorff. P. Et al, 2010).

Millennials are the most-educated and technologically generation ever (Willey, J et al. 2016). According to the article Tourism and Generation Y: “Members of the Y Generation are confident and relaxed, conservative and the most educated generation ever.” They are impatient and self-focused. Even they consider collaboration and team values” (Benckendorff. P. et al. 2010) they have a tendency to be narcissistic, immature and selfish. Characteristically these traits are attributed to the idea that most Millennials were raised under the philosophy that they were “special” and could be whatever they wanted (Geyer. M. 2017). Moreover they are multitasking and networked people, “It is a hero generation, with a focus on brands, friends, fun and digital culture” (Benckendorff. P. et al. 2010. p.5,6). In the professional ambience Millennials have high perceptions of themselves. They want managers to be involved in their professional development. Furthermore Millennials are people with a lot of potential. They proclaim themselves as ready; ready for any challenge and for more responsibility (Willey, J et al. 2016)

Focusing more in deep on the tourism sector, this industry is continuously working in order to better understand generational differences, ensure a strong labor force and tourism market. In a recent study conducted by Kressmann Jeremy and the Skift Team (2016) is exposed that Millennials prefer travel and leisure experiences rather than other purchases.

Generation Y rely on content generated by users in social media that's why this segment spend a big amount of time looking for information about their next destination (an average of 10 different sources before purchasing any product or service). As G Brief confirmed: "they are travelling more often, book more over the internet and usually spend more on travel, are avid of information and experiences as well as willing to explore more destinations" (Pentescu. A. 2016. p2).

During their trips they want to enrich themselves, both culturally and personally, and in many cases they choose to stay in cheap accommodations. Some of them seem fine even when staying for free using some new platforms as couchsurfing. Besides, it is not weird either to find some Millennials that travel by making a labour exchange and they take advantage of this experience to know more in deep about the destination where they are (Pentescu. A. 2016).

All these characteristics come from the social and economic context they have grown with. This generation has created a new cultural phenomenon and that's because Generation Y is the first one born in the Information Age, they are digital natives so they way of doing and understanding things is completely different to previous generations (Benckendorff, et al. 2010).

## 2.7. Generation Z

Generation Z, also known as Post-Millennials, the iGeneration, or the Homeland Generation, is the demographic unit following the Millennials or Generation Y. They are mainly the children of Generation X but they also have parents who are Millennials (Strauss. A. et al, 2015). It can be said that the Generation X parents impose an upbringing style that tries to express commitment and at the same time freedom. That's why parental relationships within Z Generation is much closer and friendlier than used to be (Di Lucca. S. 2013).

The beginning of this is argued due to the conception of starting and ending points of previous generations: the Y, and the X. Taking into account the point of view of Mascó, in his book *Between Generations* (2012), this generation has been divided by investigators in the United States in two subgroups: the Z1(born between 1995 and 2000) and the Z2 (born since 2000 to 2005) (Di Lucca, 2013). Martín Acha, Director of the Human Resources Career at the "Universidad del Museo Social Argentino" (UMSA), says about Generation Z: "They are called digital natives and we should pay attention to their typically postmodern characteristics, which will impact on new modes of learning, the breaking of certain established social norms, as well as the way of visualizing work "(Di Lucca. S. 2013. p 12). They are the first to have internet easily integrated in their lives at a very young age. Therefore they are comfortable with technology and interacting on social media (Strauss. A. et al., 2015).

Generation Z is described as being more conservative, more money-oriented, more entrepreneurial and pragmatic. Furthermore A study called "Generation Z Goes to College" (2014) found that

Generation Z students identify themselves as being loyal, independent, compassionate, thoughtful, open-minded, responsible, and determined (Strauss. A. et al., 2015). Moreover it refers to a generation with a strong ethic towards work. They know the importance of saving money and working hard. Unconsciously they have been significantly affected by the global economic crisis of 2010, as they saw their parents lose their jobs. This gives them the wisdom to know that they should prepare for the future and professional opportunities (Di Lucca. S. 2013).

Another remarkable aspect of this generation is that Generation Z is the first generation that is rising in a smartphones society so they are at the same time coexisting with Social Media, that has become integrated into the daily lives. One of their needs is having information instantaneously, a clear example of this could be that many of them have their mobile devices under their pillow when they go sleep (Williams. A. 2015).

The Internet connection is a central theme in the Z, since they depend almost entirely on it. The concept freedom for these young Z is new. It is no longer related to going from a place to another, it is more the freedom of being connected to a huge world, they access all they need, and save experiences "in the cloud". Their lives are immersed in a hyper communication phenomenon (Di Lucca. S. 2013).

Spending more time on their smartphones has caused online relationship development to become a new generational model. They interact with people who they otherwise would not have met in the physical world. Social Media is primarily used for creating and preserving relationships with people they interact with outside the Internet, on their daily life.

They use the Internet as a means to improve social skills they then apply to real situations. Then it is also used for keeping updated with global news, and learning about interests they may have (Strauss A. et al., 2015).

While the millennial generation notoriously pioneered in Facebook, many in Generation Z have incorporated anonymous social media platforms like Secret or Whisper, as well as Snapchat, where any images disappear almost instantly. Nevertheless the difference between generations goes much further than selecting Snapchat over Facebook (Williams. A. 2015). Twitter and Instagram are seen to be gaining popularity among Z Generation. Rapidity, reliability and consistency are significant factors in how members select a social networking platform (Strauss. A. et al., 2015).

## **2.8. Influencers as a new trend**

Since the beginning of the professionalization of advertising, communication experts have sought the most effective channels to ensure that companies and brands reach their target audience. As stated by Mayorga (2014) companies have not only to believe in their commitment to develop a successful

strategic process, but they also need to assume the changes that have occurred in the world of communication, especially in the world on-line (Brown S. et al. 2016).

Nowadays, the user has the ability to connect with the brand at any time, breaking with the classic unidirectional model of traditional media. Under this conjuncture, the brand has to search the activation of those contact points in addition to looking for content and useful information for the target audience.

In this context, the internet has allowed the entry of new players that support the strategies of companies that seek to renew traditional formats: the influencers as a technique to improve the reputation and credibility of brands.

As mentioned by Schultz, Utz and Göritz (2011): “The rapid emergence of social media and media innovations has played an increasing role in the social construction and deconstruction of communications, in which social media influencers can play a crucial function” (Del Fresno G. et al., 2016, p.26).

In the present work we will define the influencers' marketing as the 2.0 strategy used by advertisers and communication experts whose purpose is to connect with the target audience of the brands through influential people of the 2.0 network, that are, bloggers, youtubers, instagramers, tweeters, etc. In the social media, influencers are termed as “opinion leaders” (Del Fresno G. et al.2016). The use of this tool allows brands to transmit messages to their target audience, achieving a high impact among the influencers' own followers and increasing the closeness between the brand and its community.

While it is true that influencers' marketing has spread over the years among various sectors, we currently find a strong trend in the use of this tool by brands belonging to the fashion and beauty sector. However, we can also talk about booming sectors in the use of this tool such as mobile and Apps, food, sports and tourism sector. Actions with influencers have become a key tool for some touristic companies as marketing strategies (Brown S. et al. 2016).

## **2.9. Tourism marketing with Influencers**

The first group of people that were considered influencers arose ten years ago. These being understood as the precursors of the still known blogs have now achieved a role that has changed from being a “service provider” that informs users on the positive and/or negative aspects of a product to an “ally of the brand” by which he/she has been hired (Llorca. A., 2015).

Moreover, an Influencer is an opinion leader that breaks with the traditional hierarchy and verticality because the communication is instantaneous, using content based on emotions and empathy so that the message is interpreted by the receiver in a direct and personal manner.

The Influencer phenomenon benefits brands because contributes to their positioning, “the Influencer tsunami” is a phenomenon to take into account because it has come to stay and it is increasing (Llorca, A., 2015).

As it has been explained before, the figure of influencers have a huge impact on society nowadays and of course in the hospitality sector.

As stated in a study conducted by Digimind, a social media monitoring agency, and Deloitte, a consultancy agency, the power of the influencers on the tourism sector is a new trend with high impact nowadays, changing the traditional business model of the companies. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook or YouTube, are the new field of the influencers network (IPMARK, 2018).

Some important data analysed in the study was: An 85% of the users of social media follow influencers, a 49% trust the recommendations on restaurants, hotels or tourism destinations made by influencers, and a 60% of the companies have develop specific products or services in order to be sold by the influencers and almost a 70% of the population that are subscribed in a YouTube channel trust more in recommendations made by influencers they follow than the ones made by traditional celebrities (IPMARK, 2018).

