You bragged, I booked: An exploration of how social network behaviour influences destination choice

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ABSTRACT

YOU BRAGGED I BOOKED: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW SOCIAL NETWORK BEHAVIOUR INFLUENCED DESTINATION CHOICE

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As social media users seek destinations based on how “Instagrammable” images of the destination will appear amongst their network, marketing organizations are at an advantage to capitalize on this trend. For the present study, participants tendencies towards conformity, being socially influenced, bragging, and social return were measured in conjunction with their desire to visit a trending destination. Willingness to share information and intensity of social network use preceded these four personality characteristics. An online survey was distributed to convenience samples, with four rounds of reminders, of which 305 responses were retained for analysis. It was found that Instagram users who have tendencies to conform or be socially influenced have a greater inclination to visit trending destinations. Alternatively, participants who have a tendency to use their Instagram as a means to brag or display social return have negative intention to visit trending destinations. This study provides Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO’s) with insights on how social network behaviour influences braggarts and conformists differently when it comes to selecting travel destinations. Additionally, this study extends current theoretical implications as it relates to bragging and conforming in the context of social media.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ultimately, the choice of a travel destination is yours. But, what influenced that choice may be more related to one’s social media engagement than we know. The process of narrowing one’s destination set can be influenced by the way in which different social media tools are used to display one’s consumption preferences, or in this case destination choice. Social media behaviour is reflective of many user personalities, ranging from, for example, conformists to braggarts. To conform is to make a decision, engage in a behaviour, or change one’s behaviour to be in alignment with one’s current or aspirational social group (Kerr, Lewis, & Burgess, 2012; Tussyadiah, Kausar & Soesilo, 2018). Likewise, being socially influenced, is when group norms are given great consideration for the choices of an individual (Crompton, 1981). Bragging is the intent to impress one’s audience to induce feelings of wonder and awe (Alfano & Robinson, 2014) or envy and jealousy (Kerr et al., 2012). Finally, the modern definition of social return is that a person will make a choice based on the perceived benefits they anticipate will derive from their social network after posting their consumption behaviour to social media (Boley, Joran, Kline, & Knollenberg, 2018). The purpose of this research is to explore how destination choices are influenced by a users’ tendency towards conformity, being socially influenced, bragging, and seeking social return, in a modern society where online social networking is so prevalent. Specifically, Instagram has altered how consumers select their travel destinations with users seeking destinations based on how “Instagrammable” it is (Hosie, 2017), highlighting this social media tool as a significant one to destination marketers.

Narrowing the choice of where to travel for one’s holiday can be complex. Often times, there are many factors that need to be considered (Um & Crompton, 1990), and in the modern age of technology and social media, information about different travel destinations has become
much more accessible (Nusair, Hua, Ozturk & Butt, 2017). As originally presented by Woodside and Lysonski (1989), the destination choice process is multistage, and the number of potential destinations one considers visiting will decrease at each stage. Recently, Destination Canada adapted this process in their *Path to Purchase* model (see Figure 1, page 7) to be more inclusive of the idea that the destination choice process is a non-linear cycle (Destination Canada, 2016). In doing so, the model recognized that technology and social networking are significant components throughout the entire destination choice process, impacting the users selection of a travel destination at every stage.

Social media, as an Internet based platform allows its users to share their thoughts, experiences, information and build relationships (Narangajavana, Fiol, Tena, Artola, & Garcia, 2017). Synonymous with the term electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Tham, Croy, & Mair, 2013), the emergence of social media in the 21st century has altered how tourists engage with the tourism industry (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Leung, Law, van Hoof & Buhalis, 2013; Chung & Koo, 2015; Narangajavana et al., 2017; Sigala, 2018). This is due to the informal communication of social media which defines e-WOM (Hammedi & Virelée, 2018). Research on social media and destination choice has expanded in recent years (Jacobsen & Munar, 2013; Liu, Wu, & Li, 2018; Boley et al., 2018) providing insights on how tourists use social media to gain information related to potential future travel destinations (Llodra-Riere, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015) or to provide their social network with insights into their own travel experiences (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Social media platforms such as Instagram, allow users to share photos and videos in real time (Chung & Koo, 2015). Users can selectively cultivate and communicate snapshots of their life with those in their network in the form of a post (Gretzel, 2012). These posts can include an image of the tourist at the destination to prove to their network
that the tourist is truly on a holiday (Dinphol & Gretzel, 2016). The user’s network is an audience that includes both those who anticipated being provided with images of the tourist, and those who did not (Lo & McKercher, 2015). Thus, if a user were to look at their favourite SNS, anyone who is in their network can make it known which destinations they are visiting by sharing their travel experiences.

One area where attention has been growing is how users everyday interactions with social media influences the choices that those users will make as future tourists (Liu et al., 2018; Boley et al., 2018). It has been noted that there has not been enough research on how social sharing networks enable users during their destination choice process (Boley et al., 2018). However, it is understood that social media can have an influence on its users simply based on the perceived social value of the information being communicated (Cortés, 2016). Social value occurs when tourists photograph their travel experience in order to display this experience to others and receive recognition for doing so (Cortés, 2016; Nusair et al., 2017).

This idea lends itself to the present research, which considers whether tourists are motivated to select their travel destinations based on the social value they discern can be obtained in selecting and communicating their destination choices on social media. One thought that has emerged is that users are conscious of how their network of peers will perceive the tourist once they post to social media about their destination choice (Siagala, 2018). There is a growing desire to appear trendy and fashionable, and this appearance is curated by the images which tourists post to their social media accounts. Tourists, who post about their destination choice, are giving their social network access to their consumption behaviours (Dinphol & Gretzel, 2016). While social media can be considered a sharing platform for travel related information to be dispersed among its users (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), the industries
comprehension behind the sharing is limited. Thus, the tourism industry would benefit from a richer understanding of the impact that social media posts can have in influencing travel consumption behaviours (O’Connor, Cowhey, & O’Leary, 2016). Particularly if this understanding can distinguish between user personality characteristics. In an effort to gain this insight, the present research will assess how tourists’ interaction with their Instagram accounts motivates their consumption behaviour. The following research questions will be answered:

1. Does an Instagram users’ willingness to share their trip precede the users tendency to conform, be socially influenced, brag, or seek social return?

2. Does an Instagram users’ intensity of social network use during and after their trip precede the users tendency to conform, be socially influenced, brag, or seek social return?

3. Does an Instagram users tendency to conform positively influence their intention to visit a trending destination?

4. Does an Instagram users tendency to be socially influenced positively influence their intention to visit a trending destination?

5. Does an Instagram users tendency to brag negatively influence their intention to visit a trending destination?

6. Does an Instagram users tendency to seek social return negatively influence their intention to visit a trending destination?

7. Does what each Instagram user consider as “Instagrammable” differ depending on the users personality characteristics?
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Destination Choice

The selection of a travel destination by a tourist can be defined as a process in which a destination is selected for its abilities to support and fulfill the tourist’s needs when travelling (Lewis, Kerr & Pomering, 2010; Tham et al., 2013). It is a funneling process whereby, the tourist begins with a large number of potential travel destinations and begins eliminating those that will be unable to meet their needs or desires until a single destination is chosen (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990; Karl & Reintinger, 2016). This destination choice funneling model identified by Woodside and Lysonski (1989) and Crompton and Um (1990) has proven its relevance in modern times (Karl & Reintinger, 2016; Destination Canada, 2016) and thus, will be adapted as a framework of the present study.

The process is not linear, especially now that technology and eWOM are included in the process at all stages (Destination Canada, 2016). Usually financial, schedule, political, and danger constraints are considered to eliminate destinations which will be unable to meet the tourists needs right away (Karl et al., 2015), however, new information could be presented to the tourist which would argue why a better destination may fulfill their travel needs (Marder, Archer-Brown, Colliander & Lambert, 2018). New information includes, social media posts that they are exposed to each time they engage with the application. For example, tourists may change their mind on where they wish to travel to next based on an Instagram post they are exposed to. It has been identified that there is a gap in understanding how social media posts are influential on the tourist’s selection of a travel destination (Boley et al., 2018). Rarely does the literature make the connection that tourists destination choice processes are cyclical, whereby future tourists actively consider previous tourists experiences throughout their own destination.
choice process (Destination Canada, 2016; Choe, Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017). This is particularly true when it comes to understanding the social influences that previous tourists can have on motivating future tourists decision-making. Thus, this study brings attention to the dynamic relationship tourists, as social media users, have with one another within their social network (Lo & McKercher, 2015).

In a recent report on Millennial travelers (22-38 year olds), it was noted how this cohort will promote their travel experiences through social media more than any other age group (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2015). Compared to previous destination choice models (Lewis et al., 2010; Karl et al., 2015), Destination Canada’s Path to Purchase (see Figure 1, page 7) recognizes that the information being presented to future tourists through eWOM influences the tourist during all stages of their destination choice selection (Destination Canada, 2016). In promoting their travel experiences, the social media user is also promoting their trip destinations. As Destination Canada’s present model (see Figure 1, page 7) outlines, social media advocates influence others during their process of selecting travel destinations (Destination Canada, 2016). This influence created by advocating tourists’ social media posts is not just during this initial awareness stage. Rather, from awareness to purchase, the future tourist is conscious of the destinations that those within their social network are travelling to. This is particularly important to note, as it reinforces the fact that social media and technology are influencing its users at each stage of the choice process. As such, the way in which destinations become a part of this awareness set and beyond has transformed with the emergence of social media. Tourists and particularly Millennial tourists who advocate for a destination after visiting, act as one of these influential sources (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2018; Marder et al., 2018). This is not to say Generation X and Baby Boomers do not actively use social media and the internet during
their holiday planning stages (Davies & Cairncross, 2013). Simply, whether they are motivated to travel to particular destinations due to their social media engagement has yet to be established.

Figure 1: Destination Canada’s Path to Purchase (Destination Canada, 2016).

2.2 Social Media

Capitalizing on the everyday interactions users have with their social networks is a goal of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO’s) (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). DMO’s are conscious of the impact social media tools currently have on users ability to attract tourists to their destinations (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015; Roque & Raposo, 2016), making the present research beneficial to the industry. Nearly a decade ago, young travellers began using Facebook as a means to record and publicly show their destination choices to those within their social media network (Lewis et al., 2010). In 2017, 94% of Canadians (Gruzd, Jacobson, Mai, &
Dubois, 2018) and 69% of Americans (Pew Research Centre, 2018) had at least one social media account, with its significance to the industry becoming more apparent as an increasing number of studies call for continued research (Tham et al., 2013; Sigala & Gretzel, 2018). Tourism and hospitality literature have focused their efforts on how social networking sites (SNSs) are influential for the various decisions required of the trip process (Öz, 2014; Nusair et al., 2017).

For example, SNSs such as TripAdvisor which allow users to post reviews and rate various travel and hospitality organizations, can be used as tourists attempt to mitigate the risks associated with tourism’s intangible purchases (Leung et al., 2013; Okazaki, Andreu, & Campo, 2017; Siagala, 2018). As a whole, the Millennial cohort are prone to use social media more than any other demographic (McKinnon, 2018), and thus should be influenced by their social network interactions more so than generations before them. However, each platform appears to have its own set of demographic users and benefits for those users.

2.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is currently the most popular SNS among Canadians, with 84% of the adult population having a Facebook account (Gruzd et al., 2018). Likewise, 69% of Americans use the application, making it the second most popular SNS for this population (Pew Research Center, 2019). Facebook has continually been crowned the largest social media platform given that it was one of the first of its time, and became a global enterprise (Facebook, 2018). Users are able to share with those in their network a status update or photo that enables those in their network to comment or “Like” the post (Caers et al., 2013). Of those who have a Facebook account, 74-79% are active on the site daily (Pew Research Center, 2019; Gruzd et al., 2018). While 95% of those aged 18-24 currently have a Facebook page, 75% of those who are 55 years and older are also active Facebook users (Gruzd et al., 2018), making it the most universally accessed SNS.
2.2.2 YouTube

Created in 2005, YouTube is a video-sharing platform where users share their own content with other users (Burgess & Green, 2018). The site, like most social media websites, requires participation from its users where they are open and authentic in the information they are sharing (Burgess & Green, 2018). In 2018 YouTube officially became the most popular social networking site among Americans, with 73% of its population using the application (Pew Research Center, 2019). However, users are unlikely to use the application daily when compared to Facebook or Instagram (Pew Research Center, 2019). As the second most popular social media amongst Canadians, YouTube’s use is infrequent, with less than 50% of account holders using it daily (Gruzd, 2018). YouTube’s role in the tourism industry could certainly be explored more (Gon, Pechlanner & Marangon, 2016), but understandings its role on the industry is not pressing, given the minimal amount of everyday use by account holders.

