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The Use of Social Media for Purchasing Intent: A Cohort Analysis of Baby Boomers and Generation Y

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A research article submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

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DECLARATION

I, _Cammy Mkhize_, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

_ Nokwazi Promise Mkhize_____

(Type your name in full here, and sign in the space above)

Signed at ……Centurion……

On the ……1st…….. day of …November…… 2017…..

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my late mom and sister who passed away on 16 September 2016 and 24 October 2011 respectively.

Both were my pillars of strength. They stood with me in prayer in all my hurdles. They both encouraged me to be the best in all that I do. My mother, who was a teacher by profession, taught me that education is the one thing that no one can ever take away from you. My sister, the smartest in the family, taught me to have tenacity and dedication towards my studies and everything I aspire to achieve.

To both of you……Thank you, the best is yet to come.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- eWOM — Electronic Word-of-Mouth
- WOM — Word of Mouth
- OCR — Online Consumer Reviews
- UGC — User-Generated Content

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ABSTRACT

The study analyses the effect Facebook has on purchase intent focusing on two social media factors, namely eWOM and OCR. The evaluation is based on two generational cohorts, namely Baby Boomers and Generation Y, using Gibson, Regina, & Edwards (2009) categorisation of cohorts. The existing literature elaborates that the two cohorts are different as they grew up in different settings; Generation Y grew up in the digital space, thus more techno-savvy and already familiar with Facebook (Bolton, et al., 2013), whilst Baby Boomers are resistant to change and are non-accepting of Facebook because of security, privacy and fraud fears (Baldwin, 2015) .

However, this study reveals that Baby Boomers have become more Facebook inclined as they utilise OCR and eWOM as credible sources of information that influences their purchase intentions. OCR had the strongest relationship with both cohorts, as it was the biggest influencer. The hypotheses result on social media's influence on eWOM and OCR were significant and supported; the hypotheses results on the influence of eWOM and OCR on purchasing intent on both cohorts were also significant and supported.

Therefore, the study confirms Prinyaka's (2013) assumption that social media in the form of eWOM and OCR will play a large part in purchasing decisions.

Key Words: eWOM, OCR, Facebook, Baby Boomers, Generation Y, Purchase Intent and Social Media.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Prinyaka (2013) conducted a study on social media and made an assumption that social media communication in the form of online reviews, posts and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) will play a large part in driving purchase decisions. The purpose of this study is to investigate Prinyaka's assumptions on the use of social media factors; eWOM and Online Consumer Reviews (OCR) for purchasing intent among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers. The basis of the research is that the two cohorts will be purchasing holiday accommodation.

Social media is defined by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UCG). In South Africa, the use of social media is increasing year on year, Facebook being the most used. The Report on the SA Social Media Landscape by Goldstuck (2016) states that Facebook is the most used, with 14 million users, while YouTube is in second place at 8.7 million users, outpacing Twitter at a slow rise to 7.7million users. As for brands, 91% are on Facebook, 88% on Twitter and 66% on YouTube (Goldstuck, 2016). For this study, we will use Facebook as statistics indicate that it is the most utilised amongst private users and companies. Secondly, a study by Nyemba, Mukwasi, Mhakure, Mosiane, & Chigona (2015) confirms that Baby Boomers prefer Facebook over the rest as their chosen social media platform.

According to Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler (2004), the advent of the Internet has extended consumers' options for gathering unbiased product information from other consumers and provides an opportunity for consumers to offer their own consumption-related advice by engaging in eWOM. Through eWOM, OCR sites like TripAdvisor, Amazon, Travelocity, Bookings.com, and so forth, were formed.

The use of social media across all generations has grown over the years, as most consumers prefer to use it as their source of information. On December 31 2016, Facebook reported 1.86 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2016). It is

understandable why it is every marketer's goal to use this platform in engaging his or her consumers. According to Ewing (2012), 71% of people are more likely to purchase any product or service based on social media referrals. The interest on social media has given rise to OCR websites such as social networking, online travel communities, and review sites (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013). Consumers not only use the media to communicate with the brand, but to communicate with each other, hence word-of-mouth still remains the biggest form of information transmission (Funde, 2015).

There are currently four generational cohorts in existence: they are the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, X and Y Generations (Bevan-Dye, 2016). The generational cohorts' theory demonstrates how factors such as social and historical events affect one's belief system, attitude, values and culture (Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007). It refers to how individuals born round about the same time-share the same cognitive style. The theory argues that changes across generations are a result of a social event rather than a biological process (Sessa et al., 2007). The major force recognised to have shaped members of Generation Y (also called the Millennials) cohort born in the 1980s is that they grew up in the connectivity of the digital age and in the era of global 24/7 television networks (Bevan-Dye, 2016). This provided instant exposure to global events and trends. Baby Boomers, who were born in the 1940s, had little exposure to TV and digital platforms, thus might not be as adaptive to new innovations like social media platforms.

Limited research has been conducted to compare Generation Y and Baby Boomers in understanding their social media market-related behaviour, hence the purpose of this study.

1.2 Context of the Study

Human beings are considered social animals, they want to communicate among individuals, groups, social institutions and so on (Sumathy & Vipin, 2016). Social media has created an environment of true social interaction, which is of interest to us human beings, as we are not wired to be alone. For this study, we are to investigate the two social media factors, namely eWOM and OCR, to identify the specific one(s) that influences purchasing behaviour.

A study by Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler (2004) suggests that consumers' desire for social interaction, desire for economic incentives, their concern for other consumers, and the potential to enhance their own self-worth are the primary factors leading to eWOM behaviour. According to Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides (2012), more and more consumers use UGC, which is another form of eWOM for travel-related decisions. In response, many hospitality and tourism businesses have been integrating UGC websites into their online business strategies (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013). What this means for marketing communication is that brand-related interactions and exposure to marketing campaigns increasingly take place within the social media space (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, & Fuller, 2013).

According to the Millward Brown (2015) Report, there are more than 56% of consumers who rely on social media as a credible information source. The report further states that 89% of smartphone users conducted their research online before their last purchase. The change in consumer behaviour has prompted corporations to change their marketing strategies so they can have competitive advantage.

Social networks are becoming the new online marketplace, with new research showing why shoppers are looking to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for their next online purchase (Chahal, 2016). In July 2014, Facebook announced the addition of the "buy" button to its advertisers. By July 2015, Facebook expanded its "buy" buttons to include a "shop section" where selected merchants can sell their products directly to the consumer (Barnes & Buttons, 2016).

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Main problem

Social media has evolved over the years. Recently, it has introduced other mediums other than Facebook, which include but are not limited to Instagram, Snapchat and Google+. However, it is still unclear if social media, Facebook in particular, influences the purchase intention of holiday accommodation for Baby Boomers and Generation Y (Prinyaka, 2013).

1.3.2 Sub-problem 1

Word-of-mouth (WOM) has been recognised as one of the most influential resources of information transmission since the beginning of human society (Duan, Gu, & Whinston, 2008). The emergence of online social networks has changed the way information is shared. The otherwise fleeting WOM targeted to one or a few friends has been transformed into enduring messages visible to the entire world (Duan et al., 2008), thus creating eWOM.

Travelers are increasingly using OCRs and eWOM to inform other users about accommodations and other tourism-related products; as such, it is important to understand the behavioural consequences of these factors (Filieri & McLeay, 2013) as they are a growing trend in social media space.

The study will analyse eWOM and OCRs' influence on Baby Boomers and Generation Y in the context of purchasing accommodation for their holidays.

Accommodation is in the form of a hotel and the purchasing thereof prior to the user going on holiday, thus eWOM and OCR play the role of influencers. Therefore, the study will investigate whether eWOM and OCR influences the purchasing intention of holiday accommodation or not.

1.3.3 Sub-problem 2

Generation Y is the first generation comprising digital communities and some of the most significant users of social media. A study by Barnes & Buttons (2016) indicated that 63% of Generation Y like brands on Facebook, while 19% follows them on Twitter and Pinterest. The study also demonstrates that 47% of Generation Y use social media during their shopping journey. This cohort has a high purchasing intent. Most of the Facebook users that fall within this cohort are more likely to purchase a product online once they have liked or shared it (Barnes & Buttons, 2016).

Baby Boomers are becoming more techno-savvy as they use social media to stay in touch with family, keep informed of the latest news and learn more about product offerings. According to Baldwin (2015), 65% of adult internet users use social media. In 2011, Baby Boomers increased their social media usage by 60% (Baldwin, 2015). This

cohort is vocal and opinionated, social media gives them the platform to be involved and share their knowledge.

Baby Boomers and Generation Y grew up in different periods, hence their values and perspectives are shaped differently (Baldwin, 2015). Many differences exist between the generations as the cohorts respond to different motivators, issues and causes.

Prior research has focused on Generation Y but has taken no interest in the social media behaviour of other generational cohorts. This study will help advertisers, marketers and corporations acquire a better understanding of the two cohorts, so they can appeal to both when engaging on social media platforms.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the conceptual and empirical understanding of social media influence on consumer buying behaviour.

Prior research focused on Generation Y, but none exists where they are compared with Baby Boomers - who are mostly the parents of Generation Y.

According to a study by DMN3, 82.3% of Baby Boomers belong to at least one social media site; additionally, they spend more than 11 hours on Facebook per week (Lockard, 2016). What this means for marketers and business practice is that Baby Boomers are a growing part of the social media community, thus can no longer be ignored.

The findings are a guide to businesses in creating a “Balancing Multi-Generational Retail Strategy,” which helps them take a closer look at the purchasing habits of Baby Boomers and Generation Y, thus enable them to create marketing strategies that will appeal to both generations at the same time.

The study also contributes to eWOM providers, examples are TripAdvisor, Bookings.com, Travel start, and so forth, so they can better understand the role they play in consumer buying behaviour. The Henning-Thurau et al. (2004) study suggests that the eWOM providers can be grouped based on what motivates consumer

behaviour, suggesting that firms may need to develop different strategies for encouraging eWOM behaviour among their users.

Lastly, the findings of the research are beneficiary to Facebook, as they will get insight on how they can upgrade their “buy” offering for a better user experience.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to Baby Boomers and Generation Y members within South Africa.