Influencers in tourism have become the best travel guides since by living themselves an experience; they give the opportunity to their audience to travel with them and see all places they visit. This new content trend goes beyond the traditional ones because it brings a more personal value to the virtual community. According to Enrique Lancis, director of Innovation and Tourism Intelligence of the company Globaldit (a Spanish company dedicated to identify the influencers that best fit a specific campaign in multiple themes and countries) , he believes that the destinations have worked together with the influencers, not only to create innovative content but to positively help their future audience, working to enrich their values and satisfy needs (BrandManic, 2017).

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1. Overall research design**

Given the purpose of this study (How Spanish social media influencers can affect the decision making process within Millennials and generation Z in the touristic sector), this chapter frames the research methodology carried in this study, using a primary data field approach.

Data will be collected to assemble all the necessary information and then provide an explanation of the results. This research involve two of the major approaches used nowadays the qualitative and quantitative research.

It is basic to distinguish both approaches. In the one hand the quantitative approach is related with a method to test theory, often using number or fact and therefore an objectivist view of the aspects studied (Greener. S. 2008). So this method will be used to create numerical data that will be converted into statistics.

On the other hand qualitative research the qualitative approach is likely to be associated with a method to generate theory, often using the interpretation of various subjective perspectives and building knowledge. Normally qualitative methods use a way of discovering issues, which cannot be expressed by number (Greener. S. 2008). This method will focus the investigation research by means of interviews to Spanish influencers. This will be useful to understand which are the basic reasons, motivations, opinions and behaviour of the repercussion they are causing in society (DeFranzo. S. et al, 2011).

The aim of mixing both methods is to provide a best understanding of the research gap through the investigation of the numbers obtained, and looking also at the perceptions of those involved in the situation studied. We will use the best of both approached to investigate about the topic.

Some key differences between quantitative and qualitative method are shown in the table below:

<u>Quantitative</u>	<u>Qualitative</u>
Numbers	Words
Point of view of researcher	Points of view of participants
Researcher distant	Researcher close
Theory testing	Theory emergent
Static	Process
Structured	Unstructured
Generalisation	Contextual understanding
Hard reliable data	Rich deep data
Macro	Micro
Behaviour	Meaning
Artificial settings	Natural settings

**Figure 9 Main Characteristics of Quantitative and Qualitative approaches**

Source: *Business Research Methods Qualitative research methods: collecting and analysing qualitative data. P.80*

### **3.2. Data collection techniques and research instruments.**

A mixed methodology combining, interviews and surveys will be used.

On the one hand data will be collected through surveys (quantitative method) done mainly to the two generations mentioned before, Millennials and Generation Z.

The use of surveys is really useful and it provides some advantages as the process is fast, in this particular case inexpensive because the surveys will be done online and they are helpful to do graphics and statistics. With the conclusion obtained from them it will be possible to have a global view of the market.

On the other hand and to cover the qualitative method some interviews will be done. In the table of Influencers (Figure 12) it is shown all the people we will try to contact in order to do some interviews and obtain our own conclusions and how are they responses related with the results of the surveys. The concrete instrument used will be Focus group as the questions are gathering a specific type of users, and we want to know more about attitudes toward the tourism products and services. If possible, we will make those interviews face-to-face, and as a second option we have prepared a formal sheet to send them all the questions so that they can answer directly writing on it, or by sending us a video or recorded audio.

Both surveys and interviews will be done in Spanish as the language of all the target is going to answer is from Spain, and once obtained all the information and collected all the data we will translate them.

### **3.3. Research context and participants**

The study will be based on Spain, being one of the most important countries on the tourism field with 82 millions of visitors on 2017 (Hosteltur, 2018). The main focus, in the case of the interviews to influencers will be Barcelona as we may have interviews face-to-face. Moreover we will contact others around Spain by sending them the interviews.

On the one hand the surveys had been sent via WhatsApp and Facebook to all our contacts. The center of the study is the Millennials and we also will consider opinions of Generation Z as we have talked about their characteristics in the literature review. Therefore the largest number of people answering the surveys will be between 17 and 30 years old.

According to the “Instituto Nacional de Estadística” at the end of 2017 there was a total of 6,584,838 people between 20 and 34 years old (Figure 10), so considering this number and using the tool found

in the web “survey monkey” we have calculated that the sample size we need to cover is 301 surveys with an error margin of the 5.65% of the total of interviews (Figure 11).

	Ambos sexos
	2017
<b>TOTAL ESPAÑA</b>	
<b>15-19 años</b>	
Españoles	2.000.231
<b>20-24 años</b>	
Españoles	1.989.001
<b>25-29 años</b>	
Españoles	2.131.618
<b>30-34 años</b>	
Españoles	2.464.219

Figure 10 Number of Millennials in Spain

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística

**Calculate Your Sample Size:**

? Population Size:

? Confidence Level (%):

? Margin of Error (%):

---

Sample Size:

**301**

**CALCULATE**

Figure 11 Calculate the size of the sample

Source: <https://es.surveymonkey.com/sample-size-calculator/>

On the other hand, after doing a search among all the profiles of influencers that can be found today, we have chosen the ones with the greatest number of followers. Those selected to conduct the study are the most recognized nowadays in Spain so at the same time the ones with more power or influence on the behaviour of the consumers in the tourism market. We will contact them and try to get as much responses as possible. Furthermore we have also selected some influencers with fewer followers but with a profile that goes in connection with our objective, since we consider that it may easier to get a response from them.

It is also important to add, as has been explained in previous sections, that Instagram is one of the most used online platforms among the generations analysed in this study so that is why we have based our research of influencers in this Social Media Application. Therefore all of them have been selected through Instagram, since it is the social network most used by all of them to make their publications. Find below the table done with a list of 62 Spanish influencers with their names, their Instagram profiles, their number of followers and their mails.



	NAME	INSTAGRAM	FOLLOWERS	E-MAIL
1	Aida Domenech	dulceida	2,200,000	No Mail
2	Alexandra Pereira	lovelypepa	1,600,000	
3	Paula Gonu	paulagonu	1,600,000	
4	Oscar Casas	oscar_casas_	1,300,000	
5	Nicole Garcia	nicolegarcia	1,200,000	
6	Laura Escanes	lauraescanes	992,000	
7	Jessica Goicoechea	goicoechea22	946,000	
8	Sergio Carvajal	sergiocarvajal7	872,000	
9	Emélie	emitaz	799,000	
10	Alba Paul	albapaulfe	790,000	
11	Nina Urgell	ninauc	773,000	No Mail
12	Patry Jordán	patryjordan	730,000	
13	Maria Pombo	mariapombo	721,000	No Mail
14	Belén Hostalet	belenhostalet	673,000	No Mail
15	Estefanía	verdeliss	593,000	
16	María Turiel	meryturiel	560,000	
17	Marta Lozano	martalozanop	540,000	
18	Marta Carriedo	martacarriedo	506,000	
19	Gigi Vives	gigi_vives	415,000	
20	Ángela Rozas	madamederosa	412,000	No Mail
21	Alex Domenech	alexdomenech	411,000	
22	Marc Forne	marcforne	383,000	
23	Daniel Illescas	danielillescas	376,000	
24	Andrea Belver	andreabelverf	370,000	
25	Paula Ordovás	mypeeptoes	367,000	
26	Alex Chiner	alexchiner	355,000	
27	María Valdés	marvaldel	343,000	
28	Inés Arroyo	ines_arroyo	341,000	No Mail
29	Teresa André	teresaandresgonz	324,000	
30	Miquel	miquelantoja	320,000	
31	Alex Puértolas	alexpuertolas	306,000	
32	Maria Fernández	mariafrubies	295,000	
33	Sergi Pedrero	sergipedrero	276,000	
34	Sara Baceiredo	sarabace2	267,000	
35	Lucas Lorén	lucloren	237,000	No mail
36	Miranda Makaroff	mirandamakaroff	219,000	
37	Carla Dipinto	carla_dipinto	207,000	
38	Joan Palà	joanpala	205,000	
39	Silvia Muñoz	silvia_mmb	200,000	
40	Biel Juste	bieljuste	199,000	
41	Juan Manuel	juanmasaurus	185,000	
42	Blanca Miró	blancamiro	180,000	
43	Rebeca Terán	srtateran	179,000	
44	Arantxa Cañadas	arantxaschz	174,000	
45	Carla Hinojosa	carlahinojosar	167,000	
46	Noelia	noelia_dp	162,000	
47	Alex Dominguez	srdomi	143,000	No mail
48	Elisa Serrano	elisaserranot	138,000	
49	Elena Bueno Segura	elee.bs	134,000	
50	Ariadna Tapia	ariadnatb	132,000	
51	Berry Berryuca	berryuca	132,000	
52	Carlota Bruna	carlotabruna	122,000	
53	Marta y Sara	devermut	121,000	No mail / <a href="http://www.devermut.com">www.devermut.com</a>
54	Verónica	ohmamibblue	121,000	
55	Marta Pombo	mpombor	116,000	
56	Julietta Padrós	julietapadros	95,300	
57	Alejandra Tessari	altessari	73,300	
58	Juan Arroita	juanarroita	63,700	
59	Anna Verdú	annivs	51,700	
60	Claudia Tessari	clautessari	49,700	no mail
61	Gemma Pinto	gemmpinto	37,900	
62	Paula Cremades	paucremades	26,500	

Figure 12 Spanish Influencers: Instagram username, number of followers and email

Source: Own elaboration

### 3.4. Data analysis

In this section we will explain which has been the sample obtained through both methodologies, qualitative and quantitative, including surveys and interviews carried out.

