



## Article

# User-Generated Content and Its Impact on Purchase Intent for Tourism Products: A Comparative Analysis of Millennials and Centennials on TikTok

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**Abstract:** In an increasingly technological society, online social networks are essential to support consumer purchasing decisions, primarily through User Generated Content (UGC). In this research, we look at the influence of UGC on purchase intent applied to the tourism product on the TikTok social network. In this sense, a survey was applied to TikTok users aged between 18 and 42 to compare their behaviour with that of the two generations: Millennials and Centennials. The results indicate a relationship of influence between credibility and the usefulness of information and between usefulness and social influence on the intention to buy tourism products and services. In addition, a comparison was made between the results of the sample of individuals belonging to the Millennial Generation and the sample of individuals belonging to the Centennial Generation, with the main discrepancy in the results being the relationship between the need for information and the usefulness of information. These insights pave the way for further research aimed at establishing more robust conclusions in this area.



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**Keywords:** marketing; tourism; social media; user-generated content; purchase intention; TikTok; millennials; centennials

## 1. Introduction

The advent of the Internet has transformed the distribution of tourist information and the ways in which consumers plan and engage with tourism products [1]. As of 2023, billions of individuals actively use social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, with the global user count reaching approximately 4.89 billion [2]. These social networks primarily serve as platforms for the generation and sharing of User Generated Content (UGC) [3]. This type of content significantly influences consumer behaviour, as users actively seek out and rely on it to assist in their purchasing decisions [4]. This reliance is particularly pertinent for tourism products, which are often challenging to evaluate prior to consumption [5].

The significance of this study stems from the critical role of purchase intention in predicting actual consumer behaviour regarding tourism products [6]. Additionally, there exists a research gap concerning the effects of UGC on purchase intention, specifically within the TikTok platform, likely due to its relatively recent emergence in the social media landscape. This gap represents a compelling rationale for focusing our investigation on TikTok, as it allows us to explore how this platform can be integrated into smart environments to enhance consumer engagement and decision-making processes. By examining the

interplay between UGC, purchase intention, and smart environments, this article aims to contribute valuable insights into how these elements can be leveraged to optimise tourism experiences and improve consumer satisfaction.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the influence of UGC shared on TikTok on the intention to purchase tourism products and services, as well as to examine the relationships between purchase intention and its antecedents. To achieve this, we have developed an eXtension of the Information Acceptance Model (XIAM). Furthermore, we aim to analyse the differences in behaviour between consumers from the Millennial and Centennial Generations, specifically investigating whether the influence of UGC on purchase intention varies significantly between these two demographic groups.

The structure of the article is organised into four main sections, excluding this introduction. The first section presents a literature review that forms the foundation for the methodology and conceptual model. The second section delves into the data collection techniques employed alongside the proposed conceptual model and accompanying research hypotheses. The third section is dedicated to the analysis and discussion of the results. Finally, the concluding section summarises the key findings, discusses the limitations of the study, and offers suggestions for future research.

## 2. Tourism Consumer Behaviour

We live in an era of digital transformation in which the modern consumer is progressively more informed throughout their purchasing decision process. Among the various sources of information available to the user, online social networks are increasingly becoming prominent. This type of social platform allows the creation and sharing of user-generated content, also called UGC (User Generated Content) [7]. UGC can be defined as “any type of text, data or action carried out by users of online digital systems, published and disseminated by the same user through independent channels, that incurs an expressive or communicative effect either in an individual manner or combined with other contributions” [8] (p. 109). The UGC, also called reviews, as they represent consumer opinions and experiences about products and services shared with other potential buyers, has a relevant role in the purchasing decision process [9].

### 2.1. Purchasing Decision Process in Tourism

According to Kotler and Armstrong [10], the consumer Decision-Making Process is divided into five phases: recognising the need, searching for Information, evaluating alternatives, purchasing decisions and the post-purchase. The need recognition phase occurs when the consumer feels the need for a product or is drawn to the existence of a specific product due to their motivations. The consumer seeks relevant and valuable Information to make an informed decision when searching for Information. In the alternative evaluation phase, the consumer examines his options to choose the best alternative. The purchasing phase involves the transaction of the selected product. Finally, the post-purchase phase includes, among others, the possible return of the product or recommendation of it through online social networks [11].

The tourist’s purchasing process is characterised by additional complexity due to the specific characteristics of the tourist product. Namely, due to the combination of tangible elements, such as a hotel room or tickets to a museum, and intangible elements, such as the provision of various services; the variation in complexity depending on the product/service (an overnight stay in a hotel versus a month-long trip around the world); the intangibility of purchasing an experience; the influence of the tourist himself on the experience, through his attitudes, state of mind and expectations, as well as the influence of his interaction with other travellers, when applicable; and the impact of external factors, beyond the control

of the tourist or the company providing the product/service, such as weather conditions, strikes or pandemics [12].

One of the most popular theories in studying tourist motivations is Push and Pull, initially defined by Dann [13]. As the name suggests, tourists are “pushed” for internal reasons—socio-psychological—to travel and “pulled”/attracted by external reasons related to the destination—attributes of the destination. The push factor is related to tourists’ desire to travel, and the pull factor is the choice of destination [14].

In the tourism sector, tourist motivations are seen as determinants of tourist activities concerning reasons for travelling, selecting a specific destination, and overall satisfaction with the trip [15]. The study by Nguyen and Tong [16] concluded that passive access to tourist UGC considerably influences potential travellers’ desire to visit a destination. In turn, desire, the psychological state of motivation about an experience or stimulus that will hopefully be satisfactory, is considered a determinant of behavioural intention because it is the source and reason for behavioural motivations.