2.2.3 LinkedIn

This platform would probably be the least relevant to tourists given that the role of LinkedIn is to connect professionals and maintain a person’s current professional network (LinkedIn, 2018). While its significance for industry partners and those who work in the industry can be applicable, how tourists select a destination through this site is not obvious.

2.2.4 Twitter

Twitter is known for its ability to generate a conversation amongst its users, who are limited to a number of characters to either create or comment on a given topic (Twitter, 2018). Twitter is used by those who want to engage in a micro-blogging community where the use of a hashtag encourages trending topics (Twitter, 2018). Young, wealthy men are the most active Tweeters in Canada currently (Gruzd et al., 2018). Moreover, only 22% of the American
population use the application, with its daily use being the least frequent of all social media’s (Pew Research Center, 2019).

### 2.2.5 Pinterest

When it comes to picture sharing platforms, Pinterest is the most popular amongst Canadian adults (Gruzd et al., 2018). However, for American social media users, Pinterest’s popularity was surpassed by Instagram in 2016 (Pew Research Center, 2019). Pinterest allows people to organize a collection of items related to a single topic on what is called boards (Pinterest, 2018). Research in the tourism industry as it relates to this tool is limited (Clarke, Murphy & Adler, 2016). Infrequently used by tourism marketers (Wozniak, Stangl, Schegg & Liebrich, 2017) and with only 28% of Canadian Pinterest account holders using Pinterest daily (Gruzd, 2018) the influence of this application on a daily basis, regardless of the content generated, is much less evident.

### 2.2.6 Instagram

While Facebook is still the most popular SNS amongst Canadian social media users, Instagram is quickly gaining traction, especially amongst a younger audience (McKinnon, 2018; Meyer Foundation, 2018). Instagram is the fastest growing picture and video-sharing platform (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016) identifying itself as a necessary research medium within the tourism industry (Sedera, Lokuge, Atapattu, & Gretzel, 2017). In a Canadian context, 64% of those aged 18 to 34 are Instagram users (McKinnon, 2018) with 61% of account holders using Instagram daily (Gruzd et al., 2018). Making it the second most frequently used social media tool, next only to Facebook (Gruzd et al., 2018). Likewise, 63% of American Instagram users utilize the application daily, making it the second most frequently used application amongst American social media users (Pew Research Center, 2019). Instagram is also unique in that users are likely
to have a combination of celebrities and public figures in addition to those they know personally within their social network (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

While its reach may be less, compared to that of Facebook, users’ reasoning to choose this application over Facebook are clear. Since, producing an ideal version of the tourist self is significant to the impression management component users seek (Lo & McKercher, 2015), users are able to use the many photo editing and sharing features that Instagram has (Instagram, 2018). Moreover, Instagram is well known by users who wish to share stories and images on the go (Meyer Foundation, 2018). Adding the location of where the photo or video was taken is part of Instagram’s sharing component (Instagram, 2018). This thought is supported by the fact that tourists consider their smartphones to be travel companions, capturing every moment of the tourists experience and making it accessible for the tourist to share those experiences with their social network (Lo & McKercher, 2015; Siagala, 2018).

Individuals who have full time employment, and professional degrees are more likely to use Instagram (Gruzd et al., 2018) rendering it an ideal application to be used by those who can afford to travel. Of those who participated in Contiki’s study, it was found that 33% of current Millennial and Generation Z travellers will spend 2 to 4 hours consuming travel related information on their Instagram feed and YouTube when planning their travel (Casciano, 2018). For these reasons, Instagram aligns itself well with the present study objectives.

2.3 Ideal Destinations and the Ideal Self

Many tourists want to present an ideal version of themselves online (Marder et al., 2018) which subsequently impacts how destinations are being presented. The image of the destination is no longer solely in the hands of the DMO (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). Rather, the tourist who generates content to share with their network has a significant role in contributing to the
destination image. For tourists, taking and sharing photos of themselves during their travels “is an opportunity to enhance and perform an ideal self,” (Lo & McKercher, 2015: page 114). In return, the user is also presenting an ideal version of the destination, by selecting a positive over a negative image in which to present this ideal self. Therefore, the perception that one portrays on social media needs to be carefully cultivated and managed, to ensure an ideal self is being presented at all times (Siagala, 2018).

It has been postulated that Millennials top motivation when it comes to selecting travel destinations is based on how “Instagrammable” the destinations are (Hosie, 2017). In the study, tourists were concerned with how their network would perceive the user once they visited and shared images of their selected travel destination to their Instagram account (Hosie, 2017). The tourist’s concern for how others will perceive them based on the images they displayed, is impacted not just of themselves but of the destination. These image-based posts are carefully selected by the tourist to curate a specific image of the user; intended to make them socially acceptable and desirable (Lo & McKercher, 2015). However, the way that each user rationalizes their destination selection may be different based on how they engage with the application. On the other hand, it has been suggested that Baby Boomers and Generation X are motivated to travel to a destination which offers the opportunity to be with their loved ones and escape the routine of their daily lives (Marder et al., 2018). Thus, these generations have not been associated with selecting travel destinations based on their engagement with SNSs in the same ways that Millennials and Generation Z’s have been.

Understanding why a tourist would choose to invest their time and money in travel over some other consumption good has been widely speculated (Crompton; Smith, 1979; Mansfeld, 1992). Since motivation has been discussed alongside tourism, it has been asserted that tourists
will select travel destinations which offer social benefits (Crompton, 1979; Smith, 1979). In this regard, how others will perceive the tourist for selecting their travel destination is a motivating factor during the decision making process. The desire to portray the ideal self on Instagram based on the users’ personality characteristics is one motive which has emerged with the presence of social media that is likely impacting a users’ choice of a travel destination. Four of these personality characteristics will be discussed in greater detail.

2.4 Willingness to Share Knowledge

The concept of being willing to share information related to one’s travel experiences changed with the presence of social media (Nusair, et al., 2017). This concept ensures that user’s engage with the medium and advocate for their travel destinations. Therefore, without a willingness to share information with one’s social network, eWOM could not exist. Often times, a users’ motivations for sharing information regarding their travel experience has been linked to a combination of utilitarian and hedonic motives (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). The outcome of users willingness to share their travel experience is that their network becomes subjected to this eWOM, influencing their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and intentions to travel (Jalivand & Samiei, 2012). The user is anticipating positive social benefits based on what they share with their network. Overall, a willingness to share by a group of users has a strong positive impact on eWOM (Nusair, et al., 2017), as it is through this willingness to share that eWOM exists.

2.5 Intensity of Social Network Use

Similar to willingness to share, intensity of social network use focuses on the degree to which a user will engage with their social network following their trip experience (Cortés, 2016). The intensity of used social networks was originally created in order to better understand Facebook usage (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), and has not yet been applied to a study in an
Instagram setting. The intensity with which users’ engage with their social network goes beyond frequency and duration. Thus, to measure the users emotional connection to social network engagement, intensity of used social networks was developed (Ellison, et al., 2007). This construct is rooted in the idea that by sharing the users experience with their network, they are contributing to the eWOM surrounding their destination. It offers users an opportunity to broadcast and influence others about their own trip experiences (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Of the studies which have looked at intensity of social network use, it has been found as an antecedent to a social outcome (Ellison, et al., 2007; Cortés, 2016). Therefore, a user’s tourism experience is often tied to the social value given based on their social network engagement (Narangajavana, et al., 2017; Sedera et al., 2017; Cortés, 2016). Users are able to engage with their social network when they share their trip experiences.

2.6 Conformity

The significance of the term conformity came to light when Asch (1956) conducted an experiment where participants selected the same choices as the majority of those in the group. The experiment highlighted the distinction between acting independently and conforming when in a social environment. Asch (1956) identified just how meaningful a social group is in motivating the decisions of individuals. Since conformity can be identified as the changing of one’s behaviours to be in alignment with those deemed socially acceptable (Tussyadiah et al., 2018), conformity is a behavioural reaction that is socially motivated. Conformity has been associated with the term the “Bandwagon Effect” which argues that a commodity is sought merely because others purchased it (Leibenstein, 1950). A person can hop on the “Bandwagon” by purchasing the same products as those purchased by the individuals they wish to be affiliated with. In consuming the same products the consumer has identified their desire to be accepted by
the group (Cortés, 2016). In modern times, the method that consumers learn about products that they should conform to has changed due to the presence of social media. Users are able to see the posts of their social network and determine what products and activities they should engage in to ensure they are not missing out (Orchard et al., 2014). Overall, two things must take place. First, the social network must identify that there is something that is worth conforming to. Second, the user must seek to consume the same product in order to be accepted by this social network.

2.7 Socially Influenced

Social influence, like conformity, can be seen as a motivator during the decision making process (Asch, 1956). This concept is grounded in the idea, that consumers will consider the behaviours and purchases of their peers during their own decision making (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). This is because humans, as social beings, are influenced to make decisions which are reflective of group norms (Crompton, 1981). Thus, individual behaviour is influenced by the social groups. For example, the information that a future tourist receives from their peer group is seen as more influential than information gained through travel agencies or books about destinations (Wesley, Wesley, & Sutherland, 2008). Indeed, a person’s social group can have a significant role influencing the individual (Sedera et al., 2017). As a result, the industries understanding of how peer groups influence destination choices has been a desired research topic (Wesley et al., 2008) that remains ever present with modern methods of communication (Tussyadiah et al., 2018; Wang, Yu & Wei, 2012). Social media provides an opportunity for consumers to become aware of and consider what is socially acceptable by a user’s network (Sedera et al., 2017). The impact on those who are socially influenced when destinations are presented on SNSs is something which needs to be researched.
2.8 Bragging

Braggarts engage in bragging behaviours because they want to impress their audience (Alfano & Robinson, 2014). To brag, the speaker must assert a statement about themselves in which their audience must believe this statement as true and subsequently be impressed by the statement (Alfano & Robinson, 2014). Therefore, consumer bragging occurs when the braggart is looking to assert their superiority by comparing their purchases to others in a public manner (Ruvio & Shoham, 2016). Beyond just bragging, braggacodian behaviour occurs when an individual utilizes their social media as a tool in order to develop their personal brand with social groups (Qualman, 2009). In doing so, the social media user can divulge to their social network something they have identified as worthy, but knowing what would or would not be braggable to the user is a necessary step to their ability to brag. All in all, “many activities and experiences…can be motivated, in whole or in part, by the goal of bragging about them later” (Scopelliti, Loewenstein & Vosgerau, 2015: pg. 912). This brings bragging through social media to the forefront as necessary topic to be researched within destination choice literature.

2.9 Social Return

Social return has been defined as “the amount of positive social feedback that one’s social media posts of travel generate” (Boley et al., 2018: pg. 119). This is important, because as tourists move through the destination selection process, they will consider the amount of social return associated with each destination (Boley et al., 2018). This sentiment was echoed by the Canadian Tourism Commission (2015) who noted that Millennials in particular travel with the intention of finding and promoting unique destinations. Social return is the perceived impact to the users’ coolness, popularity, ability to stand out, uniqueness, savviness, and ability to induce envy once they visit and post to social media about their trip (Boley et al., 2018). The use of
one’s social media account and influence on their social network is necessary for this outcome. Without a willingness to post to social media and anticipating engagement by the users network, a user is unable to receive social return for their post. Awareness of what destinations the users social network visits therefore, is an equally important role for social return as it is for conformity, being socially influenced, or bragging. Without a knowledge of where others are travelling, the user cannot select a destination that will offer social return items such as uniqueness or envy.