Regarding the surveys, we have obtained a total of 304 surveys having an age average of 22-23 years old. 23 of the surveys have been done by members of the Generation Z which is also important to be analysed as they are together with Millennials the generation with more presence in Social Media platforms. The surveys have been conducted in the Spanish territory having the majority of answers in Catalonia. Furthermore the analysis of collected data shows that in relation of gender we have obtained response from a 64.2% of female and a 35.8% of male.

On the other hand, in terms of interviews we have contacted all the influencers shown in the Table (Figure 12) by sending private messages in Instagram and also e-mails not only to their personal accounts but also their agencies. Finally three of them accepted to be part of the sample, and as in none of the cases they were able to establish an appointment with us we had to send them the interviews prepared,

Firstly, Miquel Antoja, born in 1984. As he mentioned in the interview his job as influencer is secondary, he is freelance and works as restaurant advisor, giving cooking classes and doing caterings or private events. He considers that Social Media is a plus since he could not live only working as a Social Media influencer. The 70% of his followers is women between 18 and 34 years old, so we can affirm that his major group of followers is within the millennial generation. According to Miquel, becoming an influencer: “It was not a decision, it came alone”. He created his Instagram account in 2014 but at first he only posted images with his family and friends in his quotidian life and once he started posting pictures of the dishes he cooked at home or at work and also from the restaurants I visited. Little by his followers began to increase. Afterwards he began to collaborate with brands or restaurants to promote their products and establishments so he ended up posting pictures or videos every day. Nowadays he has a total of 323,000 followers in Instagram and 6,863 subscribers in YouTube, a channel that he opened in 2016. He defines himself as a “restless ass” he doesn’t like monotony, as he mentioned: “I can seem shy even though it is not and I always like to have a second opinion” Regarding the professional aspect, he considers himself as a 2.0 chef or millennial chef with everything this



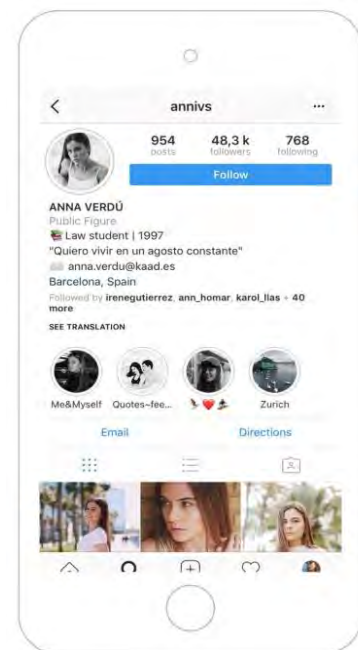
**Figure 13 Miquel Antoja Instagram profile**

Source: Instagram App

generation has. About his future vision he is in process of opening a restaurant consulting business. It is what he likes and motivates him because is not monotonous and he can learn a lot at the same time. He has never wanted to have a restaurant, even being a chef. In a long term he expects having a long path within the sector and be positioned as one of the best or most valued, with businesses that work and he can dedicate his life to manage them, but as he mentioned: *“who knows, never say never”*

Secondly Anna Verdú, born in 1997. She defines herself as an extroverted and impulsive girl. As she mentioned in the interview she did not think at first that Instagram and being an influencers could be a job, because when she started the expression was not used. She started uploading photos because she like taking them and after that noticed that her “followers” were more and more every day, giving her the motivation to keep doing it. Talking about the statistics of her Instagram between her 51,700 followers she assure that the 41% of her followers are male and the other 59% female between 18 and 24 years old. In this particular case Anna does not consider being an influencer as her job because nowadays she is still in university. After being asked about her career and which is the next step on it she answered: *“For the moment I hope I can keep growing in this sector as I am doing now and combine it with university as I am doing nowadays”*.

Regarding her future on this new trend, Anna make clear her change of mind, *“A few months ago there would answered: I see myself working as a lawyer, since I am studying law, however now I do not see it so clear”*. She is sure that finishing her degree is important and for that reason she is convicted to do it but taking into account the relevance, power an impact that Instagram have nowadays she is not sure about the future but would love to transform her hobby into a full time job.



**Figure 14 Anna Verdú Instagram profile**

Source: Instagram App

The last person we were able to send the interview was Joan Palà. Born in 1992. He defines himself as a photographer and storyteller. His professional career as an influencer began when he opened his Instagram profile, started to upload photos and realize that he had a lot of likes. Today Joan counts with 211.000 followers on his Instagram account. About the gender of his followers he explained that the main profile of them is female Millennials. Joan wanted to point out that sometimes is important to lay aside the term “influencer” but he agreed that what he is doing now it can be considered as his full time job. Joan explained that he does not have his next step on his career very clear but he might start a master. For this reason he cannot think about what he will be doing in 10 years, he just hope to be working on something he love as he is right now.



*Figure 15 Joan Palà Instagram profile*

*Source: Instagram App*

### 3.5. Ethical considerations

After taking into consideration all the different opinions of the participants that have been involved in the study it has been clear that the first thing is to inform all of them about the purpose of the case. It is also important to protect the rights of the participants always maintaining their privacy to those that asks for it, those who accept to participate in this study and asks for confidentiality or do not want to exposure their name.

All the type of communication in relation to the research will be done with honesty and transparency. On the other hand respect the authors and information obtained from articles and studies citing them in every moment this study use a source.

## 4. Findings and discussion.

### 4.1. Findings

#### a) Quantitative data analysis

To start with the analysis of the surveys taken, it is important to take into account that we have been able to collect a total of 304, concretely we have received answers from 236 Millennials, 23 people pertaining to Generation Z and 18 belonging to Baby Boomers and Generation X (See Figure 16). As mentioned during all the research this study is focused on Millennials, in this particular case is necessary to emphasize that within this group, 187 of the surveys have been done by people born between 1992 and 1997. Furthermore it is remarkable that 35.8% of people who answered were men and the rest, a 64.2% women, all Spanish.

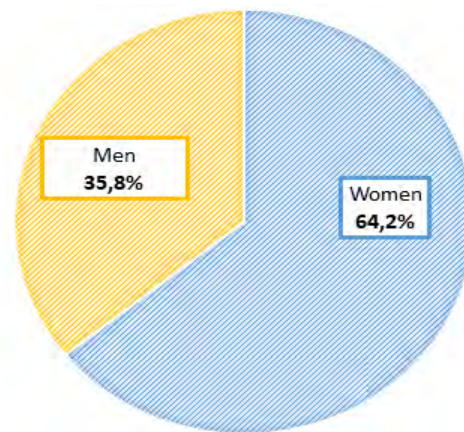


Figure 16 Number of surveys' respondents for each generation

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 17 Gender of surveys' respondents

<b>TOTAL Surveys</b>	<b>304</b>
<i>Millennials</i>	263
<i>Generation Z</i>	23
<i>Baby Boomers &amp; Generation X</i>	18

Source: Own elaboration

After getting the information of the surveys it can be said that the 92.1% of the surveys' respondents are daily users of social media, on the other hand only a 7.9% do not use Social Media platforms. Getting more in depth in the large number of users of Social Media platforms, it is clear the importance of them on the day to day life.

As it has been said in previous points social media has become part of people lives and we can see the evidence here, as they have a huge impact on society. Millennials rely on content generated by users

in social media that's why this segment spends a big amount of time looking for information in the different platforms (Pentescu. A. 2016.).