## 2.2. Search for Tourist Information on Social Media

According to Kaplan and Haenlein, online social networks are “a group of applications hosted on the Internet that are based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” [7] (p. 61). More recently, they defined them as: “. . . a technology-centric—but not entirely technological—ecosystem in which a diverse and complex set of behaviours, interactions, and exchanges involving various types of interconnected actors (individuals and firms, organisations, and institutions) can occur. Social media is pervasive, widely used, and culturally relevant [17] (p. 80).

Social media platforms have changed how travellers search, discover, access and trust tourism information and how they produce content about this sector [18]. Given the possibility of creating and sharing UGC related to travel, such as user opinions and experiences, these Web 2.0 applications have also gained increasing popularity as a means of sharing and searching for information in the tourism sector, suggesting and delivering content in a personalised through machine learning-based recommendation algorithms [1,19].

UGC is seen as an objective and reliable source of information for travellers in the planning phase, and it may even influence their decision-making [18]. In the purchase decision phase, social networks also play an essential role since purchasing intangible products, such as tourism, generally depends on available Information [20].

There are several reasons tourists should share tourist UGC. However, we can indicate that the main reason is to help others make better travel decisions and prevent them from making bad purchases of tourist products/services [21].

In the tourism sector, tourists trust UGCs such as recommendations, impressions or reviews more than legitimate data [22]. According to Mir and Rehman [23], trust is partly associated with the perception that UGC is non-commercial, which means that generators of this type of content are considered impartial when judging the product/service, which can be useful in different phases of the consumer’s purchasing decision: from information search to evaluating alternatives and from purchase to post-purchase [24].

Previous studies suggest that a high percentage of travellers turn to UGC when choosing a travel destination to visit for the first time, as well as when visiting international destinations [18] and that the use of social networks or UGC can result in purchase intention and decision on the part of the traveller [25].

TikTok is a social platform created by the Chinese company Bytedance in September 2017, the result of a merger with the Musical.ly app: a short-length video-sharing app (up to 15 s) in which users lip-sync songs of your choice [26,27]. In 2022, it was the mobile

application with the highest number of downloads worldwide: 672 million and in 2023, the platform will have an estimated 834.3 million global users [1,28].

This social network is a short-form video content-sharing app built around UGC [29]. App users can create creative and fun video content based on their interests using various custom music, filters, and effects [30]. The primary users of this platform are Centennials (also called Generation Z) and Millennials (also called Generation Y) [1,28].

Millennials (also called Generation Y or Gen Y) comprise, for this study, all individuals born between 1982 and 1999 [31]. The designation Millennial arose since, like Gen Z, they grew up in a digital age, a manifestation of the approaching new millennium [32]. They are considered individualistic, tech-savvy, well-educated, less naive and better informed than previous generations [33].

Centennials (also called Generation Z or Gen Z) are considered, for this study, all those born after the Millennial generation, that is, from the 2000s onwards [34]. It is considered an empathetic, pragmatic, cynical, resourceful, self-protective and wise generation [35].

It is undeniable how much the Internet and social media have influenced the lives of Gen Z, as they have shaped their attitudes and thoughts, expanded their point of view, and even developed a certain scepticism among the generation [36]. They were the first to grow in digital communication, and, therefore, they are considered true digital natives [37]. Hence, in contrast to previous generations, they prefer this type of digital communication to traditional [34]. Their experience with technology is an advantageous instrument [38] in searching for information and purchasing tourist products, such as hotels and flights.

According to Ma et al. [39], satisfaction best explains why users continue to use TikTok, which is directly influenced by perceived usefulness and social and entertainment values. The possibility of creating personalised content induces a sense of participation and accomplishment in users, contributing to their loyalty to the application. Establishing social relationships with the TikTok user community is also an explanatory factor [30].

From this perspective, more and more marketers recognise the potential of this online social network to increase their interaction with the public (especially Generation Y and Z) and their sales, namely through user-generated content (UGC).

### *2.3. Purchase Intention in the Tourism Sector (Through Social Media)*

Intention can be defined as “the determination to act in a certain way” [40] (p. 1421). The importance of purchase intention for professionals and researchers in the field of marketing and tourism is based on the fact that intention is considered the most crucial predictor of behaviour; that is, the intention to purchase a product is a good indicator of behaviour actual purchase of that same product [6].

Due to the relevance of this variable, it is necessary to understand its antecedents and their influence on it, namely the need for information, perceived credibility, perceived risk, social influence, and usefulness of information.

#### *2.3.1. Social Influence*

In addition to the variables presented previously, consumer behaviour is also influenced by various social factors, such as online social networks, which are web-based applications that allow users to communicate and share knowledge and information [41] (p. 48) and/or family [10]. Social influence is the process by which individuals’ thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviours change due to interactions with other individuals or groups of individuals [42].

Kelman’s social influence theory [43] allows us to better understand social influence through compliance, identification, and internalisation. Conformity represents obedience to system standards and rules. It occurs when an individual accepts the influence of

another person to obtain a positive reaction from the latter, such as obtaining approval or avoiding disapproval. Identification occurs when an individual accepts the influence of another person or group to establish or maintain a satisfactory relationship with a sense of self-definition (“satisfying self-defining relationship”) [43] (p. 4). This relationship can be based on reciprocity, in which the individual seeks to meet the other person’s expectations, or on a relationship in which the individual sees the other person as a model and intends to assume their role (or part of it). Finally, we have internalisation, which occurs when the individual accepts the influence of another person because they consider it to be congruent with their own value system [43,44].