2.10 Intention to Visit

As an antecedent to behaviour, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) measured participants intention recognizing that intention often leads to behaviour. When Ajzen (1985) extended this thought, he called it the Theory of Planned Behaviour, highlighting how intentions can be a good predictor of future actions. In tourism, measuring this intention is a great way to assist marketing organizations understanding of future tourists intentions to visit their destination (Hsu & Crotts, 2006). Moreover, the role of SNSs on future tourists visit intentions has been identified as an area that requires continued research (Liu, Wu, Li, 2018). Thus, intention to visit a trendy destination is measured in relation to participants tendency to conform, be socially influenced, brag, and seek social return given it is the best predictor of future behaviour.

2.11 Willingness to Share Knowledge as an Antecedent

When a tourist is looking to share their travel experience with their network, it is likely that the tourist will want to share an image over textual information (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Additionally, this image which is posted to the users social network, is intended to present the user in an ideal way (Lo & McKercher, 2015). This desire to share a positive image with a user’s network is motivated by the social opportunities offered to those who engage in eWOM (Tham
et al., 2013). However, the research on why information is shared and how destination choices are selected as a result of this sharing is minimal (Boley et al., 2018). For some DMO’s, understanding what makes their destination have “social shareability” has increased their ability to engage and attract potential visitors (Hosie, 2017). Moreover, sharing posts about ones travel has become a commonplace activity with the emergence of social media (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Therefore, social interactions are preceded by information sharing (Nusair Biligan, & Okumus, 2013). Without this willingness to share, participants cannot engage in conformity, be socially influenced, bragging, or social return behaviours. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

**H1a:** Instagram Users willingness to share information will positively influence their tendency to conform.

**H1b:** Instagram Users willingness to share information will positively influence their tendency to be socially influenced.

**H1c:** Instagram Users willingness to share information will positively influence their tendency to brag.

**H1d:** Instagram Users willingness to share information will positively influence their tendency to seek social return.

2.12 **Intensity of Social Network Use as an Antecedent**

Two main reasons for using social media are to build relationships and to socialize (Narangajavan, et al., 2017). One way in which this can be achieved by a user is, through influencing their networks’ perception of them based on the travel experiences they display on social media (Cortés, 2016). A user will convey different images in particular ways in order to have this influence on their peers. Indeed, some users are motivated to use the medium in order to receive recognition, support, social acceptance, or impress their social networks (Cortés,
2016). However, before this social value can be created, a user must have some level of engagement with their social network (Cortés, 2016). Moreover, the intensity with which a user engages in these social interactions, the more reliable the user is perceived by those in their network (Nusair et al., 2013). As a social media user increases the amount of their engagement with the platform, their susceptibility to be socially influenced also increases (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). Therefore, if a user is not motivated to engage with their social network in regards to their travel information, they are unable to conform, be socially influenced, brag, or gain social return. It is anticipated that there a positive influence between Instagram users intensity of social network use and each of the Instagram user personalities. Thus it can be argued that:

H2a: Instagram users intensity of social network use will positively influence their tendency to conform.

H2b: Instagram users intensity of social network use will positively influence their tendency to be socially influenced.

H2c: Instagram users intensity of social network use will positively influence their tendency to brag.

H2d: Instagram users intensity of social network use will positively influence their tendency to seek social return.

2.13 Conformity and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

If a destination will negatively impact how the tourist will be perceived by their social group, than the destination can be considered a social risk (Karl & Schmude, 2017). Thus, in the same way the tourist selects destinations without physical or financial risks (Karl et al., 2015) alleviating social risk is also a motivating factor as the tourist goes through their destination choice process. One avenue in which tourists ensure they are not committing a social risk with their destination choices is by learning what destinations those in their social group are visiting.
By capturing the trip experience and posting to social media, advocates are able to show those in their network how to engage in the same travel (Lo & McKercher, 2015). Essentially, the advocate is saying to its network, if you want to have this good holiday, travel to the same places and have the same experiences I had. In this regard, the future tourist will select a travel destination that those in their social network have already visited because they seek the same outcome. The most notable of these outcomes is positive social support (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). Therefore, the user can seek out conforming through consumption.

In one study it was noted that “by selecting the ‘right’ destination, [participants] obtained fringe benefits in social belonging and peer approval that further heightened the ‘return’ on their financial investment,” (Smith, 1979: 55). This symbolic value that can be attributed to selecting a socially acceptable destination is certainly more prominent with the presence of technology and social media (Boley et al., 2018). Social media can reinforce conformity by providing its socially dependent users with an avenue with which to become aware of trends (Orchard et al., 2014). Scrolling through images posted to a users’ social network can identify what is socially conventional, particularly as it relates to destination choices. For example, in their study of young Australian travellers, Lewis, et al. (2010) identified how social media was, in part, persuasive on a tourist’s destination choice. These young Australian travellers were more likely to travel to a destination that their current or aspirational social group had already travelled because they desired having the same trendy experience (Lewis et al., 2010). Thus, current and aspirational social groups can influence destination choices through social media platforms.

Users who have a high tendency to conform are influenced in their destination choice process by this personality characteristic. In seeing destinations that are trending as popular amongst their social network, the user will deem these destinations as socially acceptable (Boley
et al., 2018). Recognizing that a destination is perceived favorably by their network because other users have already travelled there, is a factor that future tourists who have this tendency to conform will consider during their trip selection process. For this type of user, they anticipate being provided with the same positive feedback by their network, if only they conform by selecting the same travel destination as those in their network. Therefore, it can be proposed that,

**H3**: *Instagram users tendency to conform will positively influence their intention to visit travel destinations trending amongst their social network.*

### 2.14 Socially Influenced and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

It is well recognized that a tourist's destination choices, both past and future, are influenced by the consumer’s peers (Wesley et al., 2008). When it comes to purchases which are infrequent, risky, and expensive, consumers are more likely to be influenced by their social group (Kotler, 1972). Therefore, travel purchases which are risky because of their intangibility (Leung et al., 2013), costly (Liu et al., 2018) and occur about once a year for most Millennials (Casciano, 2018), would fit well within this criteria of a purchase influenced by social group norms.

Social media has a significant role in modern methods of consumption. As users’ expose themselves to the posts of their network, they become aware of and more considerate of engaging in similar behaviour (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). It is evident that when individuals are exposed to the consumption behaviours of their social network, they are more likely to consider their peers’ purchases during their own consumption (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). Therefore, as social media users engage with the platform, and are exposed to potential travel destinations by their network, they are likely to be socially influenced to select the same destination choices as their peers.
For the destination choice process, social norms are absorbed and considered when the individual is selecting a travel destination (Crompton, 1981). A persons’ social network is influential as it relates to modern consumption behaviour (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). When a peer discusses their travel experiences, it increases the likelihood of the focal individual seeking the same travel experiences (Wesley et al., 2008). As social media posts depict socially normative destinations, future tourists with a socially influenced personality will be inclined to select these same destinations for their own travel. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

\textbf{H4:} Instagram users tendency to be socially influenced will positively influence their intention to visit travel destinations trending amongst their social network.

\subsection*{2.15 Bragging and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination}

The leisure class and the working class were two groups differentiated based on their consumption of goods; whereby the leisure class was able to improve their status by purchasing more expensive products or activities when less expensive options could satisfy their needs (Veblen, 1899). In much the same way that the leisure class engaged in this conspicuous consumption, the braggart seeks out travel destinations that they believe will provide them with the same sense of superiority amongst their network. Although it is often difficult to consider that one’s own travel is motivated by such prestige, it has been seen as a social motivator for other travellers (Crompton, 1979). Therefore, travellers are aware that others may select a destination for its symbolic value with a higher life style, even when they do not want to acknowledge that with regards to their own travel.

When it comes to earning the rights to brag, travelling certainly fits the criteria (Kerr et al., 2012; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Tomić & Božić, 2015). Travelling can be argued as an impressive experience, worthy of being not just shared with one’s network, but bragged about to
one’s social media network (Davies & Cairncross, 2013). In a time when social media has a hand in the purchasing behaviour of its users (Lu et al., 2018), being able to visit destinations that few others have highlighted on their social media is a significant contributor to modern tourists destination choice process (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2015). Travelling entitles the social media user to engage in bragging behaviour if they are having this unique and impressive experience. Young adults in particular, are selecting destinations with the intention of being able to brag to others on social media that they have visited this destination (Kerr, et al., 2012; Davies & Cairncross, 2013). Vacationing in a unique and impressive destination and highlighting this experience on social media can potentially produce the social return braggarts are looking for. The bragging rights earned by visiting particular destinations (Kerr et al., 2012) have become a critical motivating component during the destination choice process of users. Tourists are able to see what destinations their social network is visiting for their holidays, and plan to choose a destination that is different from the herd.

In the post travel stage, tourists are keen to use social media as a means to brag about their experience to others (Davies & Cairncross, 2013). In one study it was noted that users ensured the photos posted to social media were unique as this was a significant factor that contributed to them being perceived as an explorer (Lo & McKercher, 2015). In this regard, users who have a high tendency to brag are less likely to select destinations that those in their social network have visited. In doing so, these users who have this inclination towards bragging behaviours are essentially looking for the ability to impress their social network by consuming something that is novel or superior to the destinations their network is consuming. Therefore, it can be argued that:

**H5: : Instagram users tendency to brag will negatively influence their intention to visit travel destinations trending amongst their social network.**
2.16 Social Return and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

A call for understanding social return using an Instagram setting was made by the researchers who developed a modern set of measurement items related to this construct (Boley et al., 2018). This call came after finding that users intention to visit a destination can be predicted by the positive feedback the user anticipates to receive by travelling to a destination (Boley et al., 2018). Moreover, social return is a good predictor of short term (1 year) and long term (5 or 10 years) intentions to travel (Moran et al., 2018). Therefore, when looking to understand what a tourist will consider when in the process of selecting a travel destination, the social return the tourist intends to receive can be a factor. If a destination is unable to offer the tourist the opportunity to be perceived as cool, popular, standing out, unique, savvy, and envied once posted to social media, than the destination will likely not be considered for the users’ next holiday (Boley et al., 2018). Therefore, a users’ inclination to seek social return is based on these six different desires. However, coolness, standing out, uniqueness, and envy are all similar concepts related to the goal of bragging (Davies & Cairncross, 2013; Alfano & Robinson, 2014). As such, it is likely that a user who has a tendency to seek social return, will intend to behave in a similar way as a braggart by selecting different travel destinations compared to those frequented by those within their network. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

**H6: Instagram users tendency to seek social return will negatively influence their intention to visit travel destinations trending amongst their social network.**
Figure 2: Proposed Conceptual Framework
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Context

While originally believed as a niche market, DMO’s are recognising the purchasing power of their Millennial and Generation Z markets, who are the anticipated tourists of the future (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2015). Millennials constitute as those who are between the ages of 22 and 38 who were born in the 1980’s and early 1990’s (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2015) making them the next largest generation of tourism consumers. They are a highly sought after market given their current social media behaviours (Liu et al., 2018) and constant desire to travel (Casciano, 2018). According to a recent study by the travel corporation Contiki, 83% of Millennials are travelling between one and five times each year (Casciano, 2018). By the year 2020, the UNWTO predicts that Millennials will be engaging in 300 million trips each year (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2015). Moreover, it has been identified that those who share their travel photos online are younger, educated, and have a higher earned income (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung & Law, 2011). Compared to other cohorts, this group is either influencing or being influenced when it comes to modern tourism consumption behaviours (Liu et al., 2018). However, older populations are not absent from using this SNS (Pew Research Center, 2019; Gruzd et al., 2018), they just have not been researched to the same degree. Thus, as this demographic of Instagram users becomes more prominent, and the average age of Instagram users continues to increase, understanding its effects on users travel consumption is a growing demand.

3.2 Study Population

This study’s target population has the inclusion criteria that participants must be Instagram users who 18 years or older and have travelled for pleasure within the last two years.
The participants must have been on a trip for pleasure within the last 2 years, which is when Instagram emerged as the up and coming picture sharing social media (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). This requirement ensures participant’s ability to correctly answer the questions that have been modified in the eSurvey to fit the study context.