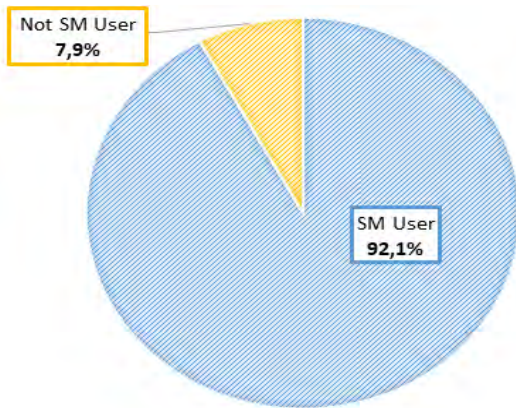
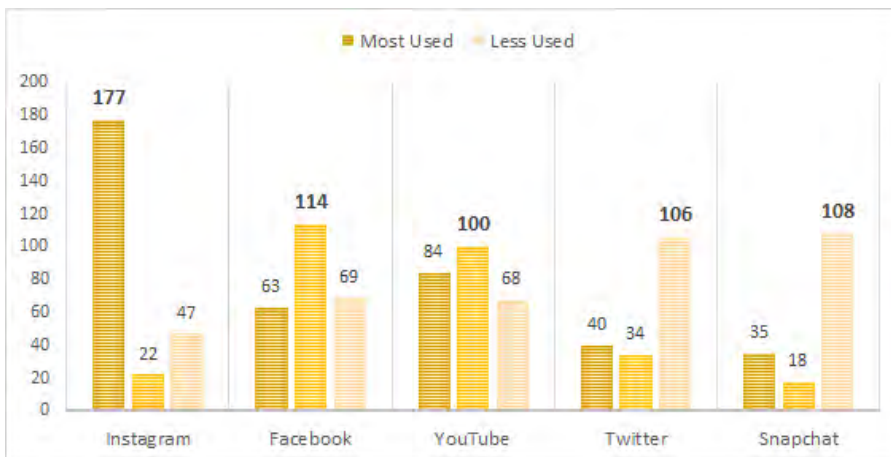


Figure 18 Percentage of regular/no regular social media users

Source: Own elaboration

As shown in the graphic below (Figure 19) the most used platform by the sample is Instagram with 177 of respondents positioning it as number 1 of the ranking. It is followed by YouTube (that has been chosen by 84 people as the most used) and Facebook (positioned by 63 people as the most used App and 114 people choosing it as the second platforms used with more frequency). Twitter and Snapchat remain in the background compared with the other Applications as they have been selected as the less used with 106 and 108 respondents respectively. Consequently, Instagram is their most used application and therefore the one with more power inside the online world. Taking into consideration the literature review and as stated by Hautz et al. (2013), this tool is the perfect platform to attract the public attraction to buy a product due to the power of photos and videos uploaded in it.



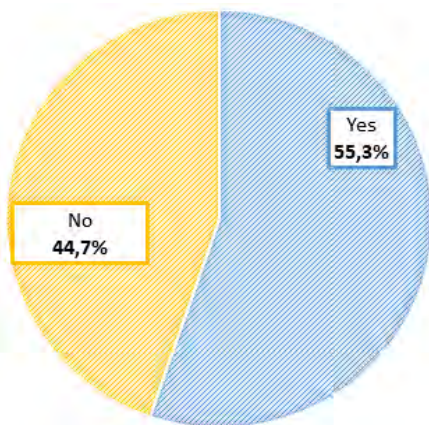


*Figure 19 Most and less used social media Applications*

Source: Own elaboration

According to the collected data 55.3% out of the total group follow the influencers in any of their channels, by contrary a 44.7% do not do it (Figure 20)

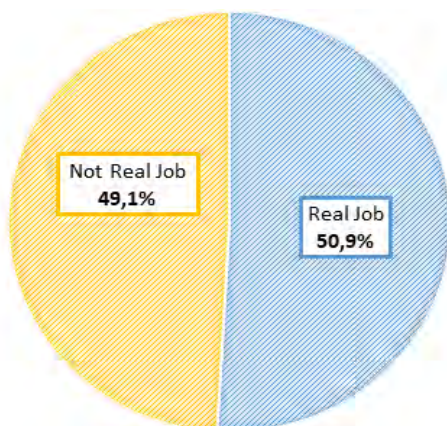
As we mentioned before in our literature review the influencers trend is on point nowadays matching that half of the sample follows them. The role of influencers in the actual society is gaining more relevance in the market, that is why most companies are including them in their marketing strategies. According to the 2016 Influencer Marketing report, “66% of the marketers have already introduced an influencer marketing strategy” and “during 2017 50% of the brands approximately have increased their investments on influencer marketing” (Forbes, 2017)



*Figure 20 Percentage of respondents following/no following influencers*

Source: Own elaboration

The previous graphic leads us to consider if in society the figure of influencers is considered as a real job. By taking a look to the answers made by the data sample it can be shown that a 50.9% thinks that is a real job while a 49.1%. Meaning that the difference between both opinions is not a big gap.



*Figure 21 Percentage of respondents that consider/ not consider being infl. a real job*

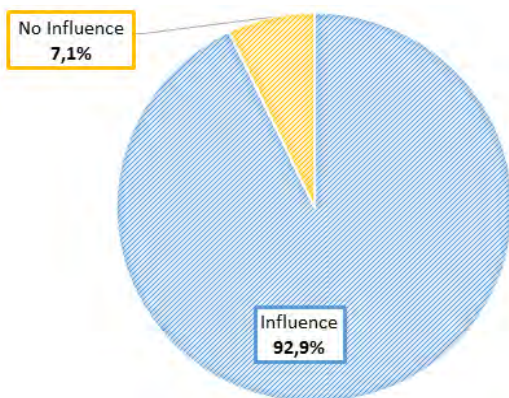
Source: Own elaboration

This information can be related to the power of influence that these people have. Meanwhile almost half of the people do not consider being an influencer as a real job a 92.9% agrees that they have a real impact on today's society.

These results match perfectly with the previous research. As it has been reasoned before, these figures act not only as intermediaries of a brand by sharing content and updating their social media profiles, but they also have a huge influence among their followers (Brown S. et al. 2016).

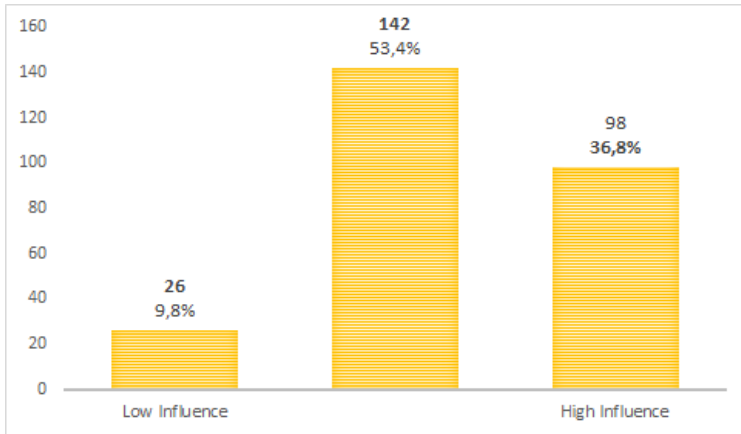
*Figure 22 Percentage of respondents that consider/ not consider influencers have influence in society*

*Source: Own elaboration*



On the other hand and keeping in consideration the power of influence on the society a total number of 142 concur that the degree of that influence is medium, having 98 with high influence and only 26 with low influence.



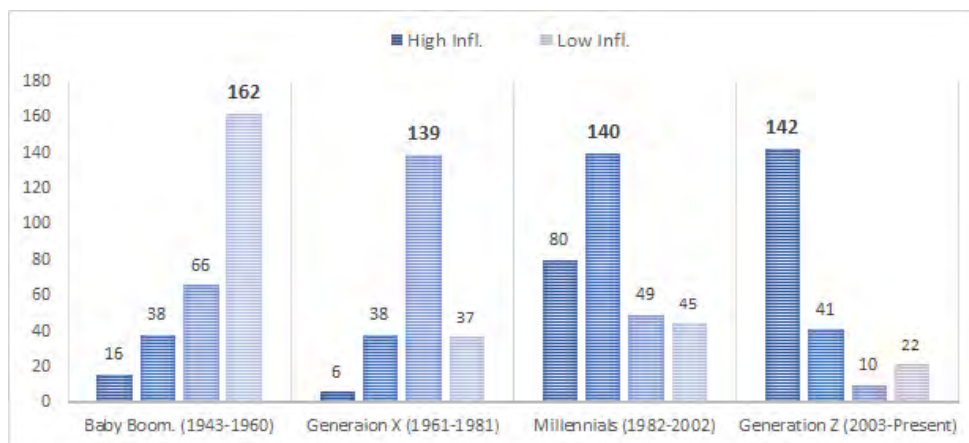


**Figure 23 Low/High influence of influencers in society**

Source: Own elaboration

According to our sample, the generations more affected by the figure of the influencer are Generation Z and Millennials, with 142 and 140 people having the same opinion. The power of influence on the rest of people, Generation X and Baby Boomers, decrease generation by generation.