The two cohorts were restricted to Road Accident Fund, Phillip Morris and ABSA employees based in South Africa.

As the generation cohorts differ from researcher to researcher, Gibson, Regina, & Edwards (2009) categorisation of cohorts was utilised. In their categorisation, Baby Boomers are born between 1946 to 1964, Generation X, between 1965 to 1980 and Generation Y, between 1981-2000.

According to Barrowcliff (2014), Facebook is the most used for customer engagements so for that reason the study was restricted to Facebook as the social media platform in reference.

Focus of the study was on the two social media factors, they are eWOM and OCR.

1.6 Definition of Terms

For ease of reference to the reader, definitions of terms are as follows:

- **Social media:** As defined by (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User-Generated Content.
- **Baby Boomers:** According to Gibson, Regina, & Edwards (2009), these are a group of individuals that are born in the range of 1946 – 1964.
- **Generation Y:** Gibson et al. (2009) explain them as a group of individuals born in the range of 1981 – 2000.
- **Electronic Word-of-Mouth:** (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004) define eWOM communication as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.
- **Online Consumer Review:** Chen & Xie (2008) define it as consumer-created product information based on their own experience.
- **User-Generated Content:** UGC is defined as Internet content that is generated and published by everyday consumers, not media or communications professionals (Wang & Rodgers, 2011).

1.7 Assumptions

The study is underpinned by the following assumptions:

- Targeted respondents are exposed to social media and are frequent users of Facebook;
- Although researchers differ on the cohorts' year start and end range, we assume that Generation Y respondents are categorised in the 1981 – 2000 age bracket and Baby Boomers fall within the 1946-1964 age bracket;
- Respondents responded honestly and accurately; and
- Required data was collected efficiently using the developed questionnaire.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section examines the available academic literature related to the influence eWOM and OCR has on Generation Y and Baby Boomers when purchasing holiday accommodation. The review will be analysing the cohorts' attitudes towards the two factors and as a result, their social media purchasing behaviour. We will deliberate on social media's influence on purchasing intent, and further analyse the relationship the two cohorts have with social media, and lastly discuss how marketers can leverage on the learnings to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace.

2.2 Background to the Study

Social media remain in continuous growth, by some accounts have become the main channel for consumers to experience and interact with the world (Hofacker & Belanche, 2016). According to Constantinides (2014), social media opened a whole range of opportunities to corporations as a platform for harnessing the collective intelligence and creativity.

The use of social media has extended consumers' options for gathering unbiased product information from other consumers and provides the opportunity for consumers to offer their own consumption-related advice by engaging in eWOM, thus generating consumer content (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004).

These opinions which we call OCR are available to a large number of people and provide product evaluations, and have a major impact on consumers' product attitude and purchase behavior, and thus on the success of products (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003).

2.3 The use of Social Media for Purchasing Intent

2.3.1 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Social media has caused a shift in consumers moving from a WOM to an eWOM society. eWOM is a consumer-generated channel where the sender is independent to the market (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007). For that reason, it is perceived as credible, more reliable and trustworthy by consumers in comparison to company-generated content (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1995). eWOM communication can take place in many ways, e.g. web-based opinion platforms, discussion forums, boycott, websites, blogs and news groups (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004).

The biggest difference between WOM and eWOM is the source consumers get their information from, as it is not just from real life friends and colleagues but also from a wider range of social media status updates, reviews, blogs, and so forth.

According to Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan (2005), eWOM will inevitably change the structure of travel information, the accessibility of travel information, and subsequently travelers' knowledge and perception of various travel products. They argue that eWOM will create virtual relationships and communities that can influence far beyond the traditional WOM. This will create a new type of reality as eWOM will be influencing readers during their online information search (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2005).

The reason why these faceless eWOM sources are proving to be influential in consumer decision making is that consumers prefer to hear opinions of "likeminded' people.

eWOM is important for consumers because they perceive a certain amount of risk when buying products online (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008). Therefore, consumers will rather wait to hear what others have to say before they make their purchasing decision.

2.3.1.2. User-Generated Content as another form of eWOM

eWOM and UGC are interchangeably related concepts (Cheung & Lee, 2012). UGC is defined as internet content that is generated and published by everyday consumers, not media or communications professionals (Wang & Rodgers, 2011). In turn, eWOM is

defined as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet (Henning-Thurau et al, 2004). From the definitions, we can see that eWOM is a specific type of UGC about products or companies (Wang & Rodgers, 2011).

According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), UGC needs to fulfill three basic requirements in order to be considered as such: first, it needs to be published either on a publicly accessible website or on a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people; second, it needs to show a certain amount of creative effort; and finally, it needs to have been created outside of professional routines and practices.

Rensink (2013) stated the six motivations on why consumers are willing to create online content, they are: venting negative feelings; concern for other consumers; self-enhancement; social benefit; helping the company and advice seeking. If consumers feel their information is relevant and important, their involvement in creating content is high.

Tourism companies cannot ignore the development of UGC as they now play an important role in their industry. UGC may provide tourism organisations and enterprises with valuable market intelligence and ongoing market research opportunities (Akehurst, 2009). As a result of UGC, future consumers will be different as they will be more knowledgeable, thus more demanding ─ companies need to be ready for this.

Other companies have caught on the UCG wave and used it to their benefit. An example is the Coca Cola “Share a Coke” campaign where Coke produced cans with consumers’ names. The consumers were then asked to go on social media and share their “Share a Coke” story, thus creating positive content for Coke. The campaign was created to boost top-of-mind awareness and increase Coke’s exposure.

2.3.2 Online Consumer Reviews

Chen & Xie (2008) define it as consumer created product information based on their own experience. Reviews happen every day, whether it is online or offline ─ the reality is, people share their experiences with their close friends. The power of social media

has widened the scope as sharing is not only limited to consumers' close friends and family, but to millions of people through review sites. Consequently, OCR websites have emerged as one of the most prominent platforms for improving travel information accessibility and for enhancing travel decision-making (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013).

A good example of OCR websites where customers share their holiday accommodation experience is TripAdvisor, the largest site for unbiased travel reviews. Companies like TripAdvisor and other blog sites like Travelblog.org, Travelup.com, YourTravelJournal, and so on, enable consumers to exchange information, opinions and recommendations about destinations, tourism products and services, with sometimes diaries of travel experiences and ratings of a particular hotel (Akehurst, 2009).

eMarketer (2016) reports on a study conducted by Trustpilot showing that 80.7% said reviews were somewhat or very important to their purchase decisions. In the holiday travel space, it is difficult to sell products or services, as they are intangible. Hence Litvin, et al. (2005) argue that the collected reviews can provide a strong sense of the product, add to the consumer's overall image of the hotel or destination, likely reduce pre-purchase doubt, and mitigate post-purchase dissonance.

Mangold & Smith (2012) refer to a study in France of over 7 000 Internet users that revealed that online reviews of video games positively influenced consumers' purchasing decisions.

Research has suggested that information from external sources, such as an online consumer review, can increase a consumer's confidence about their attitude toward some object (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2005).

Hennig-Thurau & Walsh (2003) state that consumers read online articulations mainly to save decision-making time and make better buying decisions. Therefore, the relevance of OCR is imperative as it assists consumers in their decision-making process.

According to OCR statistics given by (Ady, 2015), leisure travelers spend an average of 30 minutes reading reviews before booking; 10% of travelers spend more than one hour reading reviews and 70% of travelers read at least 20 reviews before purchasing. This is a clear indication that OCR has an impact in the purchasing intent of consumers that use social media.

2.4 Measuring Social Media Factors and Purchasing Intent

2.4.1 Measuring eWOM

Although many studies target WOM, very few have focused on the measure of word-of-mouth, especially in the context of e-services (Goyette, Ricard, Bergeron, & Marticotte, 2010). The benefits of measuring eWOM are that companies can measure their performance and the effect of their strategies on people's propensity to talk favourably about them (Goyette et al., 2010). Ying & Chung (2007) state that measuring eWOM can be used to predict purchasing intent and the consumers' inclination to speak well of the company.

Although companies can never control what consumers will say about them, through measuring eWOM, they can measure the effectiveness of their product offering and be able to adjust where necessary. An example, if consumers visit a hotel, and through eWOM share their experience of the hotel that was unfavourable, the hotel can use this information to make the changes where necessary. Therefore, the company can measure what is being said about it (content), the scope of what is being said (intensity), and the consumers' attitude towards the organisation (positive or negative valence) (Goyette et al., 2010). The study by Goyette et al. (2010) identifies four dimensions of measuring eWOM, namely: (1) eWOM intensity [activity, volume, dispersion] (2) positive valence [praise], (3) negative valence, and (4) content. These dimensions are put on a eWOM scale for companies to prop out those aspects that are weak on the scale, and then act on them.

2.4.2 Measuring Online Consumer Reviews

Consumers read reviews of others to minimise their risk. Companies also benefit from OCR as they use them to gain competitive advantage, and increase market share. A study by Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin (2015) measures OCR within the context of message characteristics, such as message type (attribute-centric and benefit-centric) and message valence (positive, negative, and neutral), and how these influence consumers' attitudes toward the review and product, perceived credibility of the reviewer, and purchase intention. The findings were that the message valence of OCR

has a persuasive effect on consumers' attitudes toward the review and product, perceived source credibility, and purchase intention. Moreover, message valence interacts with message type, providing a more complex picture of product review effectiveness. Finally, data indicated that benefit-centric reviews result in higher recall than attribute-centric reviews (Wang et al., 2015). Godes & Mayzlin (2006) argue that to measure OCR you need to measure the content posted by the user. They conducted their study by measuring the content of messages from Usenet newsgroups (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006). The study was to ascertain how much the dispensation of the information, through the online communities, affects the success of the TV show. Their findings were - if the OCR was positive, the show was also a success.
The biggest benefit of OCR is that companies receive constructive criticism and suggestions.

2.4.3 Measuring Purchase Intention

According to Hosein (2016), purchase intention can be classified as one of the components of consumer-cognitive behavior on how an individual intends to buy a specific brand or product. Chen, Hsu & Lin (2010), state that purchase intention reflects the desire of consumers to make a purchase. The measurement of purchasing intent cannot be explained without discussing the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The Theory of Planned Behavior is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, as such; the central factor in both theories is the individual's intention to perform certain behaviours. According to Ajzen (1991), intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, to perform the behavior. Measuring the intention to purchase is vital for any business as they use it to develop their sales forecast and prepare for the future. Generally, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance (Ajzen, 1991).