3.3 Sample Size

A sufficient sample size is required to measure the relationships between Instagram users tendency to conform, be socially influenced, brag, or seek social return on intention to visit a trending destination. Previous research has recommended a minimum sample size of 200 is necessary for structural equation modelling (SEM) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2011). In addition to reaching this minimum, researchers have argued a minimum sample based number of parameters. Kline (2005; 2011) has repeatedly indicated that when conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) there should be a minimum sample size of 10 for each parameter measured (N:q=10:1). If using the 10:1 sample size to parameters ratio, a minimum sample size of 560 would be needed for this study. Additionally, it has been argued that when conducting a factor analysis, there should be a ratio of 10 participants for every measurement item (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999; Cappelleri, Lundy & Hays, 2014). For this study, there were 26 measurement items included in the CFA, thus a sample size of 260 would be deemed sufficient for the factor analysis. So, while a sample size of 560 would be ideal, a sample size between 200 and 260 is considered adequate to perform the two-step structural modelling.

3.4 Data Collection

A self-administered eSurvey was developed using Survey Monkey and Qualtrics. The Survey Monkey questionnaire was distributed through Tourism Nova Scotia to a panel of Canadian and American adults. Data collection occurred for three weeks in February 2019. An
additional one week of data collection occurred through Qualtrics and was distributed through an Instagram post that was placed on the lead researchers Instagram page. In addition to participants Instagram use (Chung & Han, 2017), demographic information such as gender, education, income, relationship status, age, and province or territory that participant resides in was collected (See Appendix 1).

A total of 1359 participants responded to the Tourism Nova Scotia invite to take part in the study. After removing those participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria, 399 responses were left. However, there was a number of participants who did not complete the survey (n=89), did not understand the question regarding a trending destination being posted to their Instagram (n=30), or contradicted themselves on the reverse coded questions (n=6). A total of 41 participants responded to the Instagram post requesting participants. However, some participants did not complete the study (n=2), did not understand the question surrounding a trending destination (n= 5), or contradicted themselves on the reverse coded questions (n=3). Overall, 305 completed surveys were retained for analysis.

3.5 Measurement Scales

Participants were asked to select a travel destination that they have recently seen repeatedly posted about by their social network on their Instagram. This destination served as the trending destination throughout the eSurvey. All measurement items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Instagram user’s Conformity was measured using a 4-item conformity to trend scale (Zhou, Teng, & Poon, 2008) and being Socially Influenced was measured using a 4-item social influence scale (Tussyadiah, et al., 2018). In their study Tussyadiah et al., (2018) measured how these two constructs influenced participants intention to visit a trending restaurant, making the
measurement items an ideal choice for the present study which looked at a similar dependent variable. While the Conformity and Socially Influenced scales included only four measurement items, both have been widely researched (Sedera et al., 2017; Tussyadiah et al. 2018; Zhou et al., 2008) and therefore it is common for only four measurement items to be used.

On the other hand, bragging and social return have not been researched as extensively thus, more measurement items were used. An 8-item consumer bragging scale was created and validated by Ruvio and Shoham (2016) from which 5 measurement items was used to measure participants tendency to brag, in addition to using three individual measurements from Eastgate et al. (2006), Munar & Jacobsen (2014) and Cha, McClery & Uysal (1995). To measure Social Return, the 6-item scale which was created and validated by Boley et al. (2018) was used.

To ensure participants use Instagram to express their own destination choices and that their contribution to the destination choice process as advocates themselves precedes the four personality characteristics, a 4-item willingness to share knowledge scale (Nusair et al., 2017) and a 6-item intensity of social network use (Cortés, 2016) were used.

Finally, destination choice was measured using a 3-item focal consumer’s destination intention to visit scale (Liu et al., 2018). The destination that participants selected at the start of the eSurvey was used to represent a trending destination that they intended to visit. By participants picking their own Instagram trending destination, it accounts for the variety that participants see amongst their individual social networks.

Appendix 1 (See page 78) includes all questions asked within the eSurvey.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

To conduct the analyses IMB’s SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 25 and IBM’s AMOS 25 were used. To ensure that items were measuring their intended constructs, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted before moving onto a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The EFA provided insights about the multicollinearity of Bragging and Social Return. This was confirmed by running a Pairwise T-test. As a result, these measurement items were combined during the CFA to represent a single construct. Future studies with larger sample sizes may wish to confirm this to be true. The direct, indirect, and total effects of Intensity of Social Network Use and Willingness to Share on Intention to Visit a Trending Destination are also provided. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) occurred where the path coefficients and model fit were measured. Additionally, participants Instagram use and demographics were used to determine if there were statistically significant differences when these items were used as control variables.

4.1 Profile of Respondents

Table 1 provides the profile of the respondents (n=305). There was an uneven distribution of female (71.5%) responses over male responses (28.2%). Based on Gruzd et al. (2018) study on Canadian social media users and the study put forward by the Pew Research Center (2019) on American social media users, there are more female than male Instagram users marking this distribution skewed, but not unlikely. However, the age of the sample does not accurately reflect Instagram users. Participants ages were much higher than that of Canadian Instagram users, with the largest percentage of responses coming from those who are 60 years or older (25.9%) and the average age of respondents was between 42 and 47 years old. The income of participants reflects a mostly middle-class income, with the average income being between $60,000 and $79,999 per
year, 50.9% of participants earning between $40,000 and $99,999 per year and 19.3% earning over $100,000 a year. In addition to the age of respondents being skewed older, the majority of participants are also in a married or common law relationship (67.2%). Most participants (93.1%) have received some type of formal post-high school education. The distribution of Canadian (75.7%) and American (24.3%) participants was also unevenly distributed. Given that data was collected from a Canadian DMO and Instagram user, this was anticipated.

When looking at participants Instagram use (Table 1), most participants are using their Instagram account on their smartphone (84.6%) and nearly half of the participants use their Instagram account at least once a day (49.5%). The duration of participants Instagram use is short with 77.8% using the application for less than 10 minutes. Of the respondents (n=85) who indicated daily use of Instagram two or more times daily, eight respondents use Instagram twice a day, 22 respondents use Instagram three times a day, 16 respondents use Instagram four times a day, and 39 respondents use Instagram five or more times daily.

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<tr>
<th>Table 1: Profile of respondents (n=305)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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**Relationship Status**

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**Education**

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**Type of Device Used**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desktop/Laptop</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smartphone</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequency of Instagram Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than monthly</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every few days</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple times daily</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Length of each Instagram Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4 minutes</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10 minutes</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20 minutes</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 30 minutes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 or more minutes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

An EFA using a Principle Component Analysis (PCA) with a Varimax rotation method was used in order to determine the number of constructs present using the measurement items and data collected (Field, 2017). As displayed in Table 2, the EFA found only six distinct constructs. The total variance explained by these six constructs is 72.557%. Five Social Return items and six Bragging items loaded into a single factor. The reliability alpha of this Social Return/Bragging factor was .933 with factor loadings ranging from .482 to .896. Similarly, all the measurement items for Willingness to Share and two of the measurement items for Intensity of Social Network Use were loaded into the same factor. This factor had a reliability alpha of .901, highlighting that the items were consistently loading onto the same factor. As a result of social return and bragging being loaded into the same factor and Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network use being loaded into the same factor, a Pairwise T- was needed to determine if these constructs are significantly different from one another. An additional one item loaded into a factor in which its relevance is unrelated. Socially Influenced item “I use Instagram to obtain specific views and opinions about a particular destination,” loaded with the Intensity of Social Network Use items. A total of five items were removed from this EFA. Those items were Conformity Item #1, Socially Influenced Item #3, Bragging Items #3 and #6, and Social Return Item #4.
### Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Social Network Behaviour (N=305)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor/Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Variance Explained (%)</th>
<th>Reliability Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Social Return and Bragging</strong></td>
<td>0.933</td>
<td>35.152%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me look cool when I post to Instagram. (SR)</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me more popular when I post to Instagram. (SR)</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me stand out when I post to Instagram. (SR)</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make others envious of me when I post to Instagram. (SR)</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to choose products which will impress those I know. (B)</td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me look savvy when I post to Instagram. (SR)</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to impress other people by showing off the things I buy. (B)</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me that other people are jealous of the things I buy. (B)</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to buy products which clearly support the brand image I wish to project is important to me. (B)</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be recognized as awe-inspiring for the travel destinations that I visit. (B)</td>
<td>0.579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I travel, I am able to impress my Instagram followers by posting about my trip. (B)</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use</strong></td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>17.682%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always share my travel related pictures on Instagram (W2S)</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always share my experience of travel activities on Instagram (W2S)</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my travel experiences on Instagram frequently. (W2S)</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always share my opinion related to travel destinations on Instagram (W2S)</td>
<td>0.660</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploading information about the travel experience I live on Instagram is an important part of my daily routine during and after my trips. (ISNU)</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud when people look at and watch the information I upload on Instagram about my travel experiences. (ISNU)</td>
<td>0.561</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Factor 3: Intensity of Social Network Use (mostly)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would be sorry if my Instagram account was shut down and I couldn’t</td>
<td>7.574%</td>
<td>0.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give information about my trips (ISNU)</td>
<td>0.673</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use Instagram to obtain specific views and opinions about a particular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destination. (SI)</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel out of touch when I can’t log onto my Instagram account during</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my trips in order to give information about them. (ISNU)</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After my trips, I feel I am able to give information to a social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community that I am part of on Instagram. (ISNU)</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After my trips, using Instagram to talk about my trips is an important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activity for me. (ISNU)</td>
<td>0.606</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factor 4: Visit Intention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viewing Instagram posts about (participant selected trending</td>
<td>4.550%</td>
<td>0.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destination) makes me desire to visit the destination in the near future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VI)</td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having viewed Instagram posts about (participant selected trending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destination) I intend to visit the destination in the near future. (VI)</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would take (participant selected trending destination) into</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consideration when planning for my future holidays. (VI)</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factor 5: Socially Influenced**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would try a new travel destination if my friends posted on Instagram</td>
<td>4.098%</td>
<td>0.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that they have been there. (SI)</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would try a new travel destination if my friends positively raved about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it on Instagram. (SI)</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factor 6: Conformity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that make others have a good impression of</td>
<td>3.501%</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me. (C)</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that give me a sense of global belonging. (C)</td>
<td>-0.675</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that make me feel closer to a contemporary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lifestyle. (C)</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* KMO Sampling Adequacy test = 0.920; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $X^2 = 7385.593 = p<0.000$; Total variance explained = 72.557%. 


4.3 Multicollinearity and Pairwise T-Tests

Multicollinearity is a problem that occurs when the measurement items used to measure constructs are found to correlate too highly (Field, 2017). To avoid multicollinearity, the correlations between constructs should be less than .8 (Field, 2017). The multicollinearity that was displayed in the EFA (See Table 2) between Social Return and Bragging and then again between Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use was tested using a Pairwise T-test. This will determine if the means between these constructs were statistically significantly different from one another.

In Table 3, the correlation between the Bragging items and the Social Return items was (r=.866, p<0.000) indicating that there is a high correlation between the two items. More importantly, the means of the two constructs were statically not different from one another at a significance level of 0.10 or lower (t=1.530, p>0.10). When conducting the two-step SEM in the subsequent analyses, these constructs will be combined to represent a single Social Return/Bragging construct.

Table 3: Social Return and Bragging Pairwise T-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bragging</td>
<td>3.9383</td>
<td>.88981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Return</td>
<td>3.9864</td>
<td>1.09254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: t=1.530(n.s.)*

When the same test was run comparing the means of Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use, it was found that there was a statistically significant correlation between the two constructs (r=.564, p<0.000). However, this correlation is below the .8 threshold recommended (Field, 2017). Additionally, the paired differences between these two constructs means was not statistically different (t=3.718, p<0.000) and therefore, should continue to be used as their own individual constructs for the SEM.
Table 4: Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use Pairwise T-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Share</td>
<td>3.2148</td>
<td>1.07040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of Social Network Use</td>
<td>3.4426</td>
<td>1.05458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: t=3.718, p<0.000

4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Using the two-step approach recommended for structural equation modelling (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), a CFA was conducted prior to testing the proposed model. This is done to ensure that all measurement items load onto their designated constructs at a factor loading of 0.5 or higher (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Of the original 35 items, the EFA indicated that five items should not be included in further analyses for having low factor loadings (Hair et al., 2010). These items were Conformity Item #1, Socially Influenced item #3, Bragging item #3, Bragging item #6, and Social Return item #4. Additionally, there were three items which loaded into constructs unrelated to their theoretical iterations. These items were Socially Influenced item #4, Intensity of Social Network Use #1 and Intensity of Social Network Use #2. Thus, eight items were removed prior to beginning the CFA. One item was removed from the CFA for having a low factor loading, which was Conformity item #2. An additional four items were removed for having high covariations with unrelated constructs. These items were Bragging item #2, #4, and #7 and Willingness to Share item #1.