To sustain this data collected with the theoretical research, Millennials are the most-educated and technologically generation ever (Willey, J et al. 2016), on the other hand a remarkable aspect of generation Z is that it is the first generation that is raising in a smartphones society so they are at the same time coexisting with Social Media. (Williams. A. 2015). Both generations have integrated those platforms into their daily lives and that is why influencers have direct impact over them.

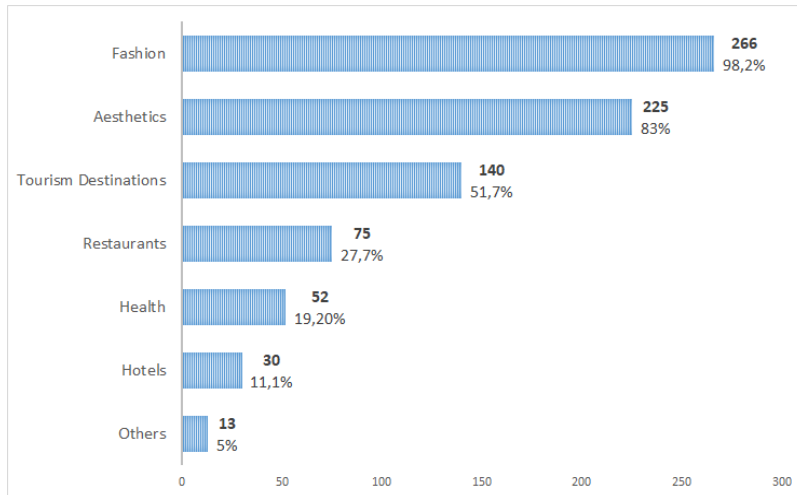


**Figure 24 Low/High influence of influencers in each generation**

Source: Own elaboration

Analysing the sectors in which the influencers have more power we can find fashion and aesthetics followed by tourism destinations, restaurants and hotels. It is important to point out that the hospitality sector is having quite a huge impact, tourism destinations for example are positioned in third place with

a 51.7% power of influence. As mentioned in our literature review, among influencers it can be found a strong trend in the use of this tool by brands belonging to the fashion and beauty sector. Nevertheless, as it is shown in the graphic below (Figure 25) there are some booming sectors using this tool such as food, sports and tourism sector (Brown S. et al. 2016).



*Figure 25 Sectors in which influencers have more power*

*Source: Own elaboration*

Talking about the interaction between influencers and people we can determine that the 72% of people do not participate in the content updated by influencers in their profiles. On the other hand a 26.2% do participate, either with comments, direct messages or raffles.

The frequencies of interaction of the sample that do participate with the content published by influencers are mainly monthly. A 17.5% participates weekly and a few daily with a percentage of 7.2%. We consider that is important to remark that within the 10.8% of “Others” we received some answers exposing that they just participate when there are products or services that cover their interest so the frequency can vary a lot.

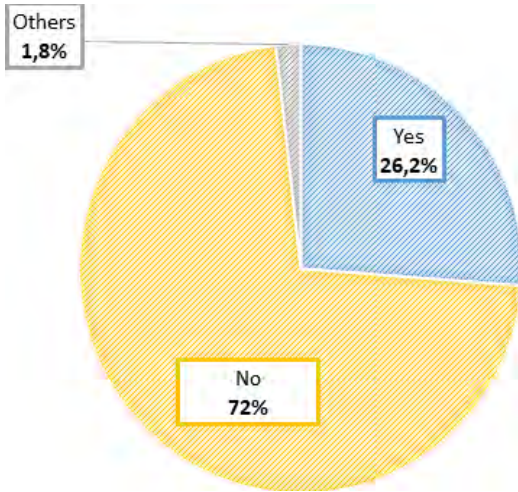


Figure 27 Percentage of respondents participating in content uploaded by influencers

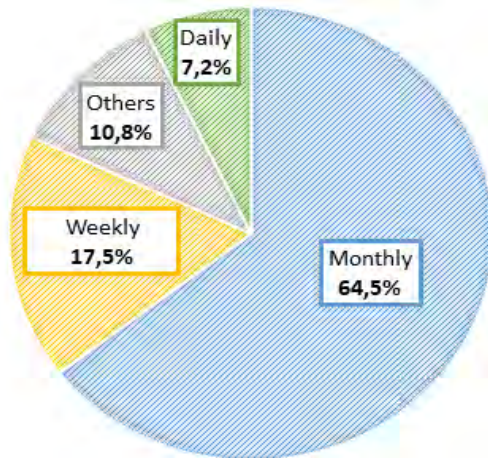


Figure 26 Frequency of respondents' participation in content uploaded by influencers

Source: Own elaboration

Getting more in depth in the hospitality sector this study is trying to define if nowadays people prefer to get information about travels, tourism destinations, restaurant or hotels by consulting online platforms rather than traditional ways.

We can conclude that the 64.1% actually looks for information through Social Media platforms while a 35.9% prefers the traditional ways. We can connect this percentages with the sentence stated by G.Brief, mentioned in the theoretical research explanation about Millennials: “they are travelling more often, book more over the internet and usually spend more on travel, are avid of information and experiences as well as willing to explore more destinations”

It is important to mention that in some cases the aim is not to get information from social media but as is really easy to come across with it they can find things they are not looking for.

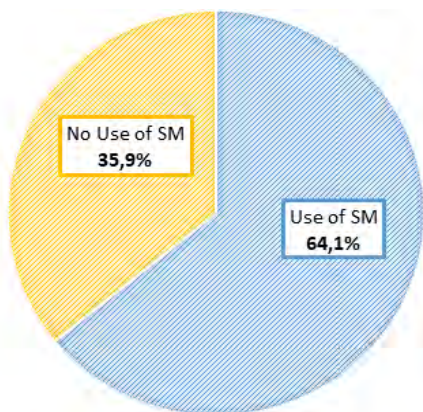
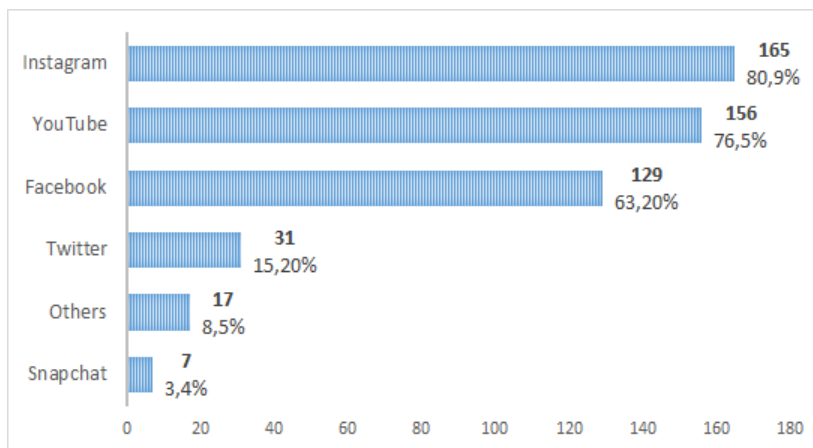


Figure 28 Percentage of respondents using/not using social media to search for tourism info

Source: Own elaboration

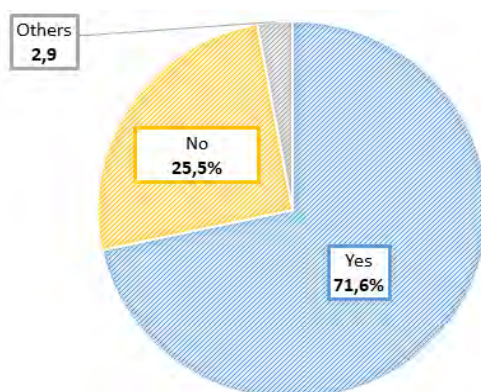
As it has been said in other points, nowadays Instagram is the social media platform with more power. For that reason the first choice for users that want to look for information in online platforms is Instagram. In the data collected 170 people chose the use this application as the first Application when searching for tourism information, leaving YouTube, with 160, and Facebook, with 135, behind. These data collected can be supported by Hautz on his journal, concluding that nowadays the visual content attract more the willingness to purchase (Hautz. J et al. 2013).



*Figure 29 Most used social media applications to search tourism info.*

*Source: Own elaboration*

On the other hand while respondents admitted that they look for touristic information on Social Media platforms, a huge percentage, concretely a 71.6% of the total sample does not believe that Influencers have any power in their future decisions when choosing a destination, restaurant or hotel.