To apply any intention to purchase methods for measure intentions, companies must first educate the potential customer on the product or service (Hosein, 2016). There are benefits of measuring consumers' intention to purchase as the results are seen when consumers actually purchase the product. A study conducted by Morwitz, Johnson, &

Schmittlein (1993) demonstrated that merely asking purchasing intent questions increased the purchase rate of personal computers in their survey.

2.5 Hypothesis

H_{10} Social media has no influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{1A} Social media has an influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{20} Social media has no effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{2A} Social media has an effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

2.6 Generational Cohorts Study

Cohorts are groups of individuals who are born during the same period and travel through life together (Schewe & Meredith, 2006). There is a belief that consumers that are born within the same period will have similar behaviours and respond to the same call to action. Generation Y grew up in the digital space, thus their lifestyle – how they work and live, is influenced by technology. Generation Y actively contributes to, shares, searches for and generates consumers' content – plus work and play – on social media platforms (Bolton, et al., 2013).

The South African Generation Y is more liberal and much more racially and ethnically diverse. According to Statistics SA (2015), there are approximately 14, 5 million Generation Ys in South Africa, who make up 26.5% of the population. They account for a third of the South African population and have high purchasing power. Most academics have an interest on Generation Y, as they want to explore the change with them as they go through their life cycle.

The Baby Boomers are generally the parents of most Generation Ys. Baby Boomers were part of the increased birth rates following the Second World War. Previous studies conducted on older adults' lack of participation on social networks focused on how technological challenges inhibit participation (Nyemba, Mukwasi, Mhakure, Mosiane, &

Chigona, 2015). These challenges referred to their lack of internet and computer literacy. However, as times evolve, more Baby Boomers are also getting involved in social media.

Although there are studies that relate to how different cohorts relate differently in various settings (Schewe & Meredith, 2006), they neglected research on how these cohorts can relate to social media as their purchasing tool.

Therefore, this section of the review analyses the two generational cohorts to ascertain if they have a relationship with social media and if they use the platform for purchasing intent.

2.6.1 Baby Boomers

Nyemba et al. (2015) conducted a study on Baby Boomers from the Western Cape Province in South Africa. The sample was a group of highly educated people, who use information technology for both work and home life. The findings were: even though they felt social media could be beneficial to them, they felt it was a waste of time. They also raised security concerns, lack of trust, feared the possible infringement of their privacy and were concerned they could find something unpleasant about their children (Nyemba, Mukwasi, Mhakure, Mosiane, & Chigona, 2015). In summary, Baby Boomers had a negative attitude towards social media. They did not trust the content or the companies that used social media, as they feared they might misuse the information entrusted to them by users.

As mentioned above regarding the Nyemba et al. (2015) study, lack of trust was one of the negative variables that caused Baby Boomers not to have a relationship with social media. Trust drives consumers' attitudes and can influence their behaviour in engaging in digital platforms like social media for purchasing purposes. Trust is defined by (Rousseau, Bitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) as a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviours of others. A study done by Obal & Kunz (2013) analysed the role trust plays on both Generation Y and Baby Boomers for e-service. The results coincide with the previous studies and clarified that Baby Boomers look for cues of privacy before they begin transacting with an online e-service. They prefer trusted advice from

salespersons, which is an offline service, and not advice from vendors in online settings (Obal & Kunz, 2013).

KPMG commissioned Intuit Research to conduct a survey on global generational cohort purchasing behaviour. Considering that Generation Y was born into technology, we are inclined to assume they are more engaged in social media in reference to reading reviews before purchase, making their own reviews and even buying online, however, the research findings proved otherwise ─ as there was a small difference in margin between Generation Y and Baby Boomers. According to Begg (2017), Baby Boomers are just as prone to shop online as Generation Y; 52% of Baby Boomers read online reviews to make their purchasing decisions while 56% of Generation Y does the same. Furthermore, 25% of Baby Boomers write their post purchase feedback on social media while 34% of Generation Y does the same. The results of this study indicate that Baby Boomers are engaged in social media platforms for their purchasing behaviour.

According to these reviews, there are conflicting opinions whether Baby Boomers have a relationship with social media or not. Can social media influence their purchasing behaviour or not?

2.6.2 Generation Y

Generation Y is also referred to as the 'Wired Generation' as they need to be connected at all times and feel most comfortable in digital environments. Born and brought up mostly in urban nuclear families, and having early access to communication media; this generation believes in three major factors; Expectations, Expressions and Acceptance (Rai, 2012).

Due to their familiarity with digital media, they have the ability to communicate with and purchase from suppliers anywhere in the world (Mangold & Smith, 2012). They access digital media on a daily basis; hence, they are the driving force of online communication. According to a study by Mangold & Smith (2012), 56% of Generation Y members talk about products and services using social networking communities, as compared to 35% of the general population.

There are a number of studies on Generation Y and their relationship to social media. This is mainly because organisations are interested in studying this cohort, as it may provide an indication on how they will behave in future (Bolton, et al., 2013). In addition, organisations anticipate that the cohort members might change as they pass through the different stages of their life cycles, hence their interest to go through the changes with them. A recent study with 3 500 Generation Ys within the Western Cape, South Africa, confirmed that advertising on Facebook has a positive influence on the behavioural attitudes (intention-to-purchase and purchase) of Generation Ys who reside in SA (Duffet, 2015). Another study by Chandra, Goswami, & Chouhan (2012) confirmed that social media advertising had an influence on purchasing decisions amongst undergraduate and postgraduate students and resulted in prices that are more competitive. The study also confirmed that Generation Ys were also actively engaged with the companies after purchase, thereby creating Online Consumer Reviews.

There is no doubt that Generation Y has a positive relationship with social media, having grown up in the digital space. However, the study will contribute to academic knowledge by investigating which social media factor(s) have an impact on purchasing intent for both cohorts.

2.6.3 Hypotheses

H_{30} eWOM does not influence purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

H_{3A} eWOM influences purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

H_{40} OCR does not affect purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

H_{4A} OCR affects purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

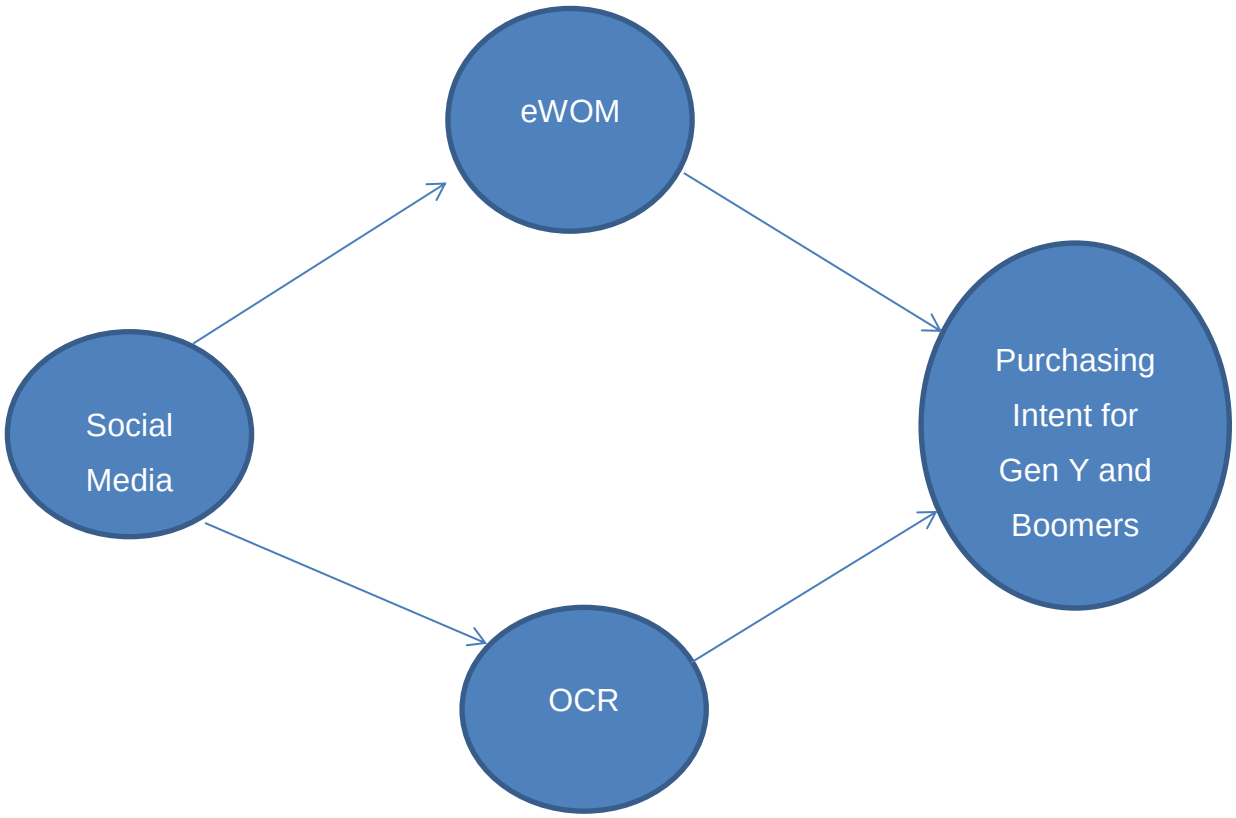


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Model of Social Media Factors on Purchasing Intent for Generation Y and Baby Boomers

2.6 Conclusion of Literature Review

In South Africa, there are 14 million Facebook users (Goldstuck, 2016) and they spend a little under 3 hours on social media a day (Shezi, 2016). The number of users has been growing year on year since Facebook was launched in 2004. This means Facebook is forever evolving, as there are new features, trends and social behaviours that develop year on year. In my view, social media academic studies must be continuous, because every year there is different attitudinal and behavioural aspects that are realised about the users.