Online social networks constitute an environment conducive to social influence, allowing users to share their preferences for certain brands or encourage their recognition, which could influence consumers’ decision-making process [45,46]. Previous studies prove that social influence exerted through online social networks affects consumer purchasing behaviour, namely impulsive purchasing behaviour, that is, purchasing a product without planning [47] and purchase intention [48]. In this sense, the research hypotheses considered are presented below:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Social influence positively influences purchase intention.*

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Social influence positively influences the usefulness of information.*

### 2.3.2. Information Needs

According to Wilson [49] (p. 2), a need can be defined as “a subjective experience that occurs only in the mind of the person in need and, consequently, is not directly accessible to an observer”. Needs can be triggered by internal stimuli, such as hunger, or external stimuli, such as advertising [10].

The need for information is not considered a primary need like food or sleep but rather a secondary need, and it “is often considered the motivating force behind a user’s action to seek information” [50] (p. 2).

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which focuses on why users choose and use certain media types, theorises that information needs to consist of seeking news and facts [51]. Yang and Ha [52] argue that due to the popularisation of online social networks, advice, recommendations, and opinions should also be considered as information needs.

As a result of a need felt by an information user, information-seeking behaviour arises. To satisfy this need, the individual turns to formal or informal sources of Information. If you are successful in your search, you use the information found to fully or partially satisfy the need felt; otherwise, you will have to repeat the search process [53]. Wilson [49] divided information-seeking behaviour into four categories: passive attention, passive investigation, active investigation, and ongoing investigation. Attention and passive investigation occur when an individual acquires knowledge without intentionally seeking it. An active or ongoing investigation occurs when an active and intentional search for information occurs.

Online social networks are essential for sharing and searching for information, constituting a source for resolving information needs [53]. Due to the abundance of UGC in its various formats, authors Xiang and Fesenmaier [19] (p. 111) believe that travellers’ information needs will become, for the most part, needs for diversity and innovation. In this sense, the research hypothesis considered is presented below:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *The need for information (NI) positively influences the usefulness of information (UI).*

### 2.3.3. Information Credibility

According to Wathen and Burkell [54], the credibility of information is the initial factor in an individual's persuasion process. Ayeh et al. [55] (p. 439) conceptualise credibility as a two-dimensional construct in which trustworthiness and expertise constitute two dimensions. Trustworthiness refers to the level of confidence that the recipient of information attributes to the communicator's intention to convey statements that he or she believes to be true, and expertise refers to the extent to which the creator of UGC is regarded by the recipient of the information as a source of truthful statements, given their expertise on the topic in question [55].

Consumers trust UGC as they believe that users convey not only the positive characteristics of the product but also its negative characteristics [56]. Additionally, creators of user-generated content are considered impartial in evaluating products and services, given their lack of commercial interest [57]. Therefore, in the consumer's view, UGC is considered more credible and useful [23]. In this sense, the research hypothesis considered is presented below:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *Information credibility positively influences the information usefulness.*

### 2.3.4. Usefulness of Information

Perceived Usefulness was initially defined by Davis [58] (p. 320) as "the degree of a person's conviction that the use of a particular system will improve his or her job performance. This follows from the definition of the word useful: that it can be used advantageously. Recently, Kusyanti et al. [59] (p. 381) adapted the original definition to the context of online social networks: "the social network user's degree of conviction in how using a specific social network helps him achieve his goal".

In the present study, we consider that the usefulness of information refers to the extent to which the user believes that the information available (UGC) on the TikTok platform is useful in their decision-making process to purchase tourist products/services.

The usefulness of UGC information has become the target of investigation because UGC provides valuable information to support consumers' purchasing decisions [4]. In the tourism sector, the study by Agag and El-Masry [60] concluded that the usefulness of the information in online travel communities, such as blogs and forums, has a positive impact on purchase intention, as well as participation in these communities through the production of positive eWOM content Wang and Li [4] concluded that the perceived usefulness of travel review websites, such as TripAdvisor, also has a positive influence on travellers' own purchasing decisions. In this sense, the research hypothesis considered is presented below:

**H<sub>5</sub>:** *The usefulness of information positively influences purchase intention.*

### 2.3.5. Perceived Risk

According to Featherman and Pavlou [61], Perceived Risk can be conceptualised as a feeling of uncertainty associated with possible negative consequences after using a product or service. For Maziriri and Chuchu [62], it is the size of the risk that the consumer perceives in their purchasing decision and/or the possible consequences of a bad decision.

According to Mitchell [63] and Garner [64], there are six types of perceived risk: Social Risk, Financial Risk, Physical Risk, Functional Risk, Time and Psychological Risk. Social Risk refers to the possibility of creating a negative social image of the consumer due to their choice. Financial Risk is the risk of not obtaining the best monetary compensation. Physical Risk refers to the possibility that the purchase could endanger the consumer's health. Performance Risk is the risk that purchase performance will not lead to consumer satisfaction. Time Risk deals with the risk of lost time. Finally, Psychological Risk refers to

the possibility of the performance or selection of the service/product negatively affecting the consumer’s self-image or peace of mind.

However, due to the subjective quality of perceived risk, each risk dimension could have a different weight/influence depending on the consumer, and monetary risk may be more influential for one and psychological risk for another [65].