It is suggested that each construct have a minimum of three items (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), and each item load onto the construct at a standardized regression weight of 0.5 or higher (Hair et al, 2010). However, the construct Socially Influenced was unable to reach an acceptable reliability or validity unless two of the four items were removed. If the two items are highly correlated with one another, and have relatively low correlation with other items, it is suggested that the construct can be retained (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Thus, Socially Influenced was kept in the SEM. The CFA results are depicted in Table 5.
A maximum likelihood method CFA was performed using AMOS 25 to evaluate the fit of the model. The model fit was determined using six fit indices. They were the ratio of Chi-square ($\chi^2$) to degrees of freedom (d.f.), goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The chi-square ($\chi^2$) to degrees of freedom (d.f.) value should be below 3 at a significance level of 0.001 to indicate excellent fit for this measure (Kline, 2005). Both the GFI and the AGFI should have values greater than 0.8 to be considered a good fit (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1982), while the IFI and CFI should be greater than 0.9 to be considered a good fit (Bentler, 1990). Lastly, the RMSEA should be less than 0.8 to reflect a good fit of this measure (Heir et al., 1998; Brown & Cudeck, 1993).

The model fit indices for the CFA indicated a satisfactory model fit with the Chi-square=434,672 p<0.00; CMIN/DF= 2.276 p<0.00; GFI= .880; AGFI=.841; CFI= .953; IFI=.943; RMSEA=.065. Given that the model fit indices are all at or beyond their acceptable measurements, the model is ready to be tested through structural equation modelling. The model fit measurements indicate that the model reproduces the observed covariance among the indicator items and therefore this is a valid model (Kline, 2005; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Table 6 indicates the model fit indices.

| Table 5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Social Network Behaviour |
|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Item                | Standard Factor Loading | CR     | AVE    |
| Factor 1: Conformity to Trend | 0.637 | 0.480  |
|                     | 0.831 |        |
|                     | 0.519 |        |

I select travel destinations that make others have a good impression of me.
I select travel destinations that make me feel closer to a contemporary lifestyle.
Factor 2: Socially Influenced

I would try a new travel destination if my friends positively raved about it on Instagram. 1.015
I would try a new travel destination if my friends posted on Instagram that they have been there. 0.693

Factor 3: Bragging and Social Return

I select travel destinations which make me look cool when I post to Instagram. 0.935
I select travel destinations which make me more popular when I post to Instagram. 0.920
I select travel destinations which make me stand out when I post to Instagram. 0.914
I select travel destinations which make me look savvy when I post to Instagram. 0.870
I select travel destinations which make others envious of me when I post to Instagram. 0.855
I like to impress other people by showing off the things I buy. 0.776
I want to be recognized as awe-inspiring for the travel destinations that I visit. 0.625
Being able to buy products which clearly support the brand image I wish to project is important to me. 0.594

Factor 4: Willingness to Share

I always share my travel related pictures on Instagram 0.943
I always share my experiences of travel activities on Instagram 0.939
I share my travel experiences on Instagram frequently 0.852

Factor 5: Intensity of Social Network Use

After my trips, using Instagram to talk about my trips is an important activity for me. 0.845
I would be sorry if my Instagram account was shut down and I couldn't give information about my trips 0.829
I feel out of touch when I can't log onto my Instagram account during my trips in order to give information about them 0.803
After my trips I feel I am able to give information to a social community that I am a part of on Instagram 0.737

Factor 6: Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

Viewing Instagram posts about (Participant Selected Destination) makes me desire to visit the destination in the near future. 0.982
Having viewed Instagram posts about (Participant Selected Destination) I intend to visit the destination in the near future.

I would take (Participant Selected Destination) into consideration when planning my future holidays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Model Fit Indices</th>
<th>Acceptable Values</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>Reject, p &gt; 0.05 (^1)</td>
<td>434.672, &lt; 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIN/DF</td>
<td>Excellent &lt; 3; Good &lt; 5 (^1)</td>
<td>2.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)</td>
<td>Excellent &gt; 0.90; Good &gt; 0.80 (^2)</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)</td>
<td>Excellent &gt; 0.90; Good &gt; 0.80 (^2)</td>
<td>.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Fit Index (CFI)</td>
<td>Excellent &gt; 0.95; Good &gt; 0.90 (^3)</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incremental Fit Index (IFI)</td>
<td>Excellent &gt; 0.95; Good &gt; 0.90 (^3)</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)</td>
<td>Excellent &lt; 0.05; Good &lt; 0.08 (^4)</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Kline, 2005
\(^2\)Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1982
\(^3\)Bentler, 1990
\(^4\)Heir et al., 1998; Brown & Cudeck, 1993

In addition to the model fits and factor loadings, the construct validity of each factor should meet acceptable thresholds prior to performing the SEM. The minimum requirement for each factor’s composite reliability measurement is 0.7 or higher (Hair et al., 2010). Likewise, the validity or accuracy of the measurement items can be measured using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). This measurement ensures that the measurement items depicting each construct are an accurate representation of that construct and should be at least 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). In Table 7, it indicates that five of the six constructs were able to reach a composite reliability of 0.880 or higher and an AVE of 0.648 or higher. Therefore, Socially Influenced, Social Return Bragging, Willingness to Share, Intensity of Social Network Use, and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination all reached the necessary thresholds to display convergent validity. In doing so, it can be argued that each of the items accurately and consistently measures the theoretical construct in which they are intended to measure. However, Conformity is slightly below acceptable level with a composite reliability of 0.637 and an AVE of .480. That being
said, other researchers have identified that discriminant validity exists when the AVE of a construct is greater than the correlations between that construct and other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 7 indicates that this was achieved, and therefore Conformity is distinctly different from the other constructs. Additionally, when conducting research that is innovative, utilizing a threshold of 0.6 for the composite reliability has been seen as acceptable (Hatcher, 1994; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 7 also confirms that there are no correlations of .8 or higher between each of the six measured variables. Thus each of the constructs are distinctly different from one another and discriminant validity was achieved (Hair et al., 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SRB</th>
<th>CNFRM</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>W2S</th>
<th>ISNU</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRB</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNFRM</td>
<td>0.391</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>-0.181</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2S</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISNU</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>-0.132</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.432</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CR    0.942| 0.637| 0.909| 0.937| 0.880| 0.901|
AVE   0.674| 0.480| 0.755| 0.832| 0.648| 0.754|
Mean  3.943| 3.61 | 2.664| 3.153| 3.443| 2.493|
SD    0.993| 0.954| 0.901| 1.168| 1.055| 1.003|

Note: W2S= Willingness to Share, ISNU= Intensity of Social Network Use, CNFM= Conformity, SI= Socially Influenced, SRB= Social Return/Bragging, VI= Intention to Visit a Trending Destination, CR= Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted

4.5 Mediation of Personality Characteristics

While not originally included in the hypotheses, the direct, indirect, and total effects of Willingness to Share Knowledge and Intensity of Social Network Use were analyzed. This was done by conducting a nonparametric bootstrap bias corrected confidence interval method using SPSS AMOS 25. The biased confidence interval for this analysis was set at 95%, as it increases
the accuracy when compared to a wider set confidence interval (Preacher & Kelly, 2011).
Likewise, the bootstrap was set to 2000 to reflect a larger resampling of the original dataset
(Preacher & Kelly, 2011). Based on the results presented in Table 9, it can be determined that
Willingness to Share is partially mediated through Conformity, Socially Influenced, and Social
Return Bragging. This is because there was a significant direct and total effect on visit intention
when this construct is mediated through each of the tendencies. Additionally, the indirect effects
through Socially Influenced and Social Return Bragging were also significant. However,
Intensity of Social Network Use has no significant direct effect on visit intention, nor did it have
an effect when it was mediated through Social Return Bragging. However, it was found that
there was a significant indirect and total effect when mediated through Conformity and Socially
Influenced, indicating full mediation for these paths.

**Table 8**: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Direct Effect</th>
<th>Indirect Effect</th>
<th>Total Effect</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W2S→CNFRM→IV</td>
<td>.244**</td>
<td>-.033(n.s.)</td>
<td>.385**</td>
<td>Partially Mediated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2S→SI→IV</td>
<td>.244**</td>
<td>.180**</td>
<td>.387**</td>
<td>Partially Mediated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2S→SRB→IV</td>
<td>.244**</td>
<td>.045*</td>
<td>.383**</td>
<td>Partially Mediated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISNU→CNFRM→IV</td>
<td>-.129(n.s.)</td>
<td>.172*</td>
<td>-.154(n.s.)</td>
<td>Full mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISNU→SI→IV</td>
<td>-.129(n.s.)</td>
<td>-.085*</td>
<td>-.154(n.s.)</td>
<td>Full mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISNU→SRB→IV</td>
<td>-.129(n.s.)</td>
<td>-.132(n.s.)</td>
<td>-.154(n.s.)</td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: **p<0.05, *p<0.5*

**4.6 Structural Equation Modelling**

SPSS AMOS 25 continued to be used for the second part of the structural equation
modelling (SEM) process in order to test the hypotheses which had been previously established.
The model differed slightly compared to the model hypothesized based on the results from Table
8. As a result of the significant direct effect of Willingness to Share on Intention to Visit a
Trending Destination, this path will now be included in the final model and is anticipated to have
a significant positive relationship. The SEM model fit indices indicate a satisfactory model fit
with Chi-square = 475.574 p<0.00; CMIN/DF = 2.439 p<0.00; GFI = .867; AGFI = .828; CFI = .945; IFI= .946; RMSEA = .069.

In Figure 3 and Table 8, the standardized path coefficients are presented by the standardized \( \beta \)s. The model indicates that nearly all the path analyses are significant. Willingness to Share had no impact on Conformity (\( \beta = -.059, n.s. \)), but there were significant impacts on Socially Influenced (\( \beta = .483, p<0.001 \)), and Social Return/Bragging (\( \beta = -.298, p<0.001 \)). The insignificant influence of Willingness to Share on Conformity and the significantly negative influence of Willingness to Share on Social Return Bragging indicate that Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1c/d are not supported but Hypothesis 1b is. Intensity of Social Network Use has a significant impact on Conformity (\( \beta = .496, p<0.001 \)), being Socially Influenced (\( \beta = -.233, p<0.001 \)), and Social Return/Bragging (\( \beta = -.800, p<0.001 \)). For Intensity of Social Network Use, there is a negative effect on being Socially Influenced indicating that Hypothesis 2b is not supported, however Hypotheses 2a and 2c/d are supported. More importantly the direct relationships of the three main personality characteristics have a significant impact on the dependent variable Intention to Visit a Trending Destination with Conformity (\( \beta = .220, p<0.05 \)), Socially Influenced (\( \beta = .313, p<0.001 \)), and Social Return/Bragging (\( \beta = -.189, p<0.01 \)). Thus, Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5/6 were all supported. Additionally, Willingness to Share had a significant positive influence on Intention to visit a Trending Destination (\( \beta = .177, p<0.05 \)).
Table 9: Results for Structural Equation Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a W2S→CNFRM</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b W2S→SI</td>
<td>.483***</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1c/d W2S→SRB</td>
<td>-.298***</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a ISNU→CNFRM</td>
<td>.686***</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b ISNU→SI</td>
<td>-.220***</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2c/d ISNU→SRB</td>
<td>.802***</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 CNFRM→VI</td>
<td>.222**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4 SI→VI</td>
<td>.419***</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5/H6 SRB→VI</td>
<td>-.190***</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not originally hypothesized W2S→VI</td>
<td>.177**</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: W2S= Willingness to Share, ISNU= Intensity of Social Network Use, CNFM= Conformity, SI= Socially Influenced, SRB= Social Return/Bragging, VI= Intention to Visit a Trending Destination; ***p<0.001, **p<0.005

![Figure 3: Structural Equation Model](image)

*Note:* ***p<0.001, **p<0.005
4.7 Age and Relationship Status as Control Variables

In addition to the previous analyses conducted, the demographic information which was collected was used to determine if different types of users were more prone to one characteristic over another. For the purpose of this paper, the age generations broken down into the different generations were formed using the age categories that were collected in the survey and after consideration was given for the sample size in each age range so that they were representative of the age group and contained enough responses allowing comparison across generations. For example, there were only two participants who were representative of Generation Z (Statistics Canada, 2015), and thus there was not a large enough sample to be representative of a generation. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, the Millennials are classified as those who are between 18 and 35 years old (N=98), the Generation X are classified as those who are between 36 and 53 years old (N=81) and the Baby Boomers are classified as those who are 54 years or older (N=126). As it is seen in Table 10, the Millennials are the most likely to be socially influenced, while Generation X and Baby Boomers are most likely to display conformist and braggarts personality characteristics. As a result of this division in Instagram personalities by Generation, marketing organizations can appeal to the different groups based on the characteristics of their destination.