*Figure 30 Percentage of respondents who believe/not believe in influencers' power in their tourist decisions*

*Source: Own Elaboration*

As previously discussed, actions with influencers have become a key tool for some touristic companies as marketing strategies. (Brown S. et al. 2016). Influencer marketing has become highly demanded and accepted as a Marketing tool. Moreover, and as stated by Alina Fackler “No industry produces as more Influencer Marketing than tourism.” (Fackler. A, 2018). This can be linked with the power that involves influencers’ publications within the hospitality sector. As considered by the sample obtained, the touristic aspects in which the influencers have more impact are tourist destinations, with 90 people thinking the same, followed by restaurants, excursions and activities, and hotels beside others.

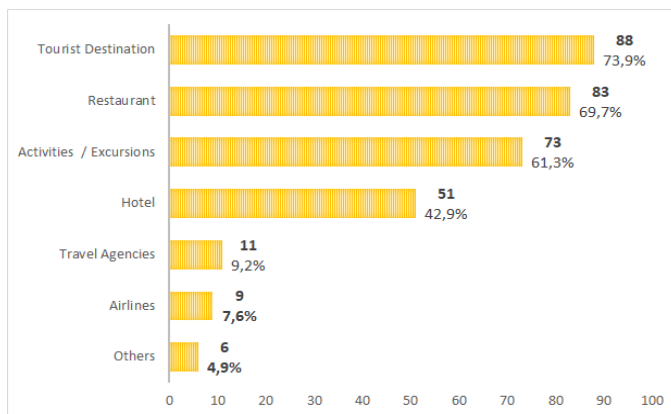


Figure 31 Power of influencers’ publications within the hospitality sector

Source: Own Elaboration

As shown in the graphic (Figure 32) the tourism related publications with more impact to the public are photos due to the rapid visual impression. In second place we have the presence of videos and lastly the written content as blogs or guides. Is interesting to point out that nowadays users prefer to see a photo instead of reading a whole post done in a blog or touristic guide.

As we have seen in the literature review and influencers interviewed the most used social media platform is Instagram matching the surveys numbers.

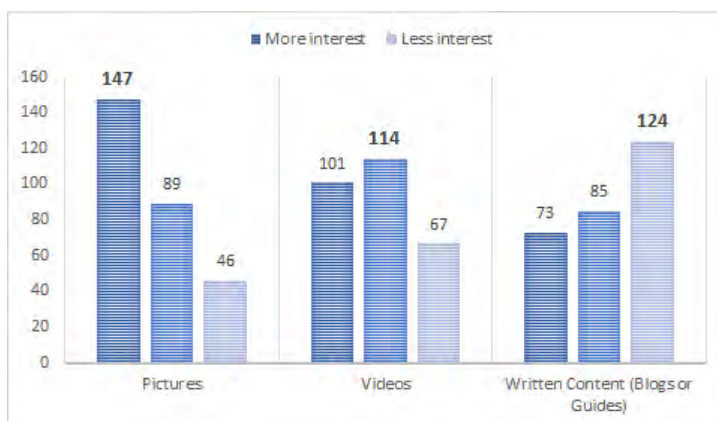


Figure 32 Type of content that generates mores/less impact

Source: Own Elaboration

The influencers' trend is nowadays one of the most important tools on social media marketing. Therefore is important to analyse if the trend really have a future in the long term.

The collected data show that the 74.5% agreed that influencers will continue having relevance in some years. By contrary a 25.5% of the respondents answered that the influencers' trend will end up soon.

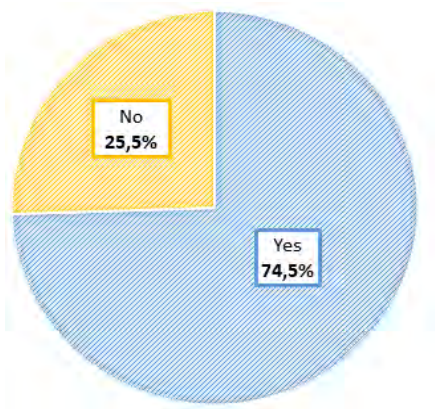


Figure 33 Percentage of future relevance of influencers

Source: Own Elaboration

## b) Qualitative data analysis

As stated in the literature review nowadays the visual content attract more the willingness to purchase of the consumers (Hautz. J et al. 2013). Moreover, and as seen also in the quantitative findings, the social media platforms most used by Millennials are Instagram and YouTube, both of them stands out for their type of content. YouTube is a useful tool as we are becoming less a society of readers and more one of watchers (Miller, M. 2011). Same happens with Instagram, a platform that has become an image-based social medium for smartphones (Salleh. S. et al. 2015). The following comments obtained from the interviews support this content:

Miquel affirmed: *“The content more demanded by my followers are videos, concretely receipt videos where I explain step by step in a fast a clear way how to prepare a dish”*. As he mentioned: *“in less than 1 minute my followers can learn how to make a recipe”*

On the other hand, Anna stated that: *“My followers' content demand is based on raffles, fashion photos and also images of my trips.”*



Joan, agreed that “If content most demanded is understood as content with more likes, photographs in which my eyes appear”

It is important to emphasize that the three of them explained that the social media Application that they use the most is Instagram.

Another important point to mention is the kind of content they share. Regarding the surveys obtained we have seen that the content in which influencers have more impact are fashion and beauty, followed by destinations and other tourism aspects related. This doesn't match with the answers received from the interviews, as the three of them stated differently.

Miquel thinks that he has more influence with kitchen products (knives, utensils, and machines), food, brands of these food products and restaurants. He has travelled sometimes to promote a hotel or restaurant. Anna main posts are about fashion, although, travelling has become also part of her collaborations with brands, some restaurants have directly contacted her to work together. Nowadays she is not doing trips with a lot of frequency as she is starting in this world, but she realizes that it is an important and common part on others influencers tasks. Finally, Joan said that the content he shares is really varied, since fashion to health. He affirmed that he travels sometimes to promote destinations or to assist to events, that is part of his job.

As seen in the quantitative research half of the respondents affirmed that being influencer is not a job while the other 50% answered that yes. Regarding the responses obtained by the sample interviewed we have 3 complete different answers.

Miquel explained: *“For me is secondary, I am freelance since 1 year ago and I work as restaurant advisor, giving cooking classes and doing caterings or private events. Social Media is a plus since I could not live only working with it”.*

Anna, on the other hand mentioned *“No, in my case is secondary since I am currently university student”*

Joan said *“Leaving aside the Influencer concept, what I do is my full time job”*

As explained in the literature review nowadays is crucial that companies inside the hospitality sector evolve constantly in order to improve the quality of the services that they are providing. (Ottenbacher. M. 2005). This evolvement is the consequence of being one of the most productive sector in mostly all the developed countries (Gomezelj. O, et al. 2015). Within this development it has to be taken into consideration the adaptation of different marketing strategies, realizing the importance of Social Media

for business. In order to have a good performance in this field is primordial to develop a detailed Social Media Strategy (Hennig, T. 2018). This content is supported by some of the comments we obtained from the interviews.

Miquel explained that the way to promote or advertise has changed and that the touristic sector is collaborating with influencers since about 2 or 3 years ago. He affirmed that his social media accounts are useful to promote restaurants hotels or touristic destinations because his profile is totally related to the sector (above all restaurants). Anna also agreed that tourism sector has changed; she explained that Social Media is crucial for the influencers' presence she also accepted that her profile in Instagram is effective to promote brands, as nowadays is the main platform to become more recognised. She matches with Miquel, as she said that influencers are collaborating with tourism brands since between 2 and 4 years ago. Joan, on the other hand, stated *"Tourism has changed in base the general revolution of internet and the ease to access to information. As in all sectors, brands are adapting and developing their digital advertising little by little"*

The Influencer phenomenon benefits brands because contributes to their positioning, "the Influencer tsunami" has to be taken into account. (Llorca A., 2015). Some important data analysed a study showed that an 85% of the users of social media follow influencers, a 49% trust the recommendations on restaurants, hotels or tourism destinations (IPMARK, 2018). These two arguments mentioned in the literature review can be related to the questions done to our interviewed sample about consumer behaviour among influencers promotion.