Tourism products, such as airline tickets, vacation packages, or hotel accommodations, are associated with a greater perceived risk than tangible products [66], as tourists cannot find out about product quality a priori [20]. However, it is possible to reduce this risk through so-called risk-relievers. Roselius [67] and Lin et al. [66] defined risk-relievers as any action initiated by a buyer or seller and used as a strategy to reduce perceived risk, including Word-of-Mouth. The greater the perceived risk, the greater the need for risk relievers [66]. According to Lin et al. [66], eWOM could also be accepted as a risk-reliever, and given that the concepts of eWOM and UGC are considered interchangeable in the context of hospitality and tourism [25], UGC could also be accepted as a risk-reliever. In this sense, the research hypothesis considered is presented below:

**H<sub>6</sub>:** *Perceived risk influences purchase intention.*

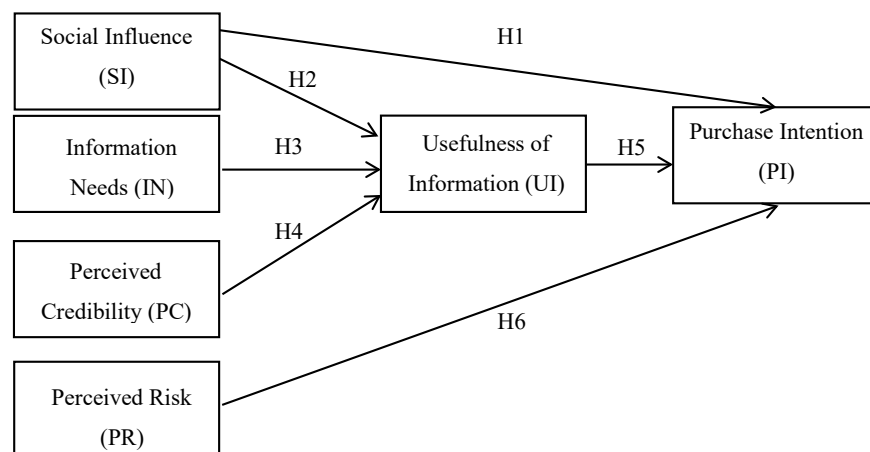
### 3. Methodology

Taking into account the nature of the study, the approach will be quantitative, as the aim is to “measure opinions, reactions, sensations, habits and attitudes, etc. of a universe (target audience) through a sample that represents it” [68] (p. 7).

Alongside quantitative methodology, a questionnaire survey was chosen as a data collection instrument. The responses to the questionnaire that were considered valid were then analysed using the structural equation model (SEM) and the SmartPLS 4 Software.

#### 3.1. Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses

This research aims to understand how UGC influences the purchase intention (PI) of tourist products and services on the TikTok platform by observing the variables: need for information (NI), perceived credibility (PC), usefulness of information (UI), perceived risk (PR), and social influence (SI), presented in Figure 1, that constituted the research model designated by XIAM (eXtension of the Information Acceptance Model).



**Figure 1.** Research Model XIAM. Source: Own elaboration.

In developing the model, elements of the IACM Model (Information Acceptance Model) were considered, namely, the relationship between the variables of information needs and perceived credibility and the usefulness of information and the relationship between the usefulness of information and the intention to purchase [69]; as well as the UTAUT Model (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) with the incorporation of the social influence variable [70]. The variable perceived risk was also incorporated in relation to purchase intention, based on the models proposed by the authors Milan et al. [71], in which perceived risk is considered a possible determinant of purchase intention, and Pentz et al. [72], who found an influential relationship between perceived risk (more significant in financial and social risk) and purchase intention.

The IACM model introduced by Erkan and Evans [69] (p. 50) suggests that to understand the influence of eWOM information on consumers' purchase intention, it is necessary to observe not only the characteristics of eWOM as well as consumer behaviour regarding this type of information. This model is an extension of the IAM model (Information Adoption Model), introduced by Sussman and Siegal [73], which allows a better understanding of which characteristics of eWOM influence its adoption, with the integration of part of the TRA model (Theory of Reasoned Action), introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen [74], referring to consumer behaviour regarding eWOM.

The UTAUT model developed by Venkatesh et al. [70] (p. 447) seeks to explain which variables lead to the intention and subsequent behaviour of using new technologies, considering four variables as important direct determinants of behavioural intention and usage behaviour: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions.

Following the proposed model, six research hypotheses were formulated, presented below:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Social influence positively influences purchase intention.*

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Social influence positively influences the usefulness of information.*

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *The need for information positively influences the usefulness of information.*

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *Information credibility positively influences information usefulness.*

**H<sub>5</sub>:** *The usefulness of information positively influences purchase intention.*

**H<sub>6</sub>:** *Perceived risk influences purchase intention.*

### 3.2. Research Instrument

To formulate each of the questionnaire research questions, questions from previous studies were adapted to the context of this study. The item's Information needs, Perceived Credibility, Usefulness of information, and Purchase intention were adapted from the study by Erkan and Evans [69]. The questions for the Perceived Risk variable were adapted from the models by Milan et al. [71] and Pentz et al. [72], and the social influence questions were adapted from the UTAUT model by Venkatesh et al. [70].

After the questionnaire was created, a pre-test or pilot questionnaire was carried out, with five participants with characteristics corresponding to the population under study [75]. After completing the pre-test, the necessary revisions were made based on the participants' input, and the survey was distributed in its final form.

### 3.3. Sample and Data Collection

The target population of this study was Portuguese users of the TikTok platform aged between 18 and 42 years old.

The distribution of the final survey was carried out online, on online social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, through private messages to users who were part of the study population sample, publications on this author's/personal social networks, and publications in sharing groups research for academic purposes. The choice of these platforms for distribution was mainly related to their reach and ease of sharing the research access link, as well as, in the case of TikTok, its relevance for the study since this is the platform considered in this study.

The response collection period took place from May 2023 to June 2023, and during this period, it was possible to collect 245 responses, among which, after cleaning the collected data, 236 were considered valid.

### 3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

After collecting the data, they were cleaned in Excel, eliminating invalid responses.