The researcher agrees with Constantinides' & Fountain's (2008) views that social media will influence the traditional purchasing behaviour process. Traditionally, consumer buying behaviour is Problem Recognition – Search – Evaluation – Purchase – and Post Purchase Evaluation. Post Purchase Evaluation has become an important step of the consumer buying process because that is where consumers share their

experiences and reviews that are made available to other consumers. According to Hofacker & Belanche (2016), the act of consumption is playing out publicly on social media. Constantinides & Fountain (2008), state that consumer reviews posted online serve as a better marketing tool than expert reviews.

It can be argued that eWOM communities have taken away the human and social element; however, according to Brown et al. (2007), these communities share broadly based information, thus becoming an important supplement to social and consumption behavior. The popularity of these emerging eWOM communities cannot be ignored. Increasing, scholarly attention needs to be paid to eWOM as its shaping post purchase behaviour and consumer decision-making as we know it.

Generation Y and Baby Boomers seem to be mostly responding differently to social media. Generation Y consumers have tremendous purchase power and influence than the other cohorts, so their social media usage and attitudes towards various media factors are important to organisations and their brands (Duffet, 2015). Baby Boomers have purchasing muscle, but from the gathered literature, they mostly do not have a relationship with social media.

The growth of social media is a clear indication that eWOM and OCR will play a pivotal role in consumer decision-making process. This makes this research an interesting study.

2.6.1 Hypotheses

H_{10} Social media has no influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{1A} Social media has an influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{20} Social media has no effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{2A} Social media has an effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

H_{30} eWOM does not influence purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

H_{3A} eWOM influences purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

H_{40} OCR does not affect purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

H_{4A} OCR affects purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Following the literature review on the subject matter, the author realised the lack of available academic literature that addresses the relationship the two cohorts have with the selected social media factors, that is – eWOM and OCR. Thus, the study attempts to address that gap in literature.

The research was conducted on employees that work at the Road Accident Fund (RAF), Phillip Morris and ABSA. The sample is selected from individuals that fall within these two age rankings: 1946-1964 and 1981-2000 as per Gibson, Regina, & Edwards (2009) cohort groupings.

The research method is convenient sampling. Quantitative research was the preferred method for the study as it is objective and systematic, thus eliminating ambiguity.

3.1 Research Methodology

The research method chosen was quantitative as it is more efficient and able to test hypotheses. The study had geographical limitations, therefore quantitative was ideal as it allows generalisation. It was suitable for this research as it tests theory deductively from existing knowledge, through developing hypothesised relationships and proposed outcomes (Carr, 1994).

Further analysis by Duffy (1986), elaborates that the strength of the researcher being detached is avoidance of researcher involvement, guarding against biasing the study and ensuring objectivity.

3.2 Research Design

Causal research is best suited in instances where you examine the influence of events and variables on others (Moloi, 2016). The aim is to understand the two cohorts' attitudes and relationships towards social media and its two factors. In understanding that, the study is able to draw a conclusion if eWOM and OCR influence purchasing intent for Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

Two screening questions were incorporated in the questionnaire; age and if participants are on social media, Facebook in particular.

As the data collection is through online questionnaires, there was an indirect data source. The scope is statistical, as the study used a sample. Confirmatory Factor Analysis methodology was used to get the underlying factors; it was also easier to explain the correlations among the sets of variables.

A study by (Wright, 2005) details the advantages and disadvantages of using online surveys for research design as: ***Advantages*** *include access to individuals in distant locations, the ability to reach difficult to contact participants, and the convenience of having automated data collection, which reduces researcher time and effort.* ***Disadvantages*** *include uncertainty over the validity of the data and sampling issues, and concerns surrounding the design, implementation, and evaluation of an online survey*.

Although the Baby Boomers selected for the study are on social media, guarantees cannot be made that they are techno-savvy; therefore, completing an online survey might be taking them to unknown territories.

3.3 Population and Sample

3.3.1 Population

The population for the research are Generation Y individuals born from 1981 – 2000 and Baby Boomers individuals born from 1946 – 1964. Both cohorts are based in South Africa with the population stemming from the three big cities, namely Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

Sampling method is a convenient sample as the author engaged with respondents based on ease of accessibility within the three organisations (ABSA, Phillip Morris and RAF). To derive to the sample size, the sample size calculator was used, with 95% Confident level and 5% Margin of Error. The total population of the three cities is 5 404

061 people. Therefore, the appropriate sample size resulted in 385 individuals. The assumption was that females will be the greater number from the targeted population.

3.4 The Research Instrument

The instrument was questionnaires that were designed based on the literature review. The self-administered online questionnaire was adapted from past studies done by Zhang, Zhao, Cheung, & Lee (2014) and Zhu, Wang, Wang, & Wan (2016) where they conducted studies on influence of OCR on consumer decision making and the factors of users' peer influence behaviour on social media on purchase intention respectively. The questionnaire was developed as follows:

- **SECTION A**

  This section refers to the Demographic Grouping and screens respondents that are not supposed to participate in the survey. Those are individuals who do not fall into the age category of the two cohorts and individuals who are not on Facebook.
- **SECTION B**

  This section assesses the relationship the users have with social media.

  Questions also address social media's (Facebook) influence on eWOM and OCR.
- **SECTION C**

  Questions under this section address the influence on OCR on purchasing intent.

  Real online reviews from the TripAdvisor website were utilised. These were consumer reviews following their hotel visit.
- **SECTION D**

  Questions under this section address the influence on eWOM on purchasing intent. We used travellers' image posts, Facebook comments and Blog posts after they had experienced that specific hotel for themselves. These are also based on real life images and posts posted by the user with no influence from the hotel.

3.5 Procedure for Data Collection

Prior to conducting the research, the researcher sought approval from HR RAF, ABSA and Phillip Morris companies. A copy of the questionnaire and demographics of the candidates to be selected for the interview were submitted to HR for approval purposes. This was important, as the companies had to ascertain that the questions did not jeopardise the company in any form.

HR then selected the candidates that met the criteria, i.e. falling within the two cohorts' age rankings. A briefing session was organised with the participants to explain the objectives, nature of the study and their participation role. As it was a self-administered questionnaire, it was important that the participants had a clear understanding, as that would eliminate errors.

The study utilised an electronic survey created on Qualtrics. Prior to launching the survey to the sampled group, a pilot of two groups of fives were used to gauge success. The pilot was initiated in a website called Survey Monkey. The pilot was important to establish any shortcomings and check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Follow-ups were made regularly to ensure participation.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis entails editing and reducing the data into manageable portions in order to create summaries, detect patterns and apply statistical methods with the express purpose of interpreted data for your research problem (Duffet, 2015).

The study used Re-scaling Distribution Fitting and Factor Analysis. The correlations between the variables (the two social media factors) are high, thus the respondents could have been confused. Therefore, a factor analysis was conducted to determine the fewer underlying influences.

To analyse the data, the following was followed:

1. Code and clean data collected into Excel

2. Import data into SPSS

3. Descriptive statistics analysis

4. Do the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

5. Re-scaling distribution fitting

Ethical considerations were considered when collecting data to ensure that the participants' personal information was kept confidential and used for purposes of this study only.

The purpose of the test was to see if there were any differences in the variables and to ascertain if the cohorts respond to them differently.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The study was not represented in all regions around SA. Online surveys have no researcher present; thus, the author could not attend to questions, especially related to clarity, during questionnaire completion.

The sample size of 385 is limiting considering the population of SA. Generation Y alone makes 25% of the SA population according to Stats SA (2015), thus a bigger sample size would have been ideal.

The study is limited to just two cohorts, it would have been interesting to analyse all four generational cohorts and see the outcome.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

As this is a self-administered survey, participants were briefed to eliminate confusion and inconsistency.

However, the researcher was always available for participants that had any questions or anything to address.

The pilot study assisted to ascertain if the participants understood the questions, and if there were any repetitions or ambiguous questions.

3.8.1 External validity

Respondents had a disclaimer that they must answer the questions as honestly as possible.

3.8.2 Internal validity

Information was validated by having ten of the respondents re-complete at least three of the survey questions to ascertain if the responses remain the same. The respondents were allocated a specific time to complete the survey. If the respondents are far off the acceptable time – whether spent too little time or too long, they were disqualified, as that was an indication of indecisiveness, thus responses might not be an honest reaction.

3.8.3 Reliability

Reliability signifies the internal consistency of the items that were developed to measure a specific construct with a high level of reliability, in other words, the intention to purchase measurement scales (Duffet, 2015).Ethical considerations were defined, the parties also signed a confidentially clause to not share the information with third parties.

The researcher was detached and not influential to respondents she had personal relationship with.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides results of the online survey conducted by presenting them in two sections: the first section is the descriptive statistics on demographics and the second provides the hypotheses results. The online survey was administered through Qualtrics, resulting in 425 respondents comprising of 210 Baby Boomers and 215 Generation Ys.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

This study seeks to make comparisons between the two cohorts regarding their social media relationship. As indicated by (Santy & Kneale, 1998) it is important that the unique features of the sample be clearly tabled to make meaning of the patterns discovered.

4.2.1 Demographics

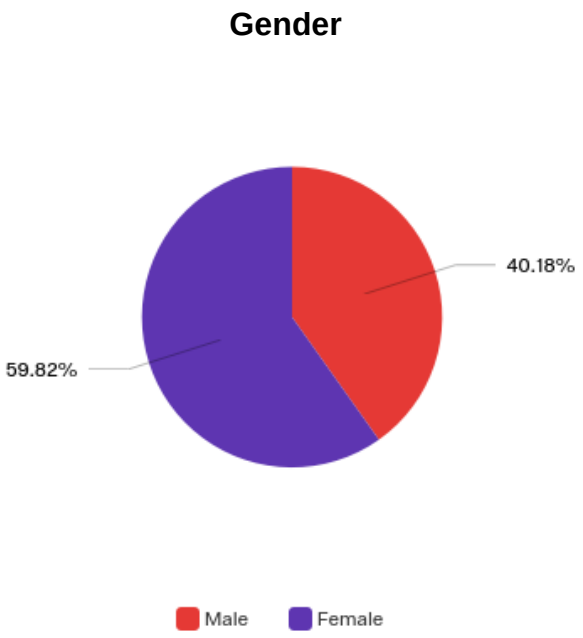


Figure 4.1 Gender

As observed on the above figure, 59.82% of the respondents were female while 40.18% were male. This confirms the assumption stated in chapter 3 that females are likely to be on social media than men. These assumptions stem from Stat SA report indicating that there are more females than men in the country.