As it is shown in Table 10, the different Instagram users were separated into the three different generations: Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. From the results of this table, it is clear that each generation are more likely to be one type of user compared to the others. For example, the Millennials were significantly more likely to indicate that they are socially influenced (M=2.89). Alternatively, Generation X (M=3.77, M=4.20) and Baby Boomers (M=3.78, M=4.31) were more likely to indicate that they are conformers and braggarts.
These two generations also have a higher Intensity of Social Network Use compared to Millennials (Generation X M= 3.54; Baby Boomer M=3.60). Additionally, Millennials were found to use Instagram more frequently (M= 4.56) and had a higher intention to visit their selected trending destination (M=2.80) than Generation X (M= 3.94; M=2.35) or Baby Boomers (M=3.74; M=2.35).

Table 10: ANOVA Comparing Users by Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Millennials (N=98)</th>
<th>Generation X (N=81)</th>
<th>Baby Boomers (N=126)</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Return Bragging</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Influenced</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Share</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of Social Network Use</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Visit</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Device Used</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram Frequency</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on Instagram</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for participants Relationship Status, there were differences for those who are in a relationship compared to those who are not in a relationship. Those who are in a relationship (M=4.04) are significantly more likely to be Social Return Braggarts compared to those who are not in a relationship (M=3.57). Those who are not in a relationship are more likely to be Socially Influenced (M=2.93) when compared to those who are in a relationship (M=2.59). Additionally, participants who are not in a relationship (M=3.36) are statistically more likely to use Instagram multiple times daily than those who are in a relationship (M=2.87).

Table 11: T-Test Comparing Relationship Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Relationship (N=64)</th>
<th>Relationship (N=241)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Mean: 3.38</td>
<td>SD: 0.99</td>
<td>Mean: 3.67</td>
<td>SD: 0.94</td>
<td>95.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Influenced</td>
<td>Mean: 2.93</td>
<td>SD: 1.041</td>
<td>Mean: 2.59</td>
<td>SD: 0.848</td>
<td>86.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Return Bragging</td>
<td>Mean: 3.57</td>
<td>SD: 1.15</td>
<td>Mean: 4.04</td>
<td>SD: 0.926</td>
<td>86.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of Social Network Use Use of Instagram Multiple Times a Day</td>
<td>Mean: 3.07</td>
<td>SD: 1.155</td>
<td>Mean: 3.54</td>
<td>SD: 1.001</td>
<td>89.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean: 3.36</td>
<td>SD: 0.952</td>
<td>Mean: 2.87</td>
<td>SD: 1.065</td>
<td>50.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if Instagram users were impacted during their travel destination selection process based on their personality characteristics. Arguably, those who are conformists or socially influenced would be more inclined to select a trending travel destination, while those who are braggarts or seekers of social return would be less inclined to select a trending travel destination. It was also argued that in order to be one of these personality characteristics, the user would have to be willing to contribute to the eWOM surrounding the destination by having a Willingness to Share and an Intensity of Social Network Use.

5.1 Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use as Antecedents

Peer communication does not often have a direct influence on behaviour intentions (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012; Cortés, 2016). It is mediated through other constructs, strengthening or improving the impact of the mediated construct on the behaviour intention. Without the users Willingness to Share with their Instagram network and contribute to eWOM by advocating for their travel destinations (Nusair et al., 2017; Cortés, 2016), they are unable to show those in their network that they have conformed, been influenced, or are bragging. Since, it was found that only when a user has a tendency to be Socially Influenced is positively influenced by Willingness to Share, those who are Socially Influenced are more inclined to try a travel destination at the suggestion of their social network. As a result, those with an inclination to be socially influenced are dependent on their own willingness to engage in the “social shareability” surrounding a travel destination (Hosie, 2017).

Alternatively, both Conformity and Social Return/Bragging are negatively influenced by a Willingness to Share, but positively influenced by Intensity of Social Network Use. Unlike being socially influenced, there is a sense of socialization and relationship building that takes place
with conformists and braggarts. Conformists seek being associated with a certain social group and wish to impress that social group by being like them (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). Likewise, the braggart is seeking to impress their network in order to appear popular and cool while making others envious (Ruvio & Shoham, 2016; Boley et al., 2018). As a result, there is more to these personality characteristics than simply sharing information with their network—they need to engage with their networks. Intensity of Social Network Use is a measurement intended to look at user’s emotional connection with their social network (Ellison, et al., 2007). Therefore, the conformists and braggarts are more emotionally invested in their Instagram behaviour, seeking a certain reaction from their audience as a result of their sharing.

The three hypotheses which were not supported in this study are a result of Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use as antecedents. Instagram Users with a Tendency to Conform are not significantly influenced by Willingness to Share; thus, these users are not motivated or unmotivated to share their trip experiences. A person who is motivated to share their knowledge in the form of eWOM anticipates a combination of utilitarian and hedonic benefits (Nusair et al., 2017). In this regard, if there are no benefits to the user, then sharing their trip knowledge on Instagram will not occur. Social Return Braggarts may not always see benefits to sharing their trip experiences as this construct indicates. Rather, Social Return Braggarts will be less inclined to always share their experiences as it will take away from these users ability to appear extraordinary, unique, and impressive. Therefore, Instagram users with this type of characteristic are going to be negatively influenced by their Willingness to Share.

The other unsupported hypothesis worth exploring is Intensity of Social Network Use’s negative effect on users who have a tendency to be Socially Influenced. In this regard, having a high engagement with ones’ network following their trip experience is negatively associated with
those who engage in socially normative behaviours. Socially influenced individuals however have not been associated with such post-travel behaviours. Rather, their social network engagement is often done pre-consumption as a way to know what behaviours and purchases are normative. This idea was supported in a similar study which found that “…active users of SNS are prone to interpersonal influence and are willing to make consumption decisions following their peers’ recommendation and past behavior as disclosed and shared on SNS” (Tussyadiah et al., 2018: pg. 217). Thus, those who are Socially Influenced engage with their network pre-consumption, not post. As a result, the social value associated with engaging with one’s network following their trip experience that Braggarts and Conformists would require is negatively associated with those who are Socially Influenced.

5.2 Conformity and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

It was expected that as users tendency to conform increases, so too does the likelihood of this individual selecting a travel destination that they were exposed to by members of their Instagram social network. Based on the significant positive path coefficient, this hypothesis is supported. Sharing one’s travel experience on social media has been known to cause benign envy in members of the users social network as a result of upward social comparisons (Liu et al., 2018). Therefore, a user who has a tendency to conform has an intention to visit a travel destination that is trending amongst the peers in their social network. Users engage in aspirational travel consumption if they are motivated by the social comparison between themselves and those who are similar to the user (Liu et al., 2018). Seeing others post about their trip experiences can cause future tourists to consider how they can be like the individual posting by engaging in the same consumption as the poster. Conformists are encouraged to make the
same consumption choices as those they engage in upward social comparisons with on social media (Tussyadiah et al., 2017), including, as this study has identified, travel destinations.

5.3 Socially Influenced and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

In the same way that an conformist is likely to select a travel destination that those in their social network have visited, so too is someone with a socially influenced personality. Therefore, the relationship between being Socially Influenced and intention to visit a trending destination reflects that as a users’ tendency to be socially influenced increases, so too will their intention to visit a trending destination. It is clear that for student tourists in particular, their peer group is more influential during their destination choice process than any other source (Wesley et al., 2008). With social media being such a significant contributor to this modern living, the degree to which one’s peer group influences the user has increased (Sedera et al., 2017). A person who is socially influenced is likely to choose the same restaurants that those in their peer group are visiting and posting to social media about (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). Similarly, this study found that an Instagram user will intend to visit a trending travel destination if members of their social network have also visited and posted to social media about their tourism experience at that destination.

5.4 Bragging and Social Return as a single Construct

As depicted in Table 2, there was not a significant difference between the mean values of Bragging and the mean value of Social Return. The Bragging measurement items used from Ruvio and Shoham (2016), Munar and Jacobsen (2014), and Cha, McClery & Uysal (1995) were found to have a significant correlation with the Social Return measurement items developed and validated by Boley et al., (2018). As a result, there was a significant multicollinearity effect which depicted how the SEM was conducted. Thus, hypotheses 5 and 6 were combined to
measure the effect of a single Social Return/Bragging construct on participants intention to visit a trending destination. The influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable was anticipated to still be a negative relationship. Some may argue that this construct is similar to that of conspicuous consumption (Packard, 1959). However, in their study on destination image and conspicuous consumption, it was the well-known destinations which were identified as conspicuous or having prestige (Jo Phillips & Back, 2011). Conspicuous destinations are the affluent ones. Therefore, conspicuous destinations may be impressive and superior, albeit in a different way than what Social Return Braggarts are seeking.

5.5 Bragging/Social Return and Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

Instagram users who have a tendency to brag seek social return were found to not have intention to visit a travel destination trending amongst their social network. Given that braggarts are looking to set themselves apart from their social group by appearing superior (Ruvio & Shoham, 2016), unique (Destination Canada, 2016), and impressive (Alfano & Robinson, 2014), they are influenced to not select a destination that is trending amongst those in their social network. Rather, this type of user’s likelihood to select the same travel destinations as those trending amongst their Instagram social network will decrease as their tendency to brag increases.

To avoid being disliked by those in the braggarts network, it is best for the consumer looking to appear superior to have an understanding of what products other consumers are already purchasing (Ruvio & Shoham, 2016). Thus, knowing which destinations are popular amongst the users Instagram network provides the braggart with an opportunity to seek out alternative destinations. New and renewed destination marketers can capitalize on these
braggarts who are able to create a “buzz” about their destination (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2015).

Social Return as a relatively new concept within the realm of social media and tourism has identified itself as having a significant role on influencing a person during their destination choice process (Boley et al., 2018). In the same way that a tourist seeks bragging rights from their trip destination, a user will seek Social Return. This is because of the overarching similarity between Bragging and Social Return to the point that they are both measuring the same concept. Social Return/Bragging focus on the user wanting to receive positive social feedback from their network (Boley et al., 2018; Alfano & Robinson, 2014). However, impressing the users network is achieved by standing out, not conforming. Selecting travel destinations which make the user appear unique, cool, stand out, and induce envy are likely not going to be the same destinations that those in the users network are travelling to. Thus, the social return braggart does not have an intention to visit a travel destination that is trending amongst their social network.

5.6 Control Variables

Given that contrasts between the younger generations and older generations when it comes to their consumption of travel destinations has already been identified (Madera et al., 2018), this study was able to support this claim by finding significant Generational differences. Those who are below 38 who have grown up with social media are likely to be influenced in selecting destinations for their “Instagrammable” appeal (Hosie, 2017). Generation X and Baby Boomers have yet to be associated with the same motivation. However, this study was able to determine that all generations are impacted, albeit in different ways. The division of the ages into these three generations was done based on the age brackets that participants could select in effort to reflect the actual generational ages as accurately as possible (Hefron, 2018a).
While income was not found to have any statistically significant differences on participants' intention to visit a trending travel destination, the income of the participants was high in comparison with the national average. Based on the 2011 Canadian Census the average income of Canadians was $37,000 (Statistics Canada, 2019), with only 10% of the Canadian population earning more than $80,000 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Instagram users are characterized as having a full-time jobs with professional degrees compared to those on other social media platforms (Gruzd et al., 2018; Pew Research Center, 2019). The present studies profile of respondents supports this characterization.