Next, data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Model (SEM) methods using the SmartPLS 4 software.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sociodemographic Profile of the Sample

The analysis will be carried out globally and by generation—Millennial Generation (24 to 42 years old) and Centennial Generation (18 to 23 years old)—to identify generational differences. A total of 245 responses were collected, of which 236 were considered valid, 169 respondents belonged to Generation Z, and 67 belonged to the Millennial Generation. Regarding the gender of the total group, 76.3% identified themselves as female, 23.3% as male, and 0.4% preferred not to discriminate their gender, as shown in Table 1. Of the total respondents belonging to the Millennial generation, 74.6% were female, 23.9% were male, and 1.5% preferred “not to say”. In the Centennial group, 76.9% identify as female and 23.1% as male, with no respondents in this group who preferred not to discriminate their gender.

**Table 1.** Gender of Respondents. Source: Own elaboration.

Gender	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
Female	76.9%	74.6%	76.3%
Male	23.1%	23.9%	23.3%
I prefer not to say	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding marital status, presented in Table 2, we have that, in the total group, 96.6% of respondents are single, 3.0% are married, and 0.4% are divorced. Millennials interviewed were 88.1% single, 10.4% married, and 1.5% divorced. In the centennial group, 100.0% of respondents state that their marital status is single.

**Table 2.** Marital Status of Respondents. Source: Own elaboration.

Marital Status	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
Married	0.0%	10.4%	3.0%
Divorced	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%
Single	100.0%	88.1%	96.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Concerning educational qualifications are presented in Table 3. The majority of the total group (43.3%) have a bachelor’s degree, 29.9% have a high school education, 25.4% have postgraduate training, and only 0.4% have primary education. In the millennial group, most respondents have a bachelor’s degree (43.3%), followed by High School, corresponding to 29.9%. This is followed by respondents with postgraduate training (25.4%) and primary education (1.5%). In the centennial group, more than half of the respondents have a bachelor’s degree (50.9%), followed by 27.8% with high school education and 21.3% with postgraduate training.

**Table 3.** The educational level of respondents. Source: Own elaboration.

Education Level	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
Elementary Education	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%
High School	27.8%	29.9%	28.4%
Postgraduate training (Postgraduate. Master’s. Doctorate)	21.3%	25.4%	22.5%
Undergraduate	50.9%	43.3%	48.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The variable in Table 4 presents data relating to the respondents’ professional occupations. In the total group, 35.6% are students, followed by 32.6% working as salaried workers. 23.3% are student workers. 4.2% are self-employed, and the same percentage of respondents (4.2%) are unemployed. Millennials are mostly salaried workers (53.7%), followed by 25.4% who claim to be student workers, 9.0% are self-employed, 7.5% are students, and 4.5% are unemployed. Centennial respondents are mostly students (46.7%), followed by a percentage of 24.3% working for others, followed by 22.5% of student workers, 4.1% claim to be unemployed, and 2.4% are self-employed.

**Table 4.** Professional Occupation of Respondents. Source: Own elaboration.

Professional Occupation	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
Unemployed	4.1%	4.5%	4.2%
Student	46.7%	7.5%	35.6%
Employee	24.3%	53.7%	32.6%
Self-Employed	2.4%	9.0%	4.2%
Student worker	22.5%	25.4%	23.3%
Total Geral	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The geographic location of most respondents is in Portugal (only 4.7% live abroad). The most significant groups are Faro (35.6% of respondents), Lisbon (14.4%), Aveiro (13.1%), and Coimbra (9.3%).

*4.2. Content Consumption on TikTok and Tourist Product Preferences*

As can be seen in Table 5, 43.2% of respondents in the total sample spend up to 30 min a day on TikTok; 35.2% spend between 1 and 2 h a day on TikTok; 11.9% spend between 2 and 3 h a day; and 9.7% spend more than 3 h a day. Most millennials (62.7%) spend up to 30 min a day on TikTok, followed by 29.9% who spend between 1 and 2 h a day; 4.5% spend between 2 and 3 h a day, and only 3.0% more than 3 h a day on the platform. The Centennials sample revealed that 37.3% spend between 1 and 2 h a day on TikTok, 35.5% spend up to 30 min a day, 14.8% spend between 2 and 3 h a day, and 12.4% more than 3 h a day.

**Table 5.** TikTok frequency use. Source: Ow elaboration.

How Often Do You Use the Social Network TikTok?	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
Up to 30 min daily	35.5%	62.7%	43.2%
Between 1 and 2 h a day	37.3%	29.9%	35.2%
Between 2 and 3 h a day	14.8%	4.5%	11.9%
More than 3 h a day	12.4%	3.0%	9.7%

In the total sample, respondents say they view tourist content on TikTok “Often/Frequently” (34.7%), “Infrequently” (39.0%), “Daily/Very common” (9.3%), and “Never/Rarely” (16.9%). Millennials say they view tourist content on TikTok “Often/Frequently” (23.9%), “Infrequently” (43.3%), “Daily/Very common” (6.0%), and “Never/Rarely” (26.9%). The Centennials. in turn. say they view this type of content “Frequently/Frequently” (39.1%), “Infrequently” (37.3%), “Daily/Very common” (10.7%), and “Never/Rarely” (13.0%), shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Frequency of TikTok content viewing related to tourism. Source: Own elaboration.

How Often Do You View Tourist Content on TikTok?	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
Frequently/Frequently	39.1%	23.9%	34.7%
Infrequently	37.3%	43.3%	39.0%
Daily/Very common	10.7%	6.0%	9.3%
Never/Rarely	13.0%	26.9%	16.9%

When asked which tourist products they feel most influenced to purchase (Tickets to events. Hotel accommodation. Airline tickets. Holiday packages, or excursions), the results of which are presented in Table 7, respondents from the total group responded “Yes” to: “Tickets for events” (58.1%); followed by “Hotel accommodation” (49.2%); Airline Tickets (26.3%); “Vacation Packages” (25.0%); and “Excursions” (11.0%). Millennials responded “Yes” to: “Hotel accommodation” (47.8%), followed by “Event tickets” (40.3%), “Vacation Packages” (28.4%), Airline Tickets (23.9%), and “Excursions” (10.5%). Centennials responded “Yes” to: “Event tickets” (65.1%), followed by “Hotel accommodation” (49.7%), Airline Tickets (27.2%), “Vacation Packages” (23.7%), and “Excursions” (11.2%), according to Table 7.