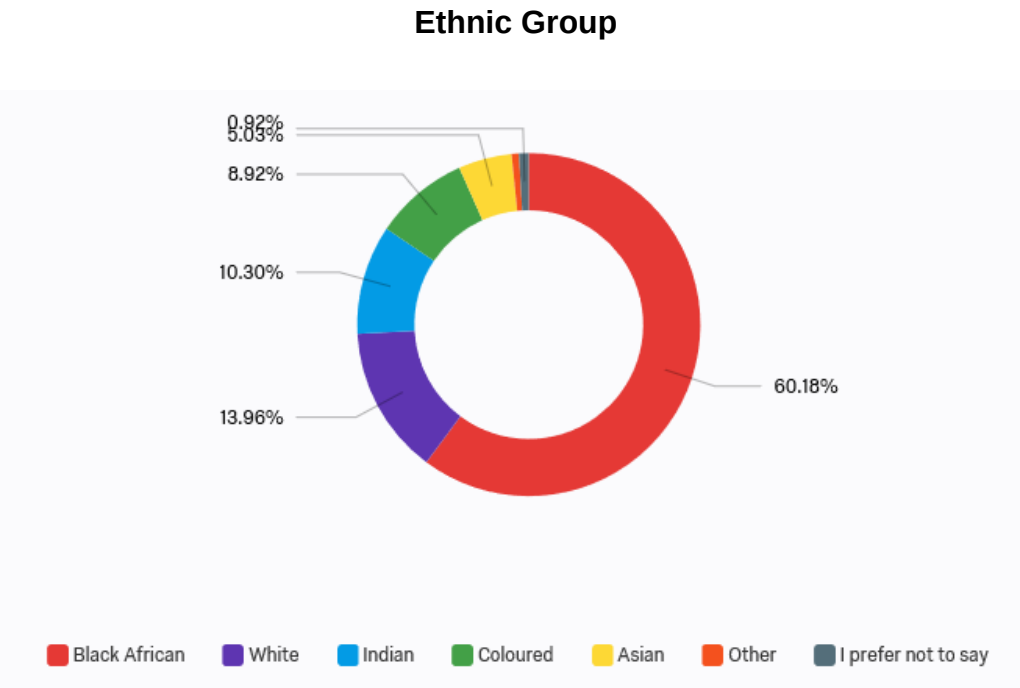


Figure 4.2 Ethnic Group

The Black African ethnic group was the largest, at 60.18%, followed by Whites at 13.96%, Indians at 10.30%, Coloureds at 8.92%, Asian and a few that preferred not to say at 5.03% and 0.92 respectively. The high Black African percentage is in line with the 2011 Census count, which indicates that Black Africans have the majority count of 76.4% in the country (Stats, 2015).

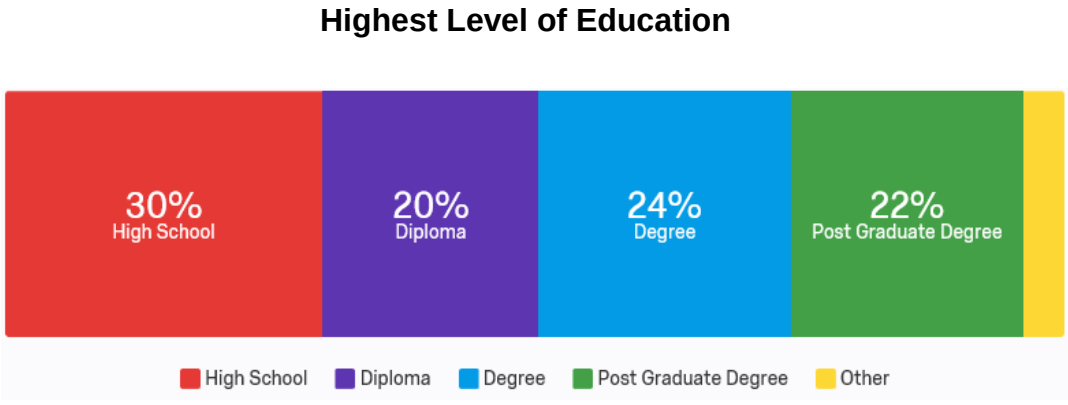


Figure 4.3 Education

Most of the respondents have a High School qualification, thus comprise 30% of the sample population; this is followed by 24% Degree holders, 22% Post- graduate Degree, 20% Diploma and 4% for other.

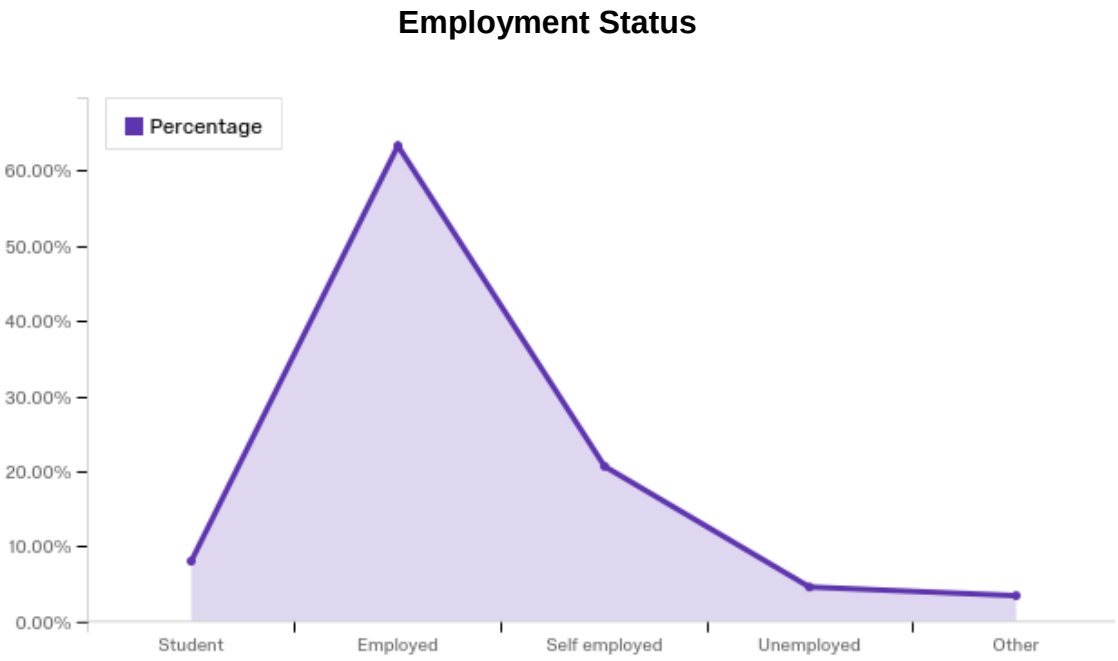


Figure 4.4 Employment

As indicated in the figure above, a large majority of the population is employed, encompassing 63.30% of the respondents. 20.64% are self-employed, 8.03% are students, 4.59% are unemployed and 3.44% indicated as other.

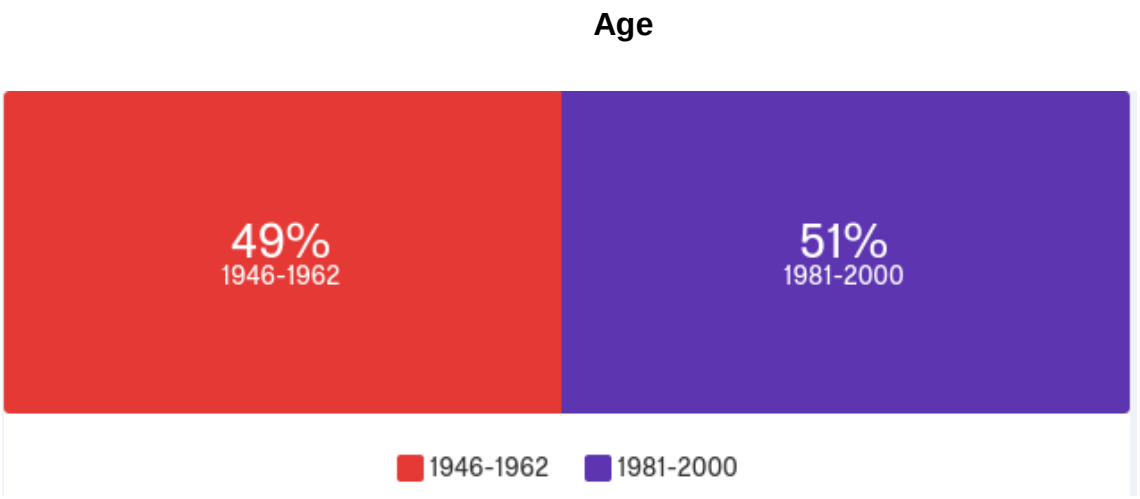


Figure 4.5 Age Category

This question was part of the qualifying measures as the study only analysed individuals who were born between 1946-1962 and 1981-2000. 51% of the respondents were Generation Y, whilst 49% of the respondents were Baby Boomers.

4.2.2 Social Media Engagements

Are you on Facebook?

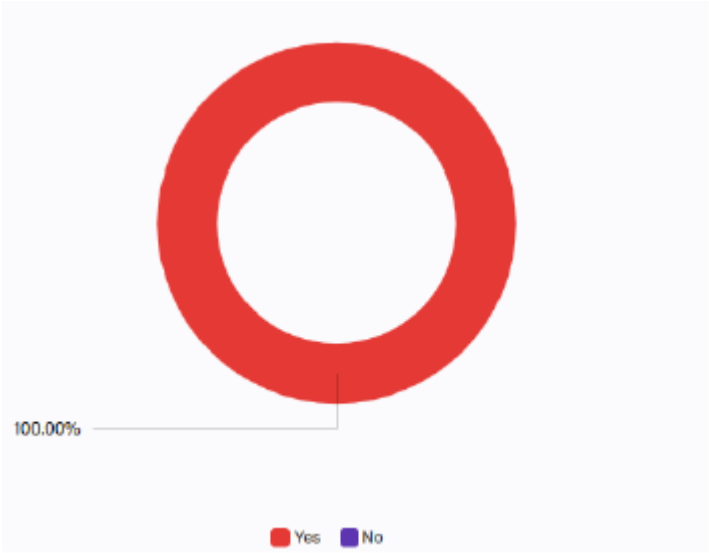


Figure 4.6 Facebook

This question was an eliminating question, as the respondents that are not on Facebook did not take part on the survey.