Miquel responded: "At the end it is advertising, you can see an ad on TV and do nothing or feel like buying that product at the same time" He remarked that the difference and advantage of promoting through influencers is that people follows that person because their admire and believe in his or her content so at the end is more effective. He also mentioned that he has often said "no" to many brands since they did not fit with their profile but on the other hand he explained that there are influencers that advertise everything without filter. In the case of Anna she explained that she understands that some consumers may feel annoyed because usually influencers don't have to pay for services in hotels or restaurants for example. But she pointed out that: *"it is important to look it in a different way. Influencers are doing their job and they are promoting a hotel for instance"*. As stated by Joan *"We, Influencers, give voice and visibility to brands. Consumers have a wider scope of information and alternatives"*



In addition, as seen in the graphics exposed in our quantitative findings 74.5% of respondents agreed that the influencer trend will have relevance in the future, and a 25.5% opined the opposite. Some of the arguments that our sample surveys shared are exposed in the table below:

<u>It is not</u> a long-term job	<u>It is</u> a long-term job
<p><i>"I consider that is not a long-term sustainable job, not really. Maybe because now I see it as something informal and in the future will be when they decide where they want to focus their lives. Either in photography or some other aspects. Maybe because they won't be something new and people will follow other references"</i></p>	<p><i>" Because they are making an important hole in the world, they are the new tourist guides, fashion consultants, products, etc. They are your friend who has bought the latest and whose opinion you rely to buy it yourself or not. The proximity factor is very important in the world of influencers and is what makes the difference with magazines or tourist guides, for example, since you know the life of that person, and makes you a participant in it. "</i></p>
<p><i>"It's much easier to follow someone on youtube than to take a book or compare information in order to create your own opinion on a topic (learning to think) ."</i></p>	<p><i>" Conventional advertising no longer generates interest and is not seen by the new generations as true or interesting. "</i></p>
<p><i>" I don't believe in their ability to condition social behavior on a large scale. Perhaps among reduced social sectors of a certain age and geographic location, but nothing else. "</i></p>	<p><i>" We are in a society where social networks are gaining strength and importance, we maintain social relationships from them (dating, making friends, promoting our professional projects ...), these influencers know how to use them and take advantage of them, they have achieved to dominate a platform that instead of declining will grow, so I think they will maintain their influence in a few years. "</i></p>

**Figure 34** Survey comments about future trend of influencers

Source: Own Elaboration

All these arguments can be directly related with the answers of the influencers interviewed. Two of them, think that their role will have relevance in the future, but Anna made a comment that differs from the rest:

“I hope that this trend will have relevance in some years but in my opinion the future of the phenomenon is uncertain. I don’t really know how far Instagram will arrive, but I would really love to dedicate myself to it 100%”

## 4.2. Discussion

Taking into account the huge importance of social media nowadays and the magnitude of the influence that “opinion leaders” have in society (Del Fresno G. et al.2016), is important to discuss several things. As it has been seen in the surveys results a 55.3% of the data sample collected follows any influencers on their social media platforms, and almost all of them, concretely a 92.1%, agreed that the consumer behaviour is medium-highly affected by the content uploaded in the influencers profiles. Taking into account these numbers it is clear that these figures are part of today’s society, and therefore their actions create a lot of movement in all sectors.

On the other hand a 49.1% of the respondents did not think that those activities can be described as a real job. The sample showed that even they follow these figures and accept that influencers have power in their lives, Millennials still do not believe that “being an influencer” can be considered a fulltime job. In both cases, influencers and users are aware of the impact that this new way of marketing has in the hospitality sector. Nowadays companies are taking advantages of social media platforms in order to promote hotels, tourism destinations and restaurants. For that reason and as have been seen on the result of the surveys everyday more and more people look for information about hospitality services through media.

After analysing the interviews made to three Spanish influencers and when asking about how much they are paid by companies for their collaborations two of them did not answer that question, and the third just said that she is not paid monetary talking but gets all the facilities or services required in order to travel to any destination and promote it, such as hotel or activities for example for free.

This matter can be directly related with the regulations on this type of collaborations. This situation is generating an informal economy because in some cases the taxes that have to be paid due to the amount of money earned can be sometimes not declared. Those characteristics can be related with the case of AirBnB. Thus, this company at its beginning had some troubles with the policies of the taxes paid by the hosts.

Another remarkable fact to mention is that we have observed that influencers are often good-looking and considered fashionable. Therefore, we can affirm that age can be an important play role in this new trend. Currently it can be found in social media an increasing number of young people following the steps of the influencers more recognised. As young generations are only aware of the “cool” content uploaded by influencers, they believe that only by sharing the same type of content their number of followers will rapidly increase and that they also will be able to be part of this new trend. They consider that everyone can be an influencer now.

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1. Conclusions

In the present research has been demonstrated that companies are taking awareness of the changes on the traditional relations and the need of evolving and adapting their strategies in the actual connected world. (Fernández. E. et al , 2017)

The transformation of the marketing context, has also affected the way consumers pursue information. Now social media has provided a direct contact with users by the different applications (Vong. K., 2013): Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram, that has become the most valued and used platform.

The rapid emergence of social media has played an indispensable role in communication, where social media influencers have a crucial function ( Del Fresno. G. et al 2016), as they give voice and visibility to brands. Thus, this trend allows consumers to have a wider scope of information and alternatives

Social media has highly impacted young generations: Generations Y and Z. On the one hand Generation Y is characterized by relying on content generated by users on social media (Pentescu. A. 2016). As they are digital natives, their way of acting has completely changed. Therefore, they have created a new cultural phenomenon (Benckendorff. P. et al 2010). On the other hand Generation Z is first one rising in a smartphones society, so they coexist with social media since they born. The need of instantaneous information has been integrated into their daily lives (Williams. A. 2015).

As shown in the research findings Instagram and YouTube are the most used social media applications by Millennials, not only in a general context but also when searching for information related with the tourism field. Furthermore, this information is supported by the answers of influencers, as they all accepted that the social media platform that they update the most is Instagram.

As has mentioned in the research and in our findings, influencer trend has more impact in sectors as fashion and beauty, but the tourism sector is gaining more relevance in this new market. As have been seen on the result of the surveys everyday more and more people look for information about hospitality

services and products through social media. That is why nowadays touristic companies are taking advantage of the different platforms. This sector is including influencers on their marketing strategies to promote hotels, tourism destinations, activities or restaurants.

Last point to emphasize is the future of the influencers trend. The survey sample and interview sample concluded with different thoughts. Millennials answer towards this question was controversial. Almost 50% agreed that influencers will continue having relevance in the future and the other half exposed the opposite. Influencers answers, though, were not too consistent, as they said that the future trend is unpredictable. So, taking into account both opinions, it can be concluded that the end of this trend cannot be defined. In present days it is really useful and adaptable to marketing strategies, but as everything evolves, maybe this trend does too.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Once done the research, and taking into account the lack of professional papers about the theme, we would recommend to make annual studies about the influencers trend, not only in the tourism sector but also in a general context as it is a relevant topic in our society nowadays.

We will also want to advise the abuse of the influencers on marketing strategies because as there is an increasingly number of influencers making collaboration with companies in order to promote services or products, future buyers' credibility can be lost.

It would be also important to regulate this kind of advertisement in order to avoid false publicity and to have a control of the incomes influencers gain.

## **5.3. Limitations and further research**

As in all research, we have found some limitations while doing the study. The most remarkable one is that as previously mentioned in this paper, influencers trend is a growing subject. It is relatively a new concept that has a lot to determine, and especially when focusing in the tourism sector. It has been taught to find academic articles related to the topic, as well as obtaining data information from other studies.

Temporary and geographical limitations were also present in the research process. The short period of time, the scale of the investigation and the region selected, Spain, have reduced our content and knowledge about the subject.

As to the empirical research, both surveys and interviews have had some weak points. In one hand, about the surveys we can affirm that the variable sampling error can increase in the groups selected as it is not big enough. Furthermore, when analyzing the surveys, we found some misunderstandings on

the answers. On the other hand, referring to interviews, it was complicated to find influencers who accepted to be part of the sample, as most of them didn't even answered though they had read our messages. In addition, the non-presence interviews made harder their interpretation of the respondents.

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## 7. Appendices

### 7.1. Survey template

#### Efecto que tienen los Influencers en el ámbito turístico.

Esta encuesta de opinión forma parte de un Trabajo de Final de Grado que está siendo realizado en la Facultad de Turismo y Dirección Hotelera Sant Ignasi. La duración de la encuesta es de 5 minutos aproximadamente y los datos son anónimos y confidenciales. Agradecemos vuestra participación.

\*Obligatorio

1. ¿Eres usuario habitual de las Redes Sociales? \*

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí  
 No

Si la respuesta es NO, continua en la pregunta número 3.

2. De la siguiente lista de Redes sociales, ordena de 1 a 3 las que usas con más frecuencia. Siendo 1 la más usada y 3 la que menos.

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	1	2	3
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Concepto Influencer

Un influencer es una persona que cuenta con cierta credibilidad sobre un tema concreto, y por su presencia e influencia en redes sociales puede llegar a convertirse en un prescriptor interesante para una marca.