**Table 7.** Tourist products are the products that people feel are most influenced to buy. Source: Own elaboration.

Tourist Products that you Feel Most Influenced to Buy: Tickets for Events (e.g., Musical Shows, Festivals, Among Others)	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
No	34.9%	59.7%	42.0%
Yes	65.1%	40.3%	58.1%
Tourist products that you feel most influenced to buy: Accommodation in hotels	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
No	50.3%	52.2%	50.9%
Yes	49.7%	47.8%	49.2%

**Table 7.** *Cont.*

Tourist products that you feel most influenced to buy: Airline Tickets	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
No	72.8%	76.1%	73.7%
Yes	27.2%	23.9%	26.3%
Tourist products that you feel most influenced to buy: Holiday Packages	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
No	76.3%	71.6%	75.0%
Yes	23.7%	28.4%	25.0%
Tourist products that you feel most influenced to buy: Excursions	Centennials	Millennials	Overall Total
No	88.8%	89.6%	89.0%
Yes	11.2%	10.5%	11.0%

4.3. Evaluation of SEM Models (Structural Equations Modeling)

SmartPLS 4 Software was used to evaluate the measurement model, which allows data analysis based on structural equation modelling (SEM—Structural Equations Modelling). According to Pinto [76], A PLS-SEM Model (Partial Least Square—Structural Equations Modelling) must be evaluated at two different times. Firstly, the measurement model must be evaluated in a second moment, and the structural model must be evaluated.

4.3.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

According to Pinto [76], evaluating a reflective measurement model involves testing internal consistency (reliability) and convergent and discriminant validity. Given that the present study intends to compare data analysis between two generations. We will analyse both results of evaluating the consistency and validity of the measurement model simultaneously. Tables 8 and 9 show, respectively, the results relating to internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Internal Consistency) and convergent validity (AVE) of the Millennial and Centennial groups.

**Table 8.** Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity (Millennials). Source: Own elaboration.

Latent Variables: Millennials	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability: Rho A	Composite Reliability: Rho C
PC	0.912	0.916	0.938
SI	0.865	0.892	0.908
NI	0.774	15.874	0.827
PI	0.865	0.890	0.917
PR	0.817	1.034	0.879
UI	0.883	0.886	0.945

**Table 9.** Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity (Centennials). Source: Own elaboration.

Latent Variables: Centennials	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability: Rho A	Composite Reliability: Rho C
PC	0.820	0.836	0.880
SI	0.811	0.824	0.876
NI	0.735	0.746	0.882
PI	0.833	0.862	0.899
PR	0.810	0.962	0.866
UI	0.820	0.823	0.917

According to Henseler et al. [77], the first criterion to be evaluated in a reflective measurement model is internal consistency and can be tested using Cronbach’s Alpha criterion, whose reference value must be greater than 0.6 to be considered acceptable and greater than 0.7 desirably [78]. Alternatively, it can be tested using the composite internal consistency criterion (Rho A and Rho C), whose acceptable value is 0.7 and desirable value is 0.9 [77]. In the context of this study, we chose to test the constructions using both criteria.

By observing Table 8 (Millennials) and Table 9 (Centennials), it is possible to confirm that. The Cronbach Alpha measurement criterion, as the composite internal consistency criterion, is acceptable for both generations under study since they present values greater than 0.6 and 0.7, respectively.

To assess convergent validity, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) measurement criterion is used, which, according to Hair et al. [78], must be greater than or equal to 0.5 to be considered sufficient. When it is, it means that the latent variable explains, on average, more than half of the variance of its indicators.

All variables pass the convergent validity test given that all values are greater than 0.5, as shown in Table 8 (Millennials) and Table 9 (Centennials), being therefore in accordance with the evaluated metric reference values (AVE > 0.5).

According to Pinto [76] (p. 48), the purpose associated with the discriminant validity test “is that, if two theoretical concepts are different, then the indicators that measure them must be sufficiently distinct”. In other words, evaluate whether the constructs are truly distinct from each other. In this third phase, discriminant validity will be assessed using three criteria: the Fornell and Larcker criterion, the cross-loadings criterion, and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Index.

According to Henseler [77] and Fornell and Larcker [79], for the Fornell and Larcker criterion to be considered valid, the AVE of each latent variable must be greater than the highest squared correlation of that latent variable with any other. Following Table 10 (Millennials) and Table 11 (Centennials), it is possible to verify that the criterion is valid as the first value in each column is always the highest.

**Table 10.** Fornell and Larcker Criteria (Millennials). Source: Own elaboration.

Millennials	PC	SI	NI	PI	PR	UI
PC	0.890					
SI	0.639	0.845				
NI	0.141	0.098	0.844			
PI	0.657	0.747	0.231	0.887		
PR	0.210	0.090	0.063	0.015	0.785	
UI	0.736	0.631	0.120	0.641	0.154	0.946

**Table 11.** Fornell and Larcker Criteria (Centennials). Source: Own elaboration.

Centennials	PC	SI	NI	PI	PR	UI
PC	0.806					
SI	0.554	0.800				
NI	0.123	0.154	0.889			
PI	0.512	0.664	0.129	0.865		
PR	−0.071	0.009	−0.106	−0.065	0.832	
UI	0.645	0.691	0.244	0.586	0.022	0.921

According to Henseler et al. [77], so that the Heterotrait–Monotrait Index is considered adequate, it must be less than 0.90. Therefore, based on the results presented in Table 12 (Millennials) and Table 13 (Centennials), the HTMT Ratio is considered adequate since the values for both groups of samples are less than 0.9.