Do you read Facebook Posts on Holiday Accommodation?

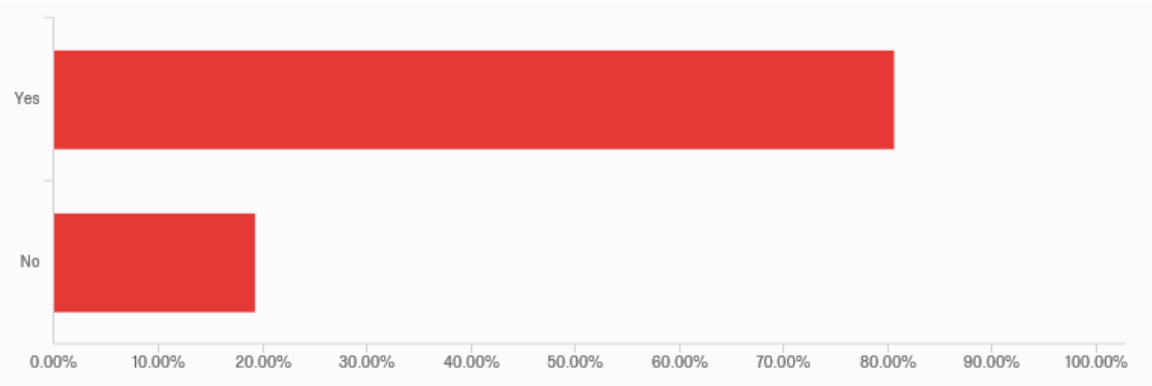


Figure 4.7 Reading Facebook Posts

80% of the respondents responded that they read Facebook posts on holiday accommodation while 20% said they did not.

Do you read Online Reviews on holiday travel?

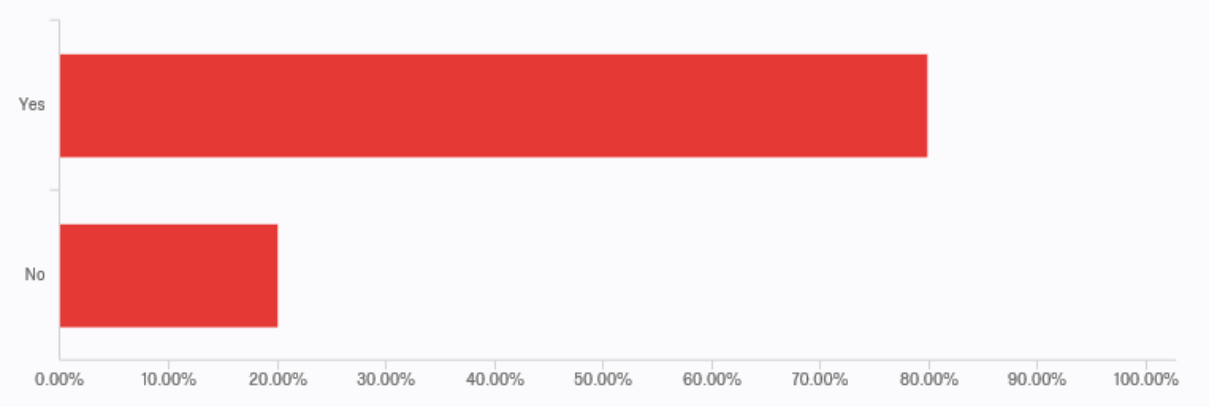


Figure 4.8 Reading Online Reviews

The results of Online Reviews are similar to reading Facebook posts as 80% of the respondents said they did while 20% said they did not.

4.2.3 Social Media, OCR and eWOM Measurement Scales

The section analysed the relationship between Social Media(Facebook); OCR and eWOM and how these factors influence purchasing intention. The finds are as follows:

Social Media Measurement Scale

#	Field	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I share my holiday accommodation posts on Facebook	13.22%	15.96%	8.48%	46.88%	15.46%
2	I often consult other consumers on Facebook regarding holiday accommodation	14.32%	17.34%	8.79%	45.48%	14.07%
3	I often click on an article link on Facebook to read on holiday accommodation	10.33%	10.58%	7.81%	54.91%	16.37%
4	Facebook keeps me informed on holiday travel through blogs, friends posts, users reviews and articles	11.14%	5.82%	6.84%	56.71%	19.49%

Table 4.1 Social Media Measurement Scale

As indicated in the above table, 46.88% of Facebook users agree that they share their holiday accommodation posts on Facebook while 15.96% disagree. This shows that most people use Facebook to share information amongst their friends. 45.48% of users consult other consumers on Facebook regarding holiday accommodation while 17.34% disagree. 54.91% often click on an article link on Facebook to read on holiday accommodation while 10.58% disagree. The findings confirm that most Facebook users use the platform as their source of information where they gather insights on matters that are important to them. 56.71% of Facebook users agree that Facebook keeps them informed on holiday travel through blogs, friends' posts and articles while only 5.82% disagree. These results are a clear indication that Facebook has a positive relationship with eWOM and OCR.

OCR Measurement Scale

The OCR measurement scale was used on ten consumer reviews taken from TripAdvisor. The results are as follows:

Question 1: Very Sophisticated Hotel

After reading this review, 45.12% of the users responded as extremely likely to purchase while another 45.12% responded as likely to purchase hotel accommodation. A minority of 9.76% responded as not likely to purchase. These results indicate that there is a positive relationship between OCR and purchasing intent, as such, we can assume that OCR influences purchase intent.

Question 2: Excellent hotel and staff is very attentive

47.48% and 42.97% of respondents indicated that they were extremely likely to purchase and likely to purchase holiday accommodation respectively. 9.55% responded unfavourably to the review by indicating that they would likely not purchase. Most of the respondents have a positive relationship while only a few do not. This means OCR influences purchasing intent.

Question 3: The hotel is nice, and the people are friendly, however, at 07h00 the hotel becomes a nightmare with dog barking without stopping

This review had a negative connotation (hotel becoming a nightmare at 07h00 because of dog barking) as such, the results were split as follows: 55.88% that were likely to purchase; 31.28% that were unlikely to purchase and 12.83% who indicated to be neither likely nor unlikely to purchase holiday accommodation. The results indicate that the context of the review is relevant because a fault-finding review will provide negative results while a complimentary review provides favourable results. This, however, does not change what the study is investigating, which is to ascertain if OCR affects purchase intent or not. With this question, the results indicate that OCR does affect purchase intent.

Question 4: Big clean rooms, however, very poor breakfast

The findings of this review were unfavourable as the majority of respondents comprised of 52.53% who indicated that they would not purchase holiday accommodation after reading the review. Only 32% specified that they would purchase while only 15.47% were neither likely nor unlikely to purchase. The insight from this review is that although OCR has an influence on purchase intent, whether consumers purchase or not is highly dependent on the context of the review – is it complimentary or is it unappealing?

Question 5: Comfortable room with king size bed

39.47% and 48.80% of the respondents advised that they would be extremely likely and likely to purchase holiday accommodation respectively. A small number of 5.33% indicated they would not purchase whilst 6.40% were neither likely nor unlikely to purchase. These results indicate that there is a positive relationship between OCR and purchase intent.

Question 6: The breakfast is legendary with great cooked choices

An extreme percentage of 58.45% respondents said they would be extremely likely to purchase, 33.24% said they would be likely to purchase. The small difference of 8.12% said they would not purchase. The results confirm that OCR influences purchase intent.

Question 7: We were delighted by the excellent rooms, until the hotel manager violated our privacy

As indicated in Question 3 and 4 above, if the review has an unfavourable statement, the outcome from the consumer is not to purchase (Lee, Park, & Han, 2007). This is a clear indication that consumers trust the views of other consumers (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013) as such, they will decide to not purchase accommodation based on the review they read. The same is evident based on the responses from this question as 38.61% said they would not purchase while 12.87% indicated to be neither likely nor unlikely to purchase. 29.22% said they were likely to purchase and 19.30% said they were extremely likely to purchase.

Question 8: Beautiful accommodations in a beautiful setting

53.64% and 38.81% of respondents said they were extremely likely and likely to purchase holiday accommodation respectively. Only 11.59% said they would not purchase. Based on these results we can assume that there is a relationship between OCR and purchase intent.

Question 9: The staff is very nice, and rooms are well appointed. However, bed linen smells of onions

44.99% of respondents were not influenced to purchase holiday accommodation after reading this review. 37% said they would purchase while 15.01% were neither likely nor unlikely to purchase. As evidently proven, the negative connotation of this review has resulted in most consumers opting not to purchase. These findings support a study by Lee, Park, & Han, (2007) that proved that the effect of negative OCRs decreases the likelihood of consumers purchase intention.

Question 10: Good orientation of the hotel

A majority of 80.43% of respondents said they would be likely to purchase, 9.66% said they were unlikely to purchase while 9.22% were neither likely nor unlikely to purchase. The result indicates there is a relationship between OCR and purchase intent, as such, we can assume that OCR influences purchasing intention.

eWOM Measurement Scale

This section of eWOM analysis took real Facebook posts, blogs, and images posted by users following their hotel visits. After viewing each eWOM post as per questions listed below, the responses were as follows:

Question 1: Facebook user posted image: Bedroom1

The below graph indicates that 68.65% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 26.22% said yes, they would purchase while only 4.05% and 0.81% said probably not and definitely not respectively.