Relationship status was also found to have a significant impact on participants' Instagram personalities. The main differences found amongst the participants' relationship status, was that those who are in a relationship are more likely to be Social Return Braggarts ($t=3.064, p<0.01$). Alternatively, participants who are not in a relationship are more likely to be Socially Influenced ($t=2.454, p>0.05$). The high average age of participants is likely a factor that needs to be considered here, with the older and in relationship participants as braggarts, and the younger and single participants are more likely to be socially influenced. This supports the idea that single and younger individuals are more concerned with selecting travel destinations which are socially acceptable amongst their social group, while older couples are more likely to select travel destinations which will impress their social network (Hefron, 2018a).
CHAPTER 6: STUDY IMPLICATIONS

Given that 84.6% of participants use the social media tool Instagram on their smartphones and 49.5% of participants are using Instagram daily, this study confirms Instagram as a relative social media tool for the travel and tourism industry. The ability to use the application regularly while on the go (Instagram, 2018) provides travelers with opportunities to share their travel experiences and interact with their network both during and after their trip experiences. Millennial travellers share their photos on SNS’s more often than Generation X and Baby Boomers (Prideaux, Lee, & Tsang, 2018), highlighting that this group might be the biggest contributors to the eWOM surrounding destinations. However, all three generations, and their consumer power, should be considered by DMO’s as each generation gains social value from this social network behaviour in their own right.

6.1 Practical Implications

Travel is not always accessible (Liu et al., 2018). It is often expensive, and associated with pleasure, superior quality, and a component of one’s personal and social identity (Liu et al., 2018). That being said, it is something that Millennials see as valuable and worthy to spend their surplus income (Destination Canada, 2015). It has been shown that, Millennials are willing to forgo sex, Netflix, and coffee if it means that they can travel (Casciano, 2018). This age group is also heavily interwoven with their social media accounts, being the most active everyday users of Instagram (McKinnon, 2018; Gruzd, et al., 2018; Pew Research Center, 2019). Nevertheless, as the present study highlighted, social media tools such as Instagram are not limited to Millennials only. While Generation X is considered to be a small demographic of the population, their impact on the travel and tourism industry cannot be overlooked (Hefron, 2018b). The results of this study indicate that this group is also active on Instagram and are likely to conform
or brag. It identifies that this group is caught between the desire to be like their network, and the desire to stand out from their network. They are quite indicative of the middle group between Millennials and Boomers.

Additionally, a growing number of Baby Boomers are becoming active Instagram users. More importantly, this study identified how this generation wants to be recognized by their network for their impressive travel destinations. They grew up needing to stand out in order to be recognized, and as a result are constantly seeking destinations which will allow them to have a superior image over their peers (Hefron, 2018a). In Canada, the Baby Boomer generation is significant for a number of reasons. They seek leisure and travel activities, suggesting that they have a meaningful impact on the tourism industry (Foot, 2007). As one study indicated, those who were 50-59 years old were attracted to destinations that offered “extraordinary experiences” (Karl et al., 2015: 61). It is unsurprising then, that this age group which would be representative of the Baby Boomer generation, continues to seek out those same experiences.

Given that social media has become a prevalent component to modern marketing techniques (Roque & Raposo, 2016), how DMO’s use those tools to market to each generation is critical. Tourists themselves have taken control by posting about their destination experiences (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). Indeed, as this study indicated, the different Instagram personality characteristics will contribute to the eWOM surrounding their travel destinations, whether it is through a more passive sharing, or active interactions with their network. As a result, DMO’s need to be conscious of the information tourists post about their destination, and find ways to highlight the positive and mitigate the negative posts (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). More importantly, destinations need to seek out the right generation of Instagram users based on their organizations goals. A destination that would like a large volume of visitors will seek out the
Conformists and Socially Influenced. While a more unique and rare destination might seek out the Social Return Braggarts. Marketing organizations need to utilize Instagram, by appealing to the different user personalities.

One great example, which specifically benefits DMO’s who capitalize on the socially influenced, is Influencer Marketing. Influencers are online content creators and opinion leaders who can assist brands in influencing consumer consumption (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). DMO’s should ensure they are using the right Influencers to reflect their brand (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). If the marketing organization is able to find an Instagram Influencer with a high number of followers, it increases the likeability of this individual (De Veirman et al., 2017) and consequently the anticipated impact of that individual influencing others to consume (Sokolova & Kedi, 2019). More importantly, the actual tourism and hospitality organizations are not seen as important to users in comparison to an Influencer (Bokunewicz & Shulman, 2017). When it comes to Millennials who are actively engaged with their Instagram accounts and socially influenced to select destinations that they see as trending amongst their network, it offers DMO’s an opportunity to use Instagram Influencers to make their destination appear trendy. So, while Instagram Influencers might not be seen as important to the Social Return Braggart, they certainly offer opportunities to be influential on Millennials and certain members of Generation X who seek out those trending destinations.

Social influences are not all encompassing when an individual is selecting their travel destinations (Wesley et al., 2008). However, their impact as a result of everyday social interactions is changing, and the industry needs to stay on top of what this change means. Given how significant it is for tourists to position themselves positively on social media (Lo & McKecher, 2015), it is unlikely that many of these Instagram posts about the tourist in the
destination will be negative. Rather, tourists are using their destination choices to enhance their
self-image (Lo & McKercher, 2015). In this regard, tourists are influenced to travel to a
destination based on their tendency to conform, be socially influenced, or seek social return
bragging rights. The Social Return Braggart personalities have travel needs defined by their
ability to impress and induce envy. The Conformist and Socially Influenced personalities have
tavel needs defined by their ability to display their alignment with current and aspirational social
groups.

For DMO’s, to have a user actively seek out their travel destination for their next holiday due
to an image that was, or was not, posted by someone in their social network is certainly a
positive outcome. DMO’s need to support Instagram users based on the organizations goal to
either remain a lesser-known and impressive destination, or a frequently travelled one. While
being a consumer who publicizes and communicates their purchases to an audience does not
make the individual an opinion leader, individuals who use social media as a means to project
and communicate their superiority and self-enhancement should still be targeted by companies in
their marketing strategies (Ruvio & Shoham, 2016). Given that the tourist would be interested in
bragging about their tourism experiences in order to gain social return, it provides marketers with
an opportunity to have their destination highlighted in a positive way. Moreover, for destinations
seeking popularity, it would be considered a benefit to have enhanced visibility as a result of the
current method in which users disseminate information online via their network (Tham et al.,
2013). The destination looking to appear trendy would seek out those with a higher tendency to
conform and be socially influenced. The lesser-known destination looking to appear unique
would seek out those who display a greater tendency to brag and obtain social return.
6.2 Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study was able to expand on the recently developed idea of social media users desire to post about their trip experiences with the anticipation of obtaining Social Return (Boley et al., 2018). Additionally, there has not been an empirical tourism related study which utilized bragging as a principle construct, although it has been identified qualitatively (Kerr et al., 2012) and theoretically (Davies & Cairncross, 2013) as an important concept in the destination choice process since the development of social media.

While it was originally predicted that Bragging and Social Return would be their own individual constructs, it was found that there is no statistically significant difference amongst the means of these two constructs ($t=1.53, p>0.10$) and their correlation is statistically significant at ($r=.866, p<0.001$) (See Table 2). As a result, the measurement items representing the two constructs were found to be representing a single concept. Society has socially constructed bragging to be a negative term, often leading to negative impressions of the braggart (Scott & Ravenscroft, 2017; Matley, 2018) and forcing alternative terms to be used. Uniqueness is one which is often sought when looking for an antonym to conformity (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). While the Social Return Braggarts admit to wanting to impress their social network, select destinations which align with their own brand, and be recognized for awe-inspiring travel destinations, they have trouble stating they want to make their network jealous. Jealousy and envy have been conceptualized to have distinct meaning, with jealousy being related to a supposed threat to a relationship and envy being defined by lacking a superior quality to another (Parrott & Smith, 1993). Thus, while we may associate bragging with both envy and jealousy (Davies & Cairncross, 2013; Kerr et al., 2012), the two constructs are distinct. So, while bragging and social return are measuring the same idea, the terms used to represent each have
been socially constructed to mean different things. Bragging being seen as a negative, while social return is almost expected with modern social media use. This study, combined the two terms, indicating that their differences are not significant, simply how society has constructed them is. Going forward, the items used to represent the combined construct of Social Return Bragging can be utilized to capture the idea that users want to be recognized as envy inducing and awe-inspiring by their network for their travel related destination posts.

Additionally, this study can be added to the growing body of literature surrounding destination choice processes (Karl & Reintinger, 2016; Destination Canada, 2016). With social media recognized as an active component throughout the tourists Path to Purchase (See Figure 1), the personality characteristics of a social media user will further influence a consumer to select or reconsider their future travel destinations. In particular, this study highlights how each users individual network is influential on their destination choice process. With no two peoples networks being identical, which destinations users consider is highly dependent on where those in their network are travelling, or not travelling to. Moreover, this study adds to the literature which argues that there is a cycle to the destination choice process, whereby the travel related images posted by the advocates in ones’ network influences the users own decision on future travel destinations (Choe et al., 2017; Destination Canada, 2016).

Lastly, this study was able to expand the discussions that we have surrounding the generational differences which surround social media usage. While previous studies have identified Millennials as the necessary group to seek when it comes to this topic, few studies have looked to Generation X or Baby Boomer generations (Destination Canada, 2015; Hosie, 2017; Henfron, 2018a; Hefron, 2018b). This study was able to highlight how these cohorts are just as likely to use social media when it comes to being influenced. Albeit in ways different to
Millennials. Future studies related to tourism consumption and social media should not exclude these generations, but seek them.
CHAPTER 7: LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study took measures to ensure it could be considered an empirically sound study, there were still limitations.

The sample used includes participant responses from two sources, which were then amalgamated into a single data set. Therefore, this is a limit to the present study’s findings in that the data was not collected from the same source. All of the 31 participants who responded to the Instagram invitation to participate were Millennials. This data containing responses from a younger sample was sought for the sole purposes of subsidizing the older sample which was obtained from the DMO utilized for this study. The large response rate from those who are 60 years or older can be seen as a limitation for this study as it is not reflective of the average age of Instagram users. Future studies should look to collecting responses from a single source to alleviate the problems which can be associated with mixed-method convenience sampling form of data collection. Moreover, a sample which is reflective of the average North American Instagram user would benefit future studies when it comes to generalizing the findings. As such, the implications of this study are limited, and cannot be generalized to reflect all Instagram users. However, the implications of this older study population two things can be taken away. First, older people are using Instagram, highlighting that this tools influence on users consumption may not be limited to younger generations. Secondly, how older Instagram users are impacted by their Instagram use is likely different from younger users.

Relationship statuses of respondents can also be seen as a limitations to the present study’s findings for two reasons. One, couples are likely to make to make initial and final travel related decisions together (Rojas-de-Gracia, Alarcón-Urbistondo & Robles, 2017). Alternatively, a number of questions ask how “friends” influence their choices, but not their significant other.
Therefore, when researchers are using these measurement items in the future, it is recommended that the word friend is replaced by a more holistic term which encompasses all possible individuals in the participants social circle. Generally, future studies should attempt to get a more representative sample of Instagram users both in regards to age and relationship status.

Given the demographics of the respondents was skewed in such a way this is not reflective of the Canadian or American Instagram user population, there is a possibility for Type I and Type II error. In this regard, the participants selected for this study cannot be described as a random sample of North American Instagram users. Also, since it was found that there were no statistical differences between Social Return and Bragging it was argued that these two constructs are measuring the same thing. It is possible that this hypothesis is being accepted by chance. There have only been two studies—one looking at Social Return (Boley et al., 2018) and one looking at Consumer Bragging (Ruvio & Shoham, 2016)—from which these measurement items were derived. Therefore, the impact of both of these constructs, particularly in a tourism context, has not been studied at any great length. That being said, there were a number of tests which were conducted that confirmed they were in essence measuring the same thing.

Additionally, the three hypotheses put forward and supported by this research which argue that Conformity, being Socially Influenced, and Social Return Bragging influence intention to visit a trending destination could be a result of the sample selected and not accurate of the population of Instagram users.