**Table 12.** Ratio Heterotrait–Monotrait (Millennials). Source: Own elaboration.

Millennials	PC	SI	NI	PI	PR	UI
PC						
SI	0.695					
NI	0.138	0.119				
PI	0.726	0.84	0.164			
PR	0.158	0.145	0.188	0.098		
UI	0.817	0.697	0.143	0.717	0.066	

**Table 13.** Ratio Heterotrait–Monotrait (Centennials). Source: Own elaboration.

Centennials	PC	SI	NI	PI	PR	UI
PC						
SI	0.650					
NI	0.162	0.190				
PI	0.606	0.791	0.162			
PR	0.149	0.092	0.123	0.066		
UI	0.763	0.833	0.313	0.683	0.048	

Once the necessary tests for internal consistency and the convergent and discriminant validity of the proposed model have been carried out, whose criteria were considered valid, it is possible to move on to the next phase of evaluating SEM Models: the evaluation of the Structural Model.

#### 4.3.2. Structural Model Assessment

Analysing the values of the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  of the most significant endogenous latent variables of the model should be the first step in evaluating the structural model [76] (p. 57). Accordingly, the procedures for assessing the structural model include assessing the model’s explanatory capacity by analysing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and assessing the prediction capacity by utilising the Cohen indicator ( $f^2$ ) and the estimates for coefficients (Path coefficients) through bootstrapping.

For Millennials, the UI and PI have an  $R^2$  of 0.586 and 0.616, respectively, while for Centennials, the UI and PI have an  $R^2$  of 0.593 and 0.477, respectively. These are the two endogenous latent variables.  $R^2$  values of 0.20 are regarded as high in the area of consumer behaviour research, per Hair [78]. The  $R^2$  of both endogenous latent variables (UI and PI) for the two study groups (Millennials and Centennials) are regarded as high as the current research falls within this theme.

We immediately proceeded to the second component of assessing the model’s predictive capacity: the effect size; the Cohen indicator [76] evaluates whether a latent variable’s omission significantly affects the endogenous latent variable [78].

According to Chin [80],  $f^2$  values of 0.02 are considered small, 0.15 considered medium, and 0.35 considered large. Table 14 refers to the millennial group, and Table 14 refers to the Centennials,  $f^2$  values whose effects were considered moderate and high are presented.

**Table 14.** Bootstrapping Results (Millennials). Source: Own elaboration.

		Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	p Values	Hypothesis
H <sub>1</sub>	SI → PI	0.575	0.58	0.092	6.227	0.000	Supported the influence
H <sub>2</sub>	SI → UI	0.271	0.275	0.096	2.822	0.005	Supported the influence
H <sub>3</sub>	NI → UI	0.015	0.033	0.102	0.143	0.886	Not supported
H <sub>4</sub>	PC → UI	0.561	0.558	0.119	4.733	0.000	Supported the influence
H <sub>5</sub>	UI → PI	0.284	0.271	0.121	2.352	0.019	Supported the influence
H <sub>6</sub>	PR → PI	−0.101	−0.089	0.084	1.194	0.232	Not supported

Consequently, the PI has a large effect on UI ( $f^2 = 0.445 > 0.35$ ), and SI has a large effect on PI ( $f^2 = 0.516 > 0.35$ ). Considering the results of the Centennials, PC has a moderate effect on UI ( $f^2 = 0.235 < 0.35$ ); SI has a moderate effect on PI ( $f^2 = 0.245 < 0.35$ ); and SI has a large effect on UI ( $f^2 = 0.366 > 0.35$ ).

Lastly, individual analysis of the coefficients (Path coefficients) is carried out; according to Henseler [77], it provides a partial empirical validation of the relationships considered in the hypotheses between latent variables. The significance of the coefficient (*p*-value) will depend on its standard error, which can be obtained through bootstrapping.

In this context, a significance level of 5% was considered so that the corresponding critical value would be 1.96; for the test to be considered valid, it must be greater than 1.96 or  $p < 0.05$  [78].

As can be seen in Table 14, referring to the bootstrapping data of the Millennials sample, we have the hypotheses H<sub>3</sub> (SI has a positive influence on PI), H<sub>3</sub> (SI has a positive influence on UI), H<sub>6</sub> (PI has a positive influence on UI) and H<sub>1</sub> (UI has a positive influence on HF) were considered valid, given that  $t > 1.96$  and  $p < 0.05$ . The other hypotheses, H<sub>3</sub> (NI positively influences UI) and H<sub>5</sub> (PR influences PI), were not supported.

The results relating to the centennial sample are presented in Table 15, supporting the influence of all hypotheses (H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub>), except H<sub>6</sub> (PR influences PI).

**Table 15.** Bootstrapping Results (Centennials). Source: Own elaboration.

		Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	p Values	Hypothesis
H <sub>1</sub>	SI → PI	0.495	0.497	0.076	6.511	0.000	Supported the influence
H <sub>2</sub>	SI → UI	0.466	0.465	0.064	7.296	0.000	Supported the influence
H <sub>3</sub>	NI → UI	0.127	0.128	0.054	2.349	0.019	Supported the influence
H <sub>4</sub>	PC → UI	0.372	0.373	0.061	6.075	0.000	Supported the influence
H <sub>5</sub>	UI → PI	0.245	0.240	0.078	3.133	0.002	Supported the influence
H <sub>6</sub>	PR → PI	−0.075	−0.071	0.079	0.951	0.342	Not supported

### 5. Discussion

Through the results obtained, it was possible to confirm the positive influence relationship between social influence and purchase intention (H<sub>1</sub>); that is, it was validated that tourist UGC influences purchase intention through the social influence variable. In other words, whoever communicates UGC on TikTok about the tourist product significantly influences the intention to purchase a certain tourist product.