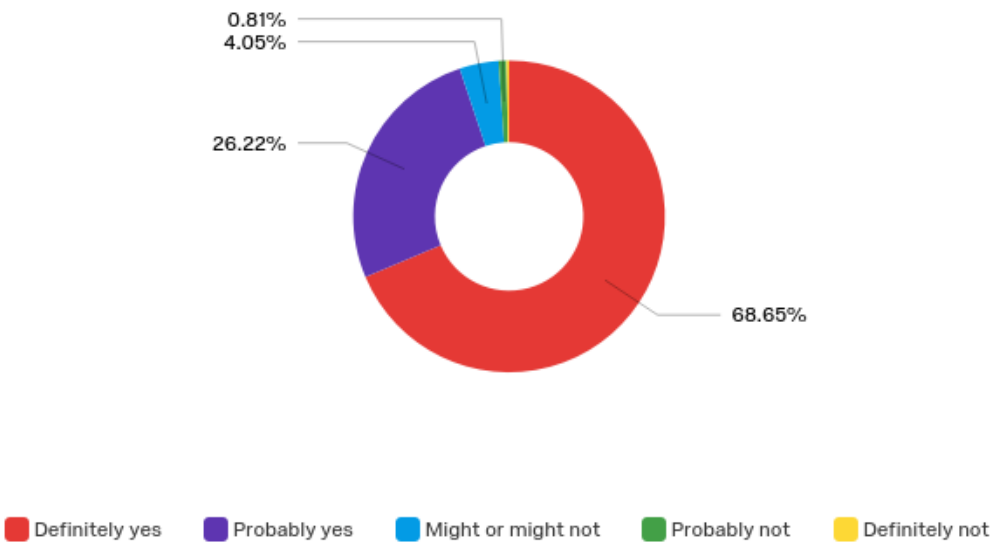


Figure 4.9 Facebook user posted image: Bedroom1

Question 2: Facebook post

The below graph indicates that 43.51% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 44.32% said yes, they would have the intention to purchase while only 7.57%, 3.78% and 0.81 said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not book respectively.

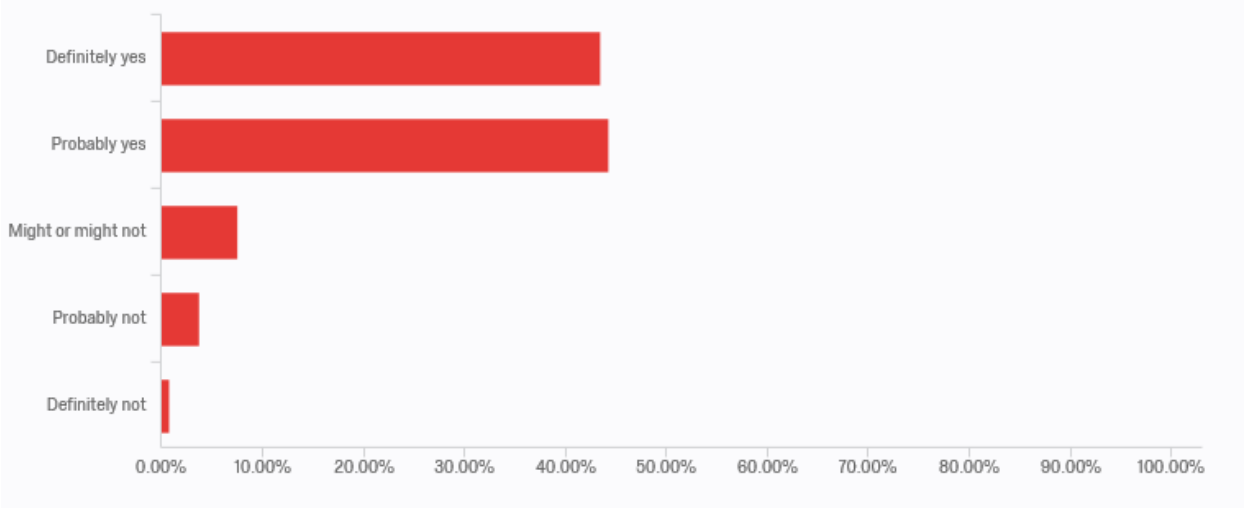


Figure: 4.10 Facebook posts

Question 3: Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 1

The below graph indicates that 38.65% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 51.08% said yes, they would purchase while only 7.57%, 2.16 and 0.54% said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not respectively.

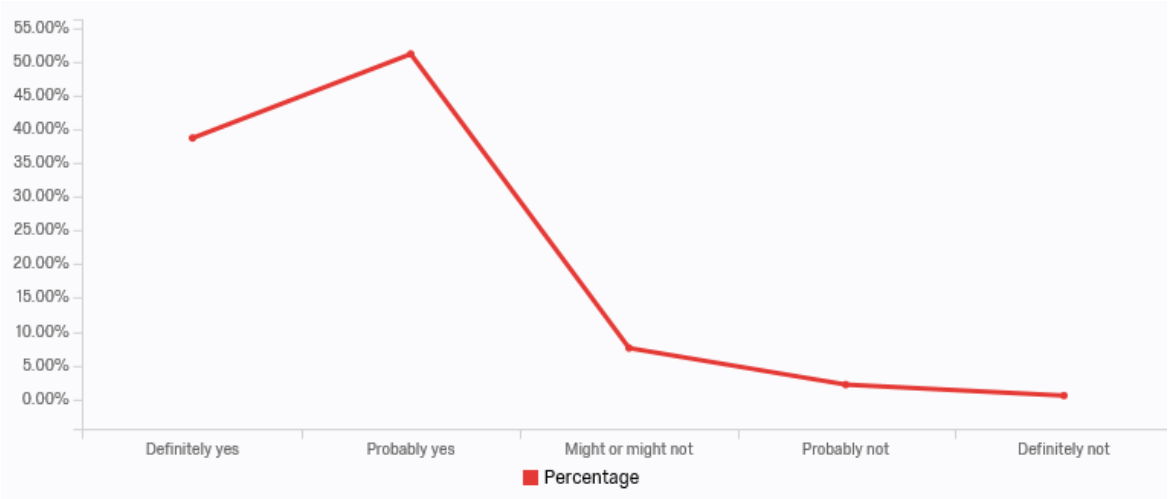


Figure 4.11 Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 1

Question 4: Blog post by a Facebook User

The below graph indicates that 59.19% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 35.68% said yes, they had an intention to purchase while only 4.32% and 0.81% said probably not and definitely not respectively.

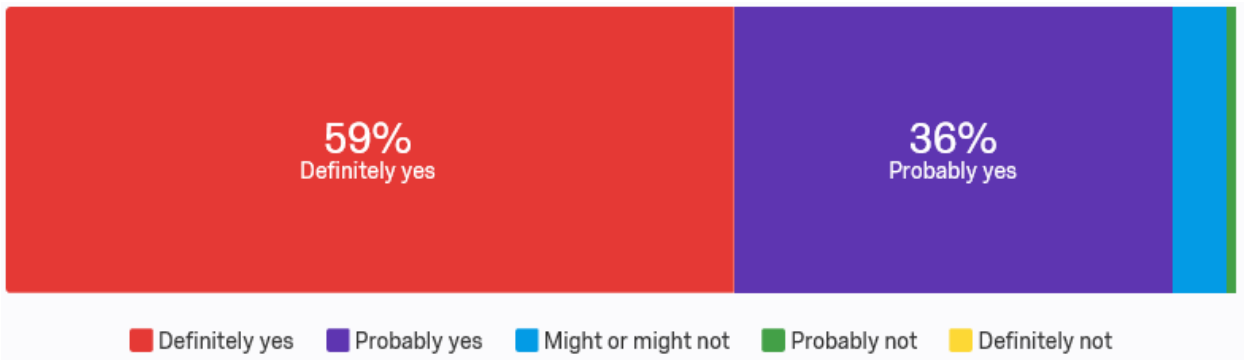


Figure 4.12 Blog post by a Facebook User

Question 5: Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 1

The below graph indicates that 70% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 24.05% said yes, they had an intention to purchase while only 4.32% and 1.08% said probably not and definitely not respectively.

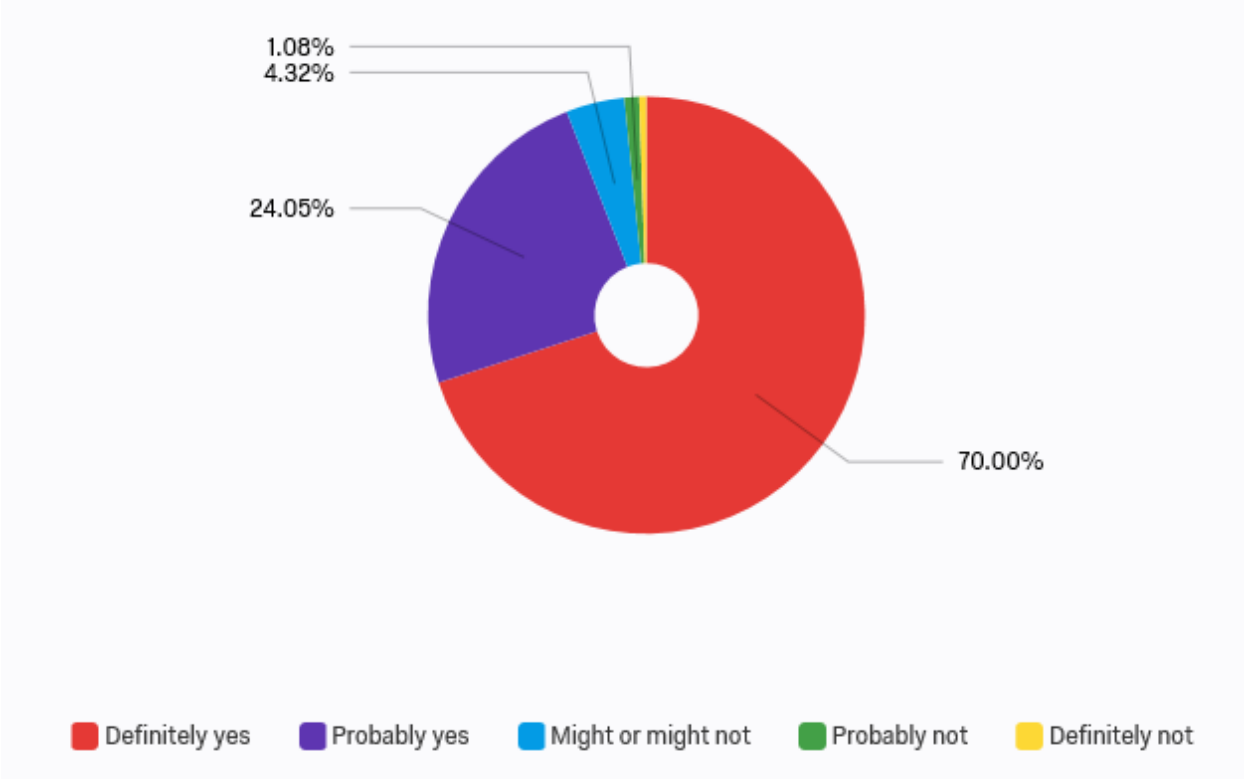


Figure 4.13 Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 1

Question 6: Facebook user posted image: Bathroom 1

The below graph indicates that 28.53% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 53.26% said yes, they had an intention to purchase while only 10.60%, 5.98 and 1.63 said might or might not, probably not and definitely not respectively.