Alternatively, Type II error is potentially evident in the three hypothesis which were not supported. These hypotheses were anticipated to be supported because users who Conform, are Socially Influenced, and seek Social Return Bragging can be recognized by their social networks when they create eWOM and engage with this network. With Willingness to Share not having a
significant positive influence on Conformists and Social Return Braggarts and Intensity of Social Network Use not having a significant positive effect on those who are Socially Influenced, these result could be a attributed of the sample used. A sample reflective of Instagram users in North America could identify that there are significant positive influences, as was originally hypothesized.

As Crompton (1979) recognized, people do not like to admit that they seek “superior” destinations. As a result, there were a number of bragging items which people often did not want to be associated with. Therefore, when measuring bragging, the socially constructed negative connotation associated with the term may impact participant responses. Future studies should attempt to develop measurement items which are reflective of the Social Return Bragging that occurs with the presence of social media and in particular Instagram.

Likewise, some may argue that two items is not sufficient to represent a construct (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Socially Influenced was not able to proceed to the SEM unless two of the four measurement items were removed. Given that there was a strong reliability and validity measurement for this item, it was retained. Conformity was also a two-item construct. Two options were presented to the researchers. Retain an item which was below the factor loading of 0.5 and maintaining a composite reliability above 0.7 and an AVE above 0.5. Or, remove this low loading item, and obtain CR and AVE measurements just below the recommended thresholds. Given that the item was still considered discriminately valid when removing the low loading item, and with both the items representing the factor being above the 0.5 factor loading, this option was selected.

This study also used intention to visit a trending destination and did not measure actual consumption behaviours. Thus, while the participants may have indicated a strong or weak
intention to visit a trending destination, this may not be reflective of actual behaviours. It has been identified that the realized behaviour and intentions of tourists can vary greatly (March & Woodside, 2005). Additionally, the eSurvey was limited in that, participants were never asked whether they had already visited the destination that they selected as being most trending on their Instagram. As a result, their intention to visit the destination may have been impacted if they had already visited the destination.

Future studies have the opportunity to examine alternative ways Willingness to Share and Intensity of Social Network Use impact visit intentions. Given that Intensity of Social Network Use (Ellison et al., 2007; Cortés, 2016) and Willingness to Share (Chow & Chan, 2008; Nusair et al., 2017) have not been used as moderating variables previously, a future study may consider conducting such analyses. Additionally, the information gained from Table 9 indicate Willingness to Share influences visit intentions directly.

Moreover, a future opportunity for this research would be to conduct a Cluster Analysis to better determine the demographics of each user more specifically. While the ANOVA (See Table 10) and the T-Test (See Table 11) were able to identify the characteristics of the different personality characteristics, a Cluster Analysis would enable a better use of the different control variables. Since it was found that younger people were statistically more likely to be socially influenced, additionally, those who are not in a relationship are more likely to be socially influenced, it cannot be assumed that younger people not in a relationship are socially influenced. A cluster analysis would confirm these to be the true characteristics of one who is socially influenced without making assumptions. Previous studies have used a clustering analysis approach to better understand social media users when it comes to the travel and tourism industry (Amaro, Durate, Henriques, 2016; Karl, Reintinger, & Schmude, 2015) by profiling the
different types of users and their intentions for future travel destinations. Therefore, it would be an opportunity for the industry to conduct a similar study as it relates to Instagram users.

Lastly, the personality characteristics used in this study are not all encompassing. There may be others beyond the conformists, socially influenced, and social return braggarts studied here. Researchers who wish to extend the present study’s findings should consider identifying alternative Instagram personality characteristics and determining how their destination choice process is subsequently impacted.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

As one of the first studies in tourism to utilize an Instagram setting, this study provides great insights into how different Instagram users are influenced during their destination choice process. Most notably, it is clear that all generations are active on Instagram and DMO’s should not focus their efforts on Millennials only. Rather, for impressive, awe-inspiring destinations, they should seek Social Return Braggarts who are represented by those born in the Baby Boomer generation. Frequently travelled destinations, seeking large population of visitors should appeal to the Conformists and the Socially Influenced. Instagram Influencers might be a great opportunity to increase visit intentions for these types of trendy destinations.

In addition to contributing to the theoretical understanding of the destination choice process, this study establishes Social Return Bragging, Conformity, and Socially Influenced as important concepts as it relates to social network and tourism consumption behaviours. User’s Instagram network can have just as a significant role in influencing users based on their tendency to conform with their choice of a travel destination as it can in influencing an inclination to seek bragging rights.

Social media, and in particular Instagram, has changed how and why users select the travel destinations they visit. “Consumers use Instagram to access pictures, videos and hashtags relating to the prospective travel,”(Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017:107), enabling tourists with the tools to consistently present an ideal version of themselves (Lo & McKercher, 2015; Instagram, 2018) by choosing “Instagrammable” destinations (Hosie, 2017). However, what defines a destination as “Instagrammable” is likely dependent on the users personality.
References


on September 18th, 2019.


Appendices

Appendix 1: eSurvey

Dear Potential Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research project to investigate how social media use influences our travel choices. This research is being undertaken by researchers at the University of Guelph.

It is important to understand the impact of social media engagement as it becomes an ever growing component of our daily lives. The desire to travel has also increased. This study seeks to understand how people engage with their Instagram account in relation to travel decision-making. In participating in this research, you help us to understand how destination choices are made, providing insights to social media engagement.

Who can participate in the research?

We seek the participation of Instagram users who have travelled for pleasure within the last 2 years.

What choice do I have?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time prior to submitting the survey without giving a reason.

All information collected will be confidential. All information collected will be stored securely with the researchers and kept for a period of one year on the computer of researchers from University of Guelph. At no time will any individual be identified individually in any reports resulting from this study.

What will I be asked to do?

Participants are asked to reflect on their social media usage and their travel experiences. This survey should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete.

What are the risks of participating?

Should the University of Guelph be subpoenaed, the information provided through participating in this eSurvey would by law have to be provided. However, once your responses to questions have been entered for data analysis, it will not be possible to identify participant responses to the participant. Please print off this sheet and keep it for your records so that you may contact the University of Guelph Research Ethics or the Principle Investigator Statia Elliot for any reason.
How will the information collected be used?

Anonymized data may be published in a master’s thesis, peer-reviewed journals, conferences and in industry reports. At no time will participants ever be identified by name. Statistical analysis of anonymized responses will form the core of research generated from this survey. Should participants wish to receive a copy of the text of any publication generated from this data, please contact the Primary Investigator directly at statia@uoguelph.ca.

Questions about ethics?

If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB # 18-12-002), please contact: Director, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606). This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.

What do I need to do to participate?

Once you have had the opportunity to read the previously provided information, if you have any questions please contact the Principle Investigator Statia Elliot at statia@uoguelph.ca.

If you would like to participate, please select the “yes” button below.

Screening Questions

1. Are you 18 years of age or older?
   - Yes
   - No
2. Do you currently have an Instagram account?
   - Yes
   - No
3. Have you taken an out of country trip that consisted of an overnight stay of three or more nights within the last two years?
   - Yes
   - No

Destination Selection

4. Thinking about your recent Instagram feed and Instagram stories, please recall a single travel destination that has been posted about more frequently than others. Regardless of your own experience or views of this destination, which travel destination do you recall seeing most frequently?
   - ____________________
Demographic Questions

5. To which gender do you most identify?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Not listed (please specify):__________
   - Prefer not to answer

6. What is your highest level of educational attainment?
   - Less than high school
   - High school diploma
   - Post high school or college certificate or diploma
   - Undergraduate degree
   - Graduate degree
   - Prefer not to answer

7. What is your individual income before taxes during an annual calendar year?
   a. Under $19,999
   b. $20,000-$39,999
   c. $40,000-$59,999
   d. $60,000-$79,999
   e. $80,000-$99,999
   f. $100,000-$119,999
   g. $120,000 or more
   - Prefer not to answer

8. What is your current relationship status?
   - Single
   - In a committed relationship
   - Married/common law
   - Separated/Divorced
   - Widowed
   - Prefer not to answer

9. What is your current age?
   - 18-23 years old
   - 24-29 years old
   - 30-35 years old
   - 36-41 years old
   - 42-47 years old
   - 48-53 years old
   - 54-59 years old
   - 60 years and older
   - Prefer not to answer
10. Which country do you currently reside within?
   - Canada
   - United States
   - United Kingdom
   - Germany
   - Australia
   - France
   - Other (please specify):__________

11. Which province or territory do you currently reside within? (only presented to those residing within Canada)
   - Alberta
   - British Columbia
   - Manitoba
   - New Brunswick
   - Newfoundland and Labrador
   - Northwest Territories
   - Nova Scotia
   - Nunavut
   - Ontario
   - Prince Edward Island
   - Quebec
   - Saskatchewan
   - Yukon
   - Prefer not to answer

12. Which state do you currently reside within? (Only presented to those who select residing in United States)
   - Alabama
   - Alaska
   - Arizona
   - Arkansas
   - California
   - Colorado
   - Connecticut
   - Delaware
   - Florida
   - Georgia
   - Hawaii
   - Idaho
   - Missouri
   - Nebraska
   - Nevada
   - New Hampshire
   - New Jersey
   - New Mexico
   - New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming
District of Columbia
Prefer not to answer

Instagram Use

13. Which type of device do you use for your Instagram account most frequently?
   o Desktop
   o Smartphone
   o Tablet
   o Other:__________

14. How frequently do you use your Instagram account?
   o Less than monthly
   o Monthly
   o Weekly
   o Every few days
   o Daily
   o Multiple times daily
15. If you use your Instagram account multiple times daily, how many times a day do you use it?
   o Twice
   o Three times
   o Four times
   o Five or more times

16. How much time do you spend on Instagram each time you use it?
   o Less than 4 minutes
   o 5 to 10 minutes
   o 11 to 20 minutes
   o 21 to 30 minutes
   o 31 or more minutes

Conformity

17. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with every statement as best you can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that make me feel good in my social group.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that give me a sense of global belonging.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that make others have a good impression of me.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations that make me feel closer to a contemporary lifestyle.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socially Influenced

18. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with every statement as best you can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would try a new travel destination if my friends posted on Instagram that they have been there.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would try a new travel destination if my friends positively raved about it on Instagram.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would avoid a particular destination if my friends kept posting on Instagram about it. <em>REVERSED</em></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use Instagram to obtain specific views and opinions about a particular destination.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bragging

19. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with every statement as best you can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like to impress other people by showing off the things I buy.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me that other people are jealous of the things I buy.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before I make a purchase, I like to be able to compare my choice with the choices of others.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to choose products which will impress those I know.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to buy products which clearly support the brand image I wish to project is important to me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I select travel destinations, I select unique places where my friends have not been.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I travel, I am able to impress my Instagram followers by posting about my trip.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be recognized as awe-inspiring for the travel destinations that I visit.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Return

20. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with every statement as best you can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me look cool when I post to Instagram.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me more popular when I post to Instagram.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me stand out when I post to Instagram.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid travel destinations which make me look unique. <em>Reversed</em></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make me look savvy when I post to Instagram.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select travel destinations which make others envious of me when I post to Instagram.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Willingness to Share Knowledge

21. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with every statement as best you can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I share my travel experiences on Instagram frequently.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always share my travel related pictures on Instagram.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always share my experience of travel activities on Instagram.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always share my opinion related to travel destinations on Instagram.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intensity of Social Network Use

22. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uploading information about the travel experience I live on Instagram is an important part of my daily routine during and after my trips.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud when people look at and watch the information I upload on Instagram about my travel experiences.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After my trips, using Instagram to talk about my trips is an important activity for me</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel out of touch when I can't log onto my Instagram account during my trips in order to give information about them.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After my trips I feel I am able to give information to a social community that that I am part of on Instagram.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be sorry if my Instagram account was shut down and I couldn't give information about my trips.</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Intention to Visit a Trending Destination

23. For the following questions, please rate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having viewed Instagram posts about (insert destination participant selected at the beginning) I intend to visit the destination in the near future.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing Instagram posts about (insert destination participant selected at the beginning) makes me desire to visit the destination in the near future.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would take (insert destination participant selected at the beginning) into consideration when planning for my future holidays.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>