The results obtained through the structural equation model supported the positive relationship between social influence and information usefulness ( $H_2$ ) in both sample groups under study: Millennials and Centennials. It means, in practice, that the TikTok user's interaction with other individuals or groups of individuals, that is, between those who communicate information and those who receive it, positively influences the usefulness attributed to tourist UGC present on this online social network.

Regarding the need for information that positively influences its usefulness ( $H_3$ ), it was only validated for Centennials and was rejected for the sample of Millennials.

Concerning the Centennials sample, a positive relationship was confirmed between the need for information and the usefulness of information; that is, the information-seeking behaviour of a TikTok user, resulting from a need they feel, will, predictably, lead you to find tourism UGC, on this social platform, with useful information for your decision-making process when purchasing tourist products [69].

In line with the IACM model of Erkan and Evans [69], the positive influence of information credibility on information usefulness ( $H_4$ ) was validated, which in practice means that when information is considered credible, that is, when the Tourist UGC present on the TikTok social network is considered by the consumer to be credible, and this same consumer considers this information to be useful in their purchasing decision process.

The fifth research hypothesis ( $H_5$ ), regarding the positive influence of information usefulness on purchase intention, was supported, similar to the previous hypotheses, in line with the research by Agag and El-Masry [60] and Lee and Koo [81]. In other words, when a user considers a tourist UGC about a certain tourist product viewed on TikTok as useful, they will consider it in their intention to purchase that tourist product. According to Erkan and Evans [69] (p. 50), users react to useful information.

These results are, therefore, consistent with the previous literature, namely with the study by Seng and Leng [48], which found a significant influence relationship between digital social influence, presence on social platforms, and purchase intention.

The influence of UGC information on purchase intention has already been proven (for example, Erkan and Evans [69]; Ventre and Kolbe [82]); however, this study sought to verify this relationship with application to the product tourism on the social network TikTok which, at the end of the entire data collection and analysis process, was possible.

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence of User Generated Content (UGC) on the purchasing intentions of both the Millennial and Centennial generations within the tourism sector. Notably, the Centennials displayed a stronger inclination towards purchasing event tickets, indicating that this generation is particularly responsive to social media content that highlights experiences and activities. Conversely, while Millennials also engage with UGC, their purchasing intentions lean more towards hotel accommodations. This distinction suggests that tourism marketers should tailor their strategies to target the specific preferences of each generation. For Centennials, marketing efforts can focus on promoting experiences, such as events and activities, through engaging content on platforms like TikTok. In contrast, strategies aimed at Millennials might benefit from emphasising the value and comfort of accommodation, as their purchasing decisions appear to be more influenced by practical considerations. Overall, understanding these generational differences allows tourism businesses to create more effective marketing campaigns that resonate with their target audiences.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the existing literature on consumer behaviour by highlighting the role of UGC in shaping purchase intentions across different generations. The successful application of the eXtended Information Acceptance Model (XIAM) in this context demonstrates its utility in understanding the dynamics of social influence, perceived usefulness, and purchasing intentions. Methodologically, the

use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) provides a robust framework for assessing the relationships between latent variables, offering insights into the underlying mechanisms that drive consumer behaviour. The validation of both internal consistency and convergent validity across generational samples reinforces the reliability of the findings. However, the reliance on a non-random sample poses limitations, suggesting that while the results are indicative, they should be interpreted as preliminary. Future research should aim to utilise random sampling methods to enhance the generalisability of the findings and further explore the nuances of how UGC influences purchasing behaviour in the tourism industry across different demographic groups.

## 6. Conclusions

Throughout this investigation, the primary objective was to understand the influence of the UGC present on the TikTok social network on the Portuguese consumer's intention to purchase tourist products, considering the study of five variables antecedent to purchase intention: the need for information, credibility of information, usefulness of information, perceived risk and social influence.

It was found that UGC influences purchase intention, especially through the variable social influence; that is, whoever communicates UGC about the tourist product significantly influences their intention to buy a certain tourist product. The positive relationship between the usefulness of information and purchase intention was also proven; that is, the consumers' consideration of UGC as useful influences their intention to purchase a certain tourist product. The proposed model also supported the relationship between information credibility and information usefulness and between social influence and purchase intention. In contrast, the influence between the perceived risk and purchase intention variables was not supported.

Additionally, results were compared between the Millennial sample and the Centennial sample, which presented as the main discrepancy in results the relationship between the need for information and the usefulness of information, which results from the Millennial sample did not prove, in opposition to the Centennials.

In terms of the limitations of this research, we can indicate the method of collecting responses in the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was carried out online and shared through the social networks Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. As it is a non-probability sampling method—convenience sampling—the sample may not fully represent the population. Due to this constraint, the study must be regarded as a preliminary investigation in order to inform a more statistically significant study. This will enable the drawing of tenable conclusions that will aid in the creation of a more robust study.

Concerning future work and following this investigation, we intend to investigate more factors that positively or negatively influence purchase intention, with the integration of a moderator associated with the type of tourism practised, because despite being applicable to any type of tourism, from cultural to nautical, certain factors may have different influences on purchase intention. Additionally, the aim is to evaluate the influence of user-generated content on the intention to purchase another type of product, namely a product with characteristics different from those of a tourist. Alternatively, investigating the main motivations for creating and sharing tourist UGC on the social network TikTok could be interesting.

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