3. ¿Sigues a algún/a Influencer en cualquier de las aplicaciones mencionadas en la pregunta anterior? \*

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí  
 No  
 Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Si la respuesta es sí, menciona sus nombres (Incluye un máximo de 5)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. ¿Consideras el ser Influencer un trabajo real? \*

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
- No

6. ¿Piensas que los/las Influencers influyen en la sociedad actual? \*

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
- No

Si la respuesta es NO, continua en la pregunta número 10.

7. Valore de 1 al 3, el grado de influencia que tienen, siendo 1 nada y 3 mucha influencia.

Marca solo un óvalo.

1      2      3

Poca    Mucha

8. ¿A qué generaciones crees que afecta en mayor grado? Ordena del 1 al 4, siendo 1 al que más le afecta y 4 al que menos.

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	1	2	3	4
Baby Boomers (nacidos entre 1943 - 1960)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generación X (nacidos entre 1961-1981)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generación Y / Millennials (Nacidos entre 1982 - 2002)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generación Z (Nacidos entre 2003 - Presente)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. ¿En qué sectores crees que tienen mayor influencia? (Escoge los 3 que consideres)

*Selecciona todos los que correspondan.*

- Estética
- Moda
- Destinos turísticos
- Restauración
- Hoteles
- Salud
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

10. ¿Participas en la actividad publicada por los Influencers en sus redes sociales? (Comentarios, Sorteos, Mensajes directos...)\*

*Marca solo un óvalo.*

- Sí
- No
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

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Si la respuesta es NO, continúa en la pregunta número 12.

11. ¿Con qué frecuencia participas?

*Marca solo un óvalo.*

- Diariamente
- Semanalmente
- Mensualmente
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

12. ¿Usas las Redes Sociales para buscar información sobre turismo? (Viajes, Restaurantes, Hoteles)\*

*Marca solo un óvalo.*

- Sí
- No
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Si la respuesta es NO, continua en la pregunta número 14.

13. Selecciona las 3 que más usas.

*Selecciona todos los que correspondan.*

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Youtube
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Las publicaciones de Influencers en redes sociales, ¿tienen algún poder sobre tu decisión al escoger tu próximo destino turístico, restaurante o hotel?\*

*Marca solo un óvalo.*

- Sí
- No
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

Si la respuesta es NO, continúa en la pregunta número 16.

15. Selecciona en que ámbitos tienen más influencia (Escoge los 3 que consideres)

*Selecciona todos los que correspondan.*

- Destino turístico
- Hotel
- Restaurante
- Agencias de Viaje
- Alquiler de coches
- Actividades / Excursiones
- Aerolíneas
- Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

16. ¿Qué tipo de publicaciones en Redes Sociales de ámbito turístico te sugieren más interés? Ordena de 1 a 3, siendo 1 el que sugiere mayor interés y 3 el que menos)\*

*Marca solo un óvalo por fila.*

	1	2	3
Fotografías	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vídeos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contenido escrito (Blogs, Guías online)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. ¿Crees que los/las Influencers seguirán teniendo relevancia social en unos años? \*

*Marca solo un óvalo.*

- Sí  
 No

18. ¿Por qué? \*

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19. Año de nacimiento \*

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20. Sexo \*

*Marca solo un óvalo.*

- Hombre  
 Mujer

21. ¿En qué ciudad vives actualmente? \*

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## 7.2. Interviews template

*Estas preguntas forman parte de un Trabajo de Final de Grado que está siendo realizado en la Facultad de Turismo y Dirección Hotelera Sant Ignasi (Barcelona). Los datos son anónimos y confidenciales. Agradecemos vuestra participación. Anna Ortín Cano y Carlota Ruiz Garrues*

1. Año de nacimiento
2. ¿Cómo te defines?
3. ¿Cuándo decidiste ser influencer? ¿Cómo empezaste?
4. ¿Quiénes son tus followers? (Género/Edad)
5. ¿Con qué productos crees que tienes más influencia sobre las generaciones jóvenes? (estética, moda, hoteles, destinos turísticos, salud...)
6. ¿Cuál es el contenido más demandado por tus followers?
7. ¿Consideras ser influencer como tu Trabajo actual? (o es secundario?)
8. ¿Compartes tu vida personal en las Redes Sociales?
9. ¿Cuál es la red social que actualizas con más frecuencia?
10. ¿Es difícil compaginar tu vida laboral con la personal?
11. ¿Cuáles son las tareas que se incluyen dentro de tu trabajo en ámbito turístico?
12. ¿Viajar forma parte de tu trabajo como Influencer? Con cuánta frecuencia tienes que hacerlo?
13. ¿Des de cuándo el sector turístico está colaborando con Influencers como una nueva forma de promover su marca?
14. ¿Consideras que el sector turístico ha cambiado debido al poder de los Influencers sobre los consumidores?
15. ¿Crees que tu Instagram, Youtube o cuenta de Facebook son efectivas para promover Hoteles, Restaurantes, Destinos turísticos?
16. ¿Actualmente, colaboras con alguna empresa relacionada con el sector turístico? (Hotel, Restaurante, Agencia, Aerolínea)
17. ¿Desde cuándo colaboras con ellos?
18. ¿Estas colaboraciones son remuneradas?
19. ¿Ha contactado contigo algún hotel/restaurante para colaborar tras etiquetarlos en una publicación?
20. ¿Son las empresas las que contactan con vosotros para promover los productos o puede ser a la inversa?
21. ¿Cómo crees que repercute esto a los consumidores?
22. ¿Cuál es el siguiente paso en tu carrera?
23. ¿Cómo te ves de aquí a 10 años profesionalmente?

## 7.4. Ethics form

It is important that you are sufficiently prepared to collect data doing fieldwork with ‘human participants.’ Your supervisor will support you in completing the Ethics Form.

The Ethics Form **MUST BE COMPLETED BY YOURSELF AND SIGNED OFF BY YOUR SUPERVISOR BEFORE UNDERTAKING RESEARCH.**

THE SIGNED ETHICS FORM **MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION.**

Risk checklist – Please answer ALL the questions in each of the sections below.

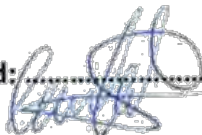
<b>Risk category 1</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Use any information OTHER than that which is freely available in the public domain?		X
Involve analysis of pre-existing data which contains sensitive or personal information?		X
Involve direct and/or indirect contact with human participants?	X	
Require consent to conduct?		X
Require consent to publish?		X
Have a risk of compromising confidentiality?		X
Have a risk of compromising anonymity?		X
Involve risk to any party, including the researcher?		X
Contain elements which you OR your supervisor are NOT trained to conduct?		X
<b>Risk Category 2</b>		
Require informed consent OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain to conduct the research?		X
Require informed consent OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain to publish the research?		X
Require information to be collected and/or provided OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain?		X
<b>Risk category 3</b>		
Involve participants who are particularly vulnerable?		X
Involve participants who are unable to give informed consent?		X
Involve data collection taking place BEFORE consent form is given?		X
Involve any deliberate cover data collection?		X
Involve risk to the researcher or participants beyond that experienced in everyday life?		X

Cause (or could cause) physical or psychological negative consequences?		X
Use intrusive or invasive procedures?		X
Include a financial incentive to participate in the research?		X

**IF APPLICABLE:**

<p><b>List agreed actions with your tutor to be taken to address issues raised in questions Risk Category 2:</b></p> <p>.....</p>
---

**Student Declaration:** I confirm that I will undertake the Undergraduate Dissertation as detailed above. I understand that I must abide by the terms of this approval and that I may not make any substantial amendments to the Undergraduate Dissertation without further approval.

Name:..... Signed:  Date: ..... APRIL 4<sup>th</sup> 2018  
 CASCOYA RUIZ

Agreement from the supervisor of the student:

Name:..... Signed:  Date: .....  
 NEZA KALAYIRGUCU APRIL 4<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Risk Category 1:** If you answered NO to all the questions, your study is classified as Risk Category 1. In this case:

- The supervisor can give immediate approval for undertaking the field work for the Undergraduate Dissertation.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.

**Risk Category 2:** If you answered YES only to questions in Risk Category 1 and/or 2, your study is classified as Risk Category 2. In this case:

- You must meet with your supervisor and clarify how the issues encountered are going to be dealt with before taking off with the field work.
- Once clarified, the actions taken must be stated in the Form. Then the supervisor can guarantee approval for the field work for the Undergraduate Dissertation.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.



**Risk Category 3:** If you answered YES to questions included in Risk Category 3, your study is classified as Risk Category 3. In this case:

- You must discuss with your supervisor how to re-direct the research and data collection thesis to avoid risks mentioned in Category 3.
- You must complete the Ethical Form again until Risk Category 1 or 2 is obtained.
- A copy of this signed Form **MUST** be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.

A copy of this signed form **MUST** be included in the Undergraduate Dissertation.