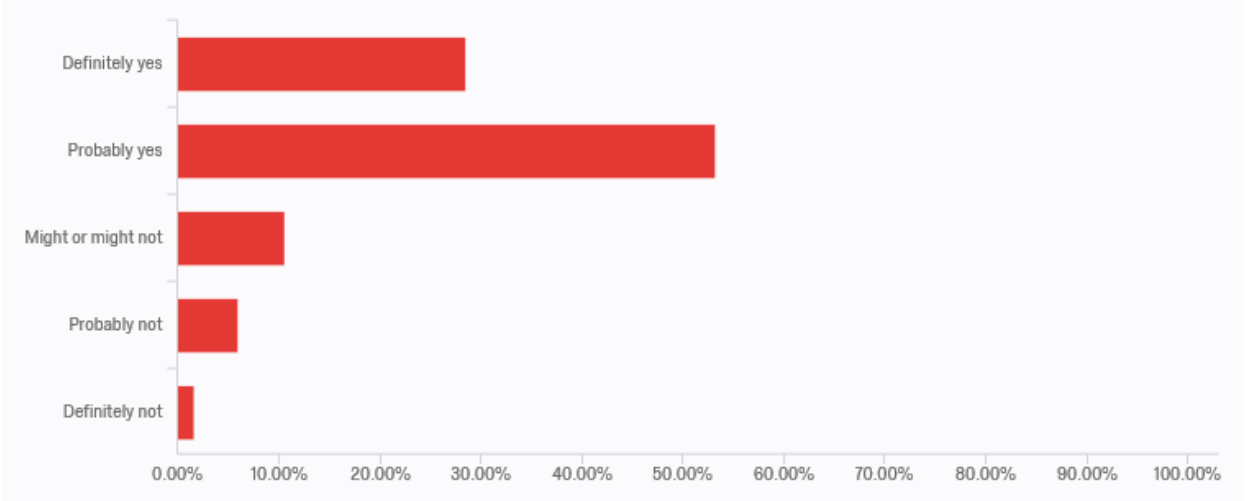


Figure 4.14 Facebook user posted image: Bathroom 1

Question 7: Facebook user posted image: Bedroom 2

The below graph indicates that 59.56% of respondents said they would definitely book at the hotel, 28.42% said yes, they had an intention to purchase while only 8.47%, 1.91% and 1.64% said might or might not, probably not and definitely not respectively.

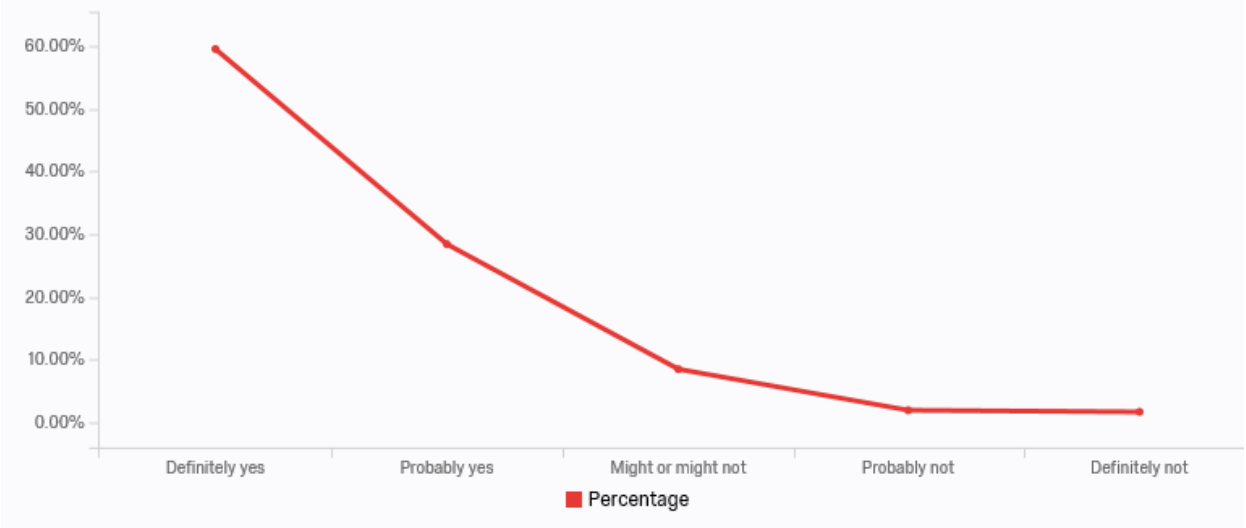


Figure 4.15 Facebook user posted image: Bedroom 2

Question 8: Facebook user posted image: Bedroom 3

The below graph indicates that 25.07% and 43.05% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel, while 13.08%, 11,72% and 7.08% said might or might not, probably not and definitely not.

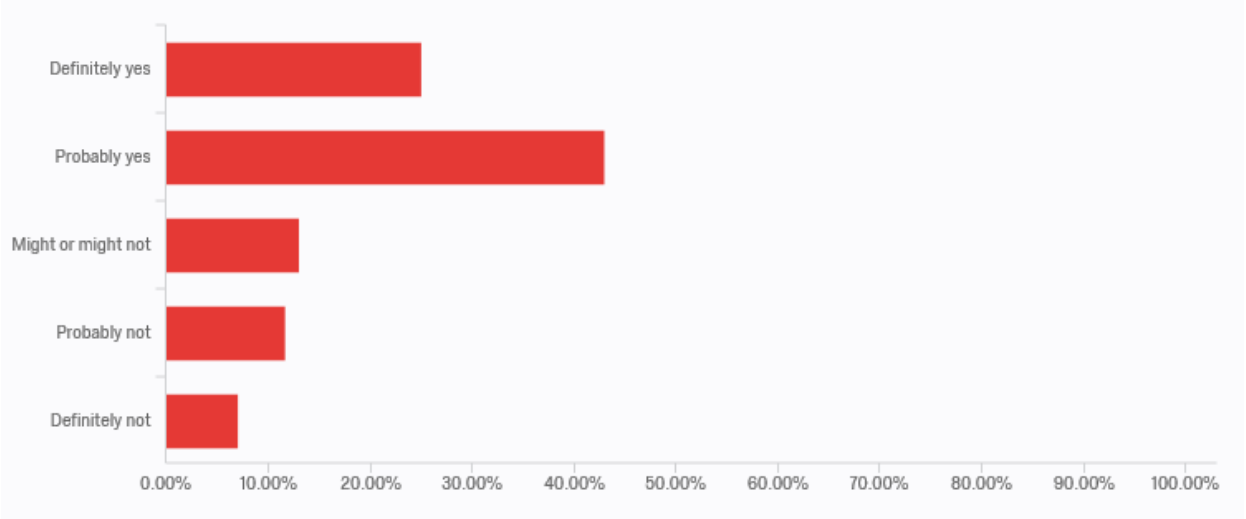


Figure 4.16 Facebook user posted image: Bedroom 3

Question 9: Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 2

The below graph indicates that 36.51% and 41.69% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 11.44%, 7.08% and 3.27% said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not book at the hotel.

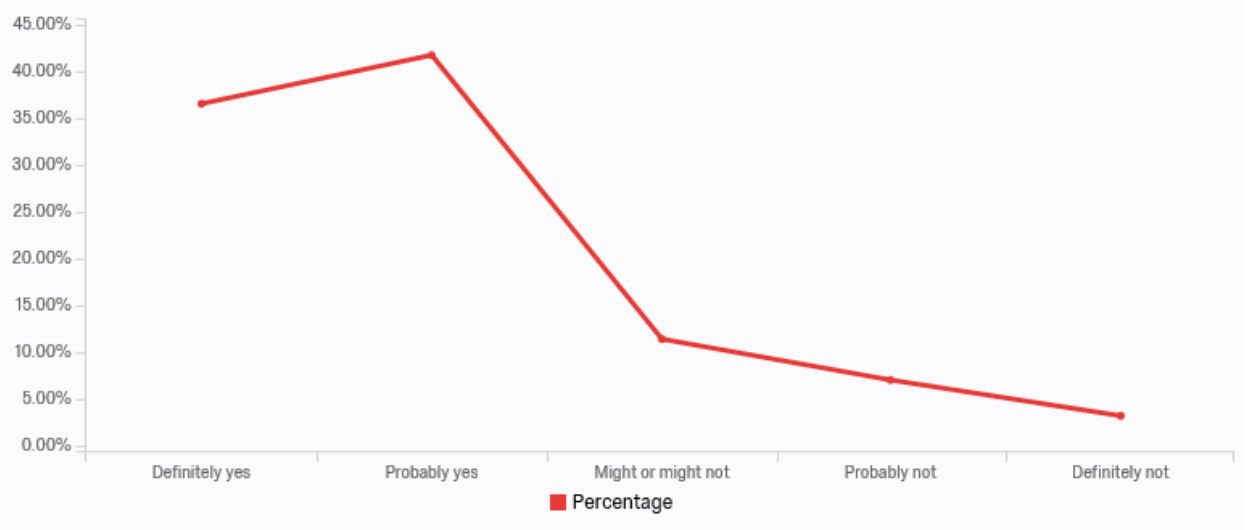


Figure 4.17 Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 2

Question 10: Facebook user posted image: Outside Hotel 3

The below graph indicates that 59.02% and 33.33% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 5.19%, 2.19% and 0.27% said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not book at the hotel.

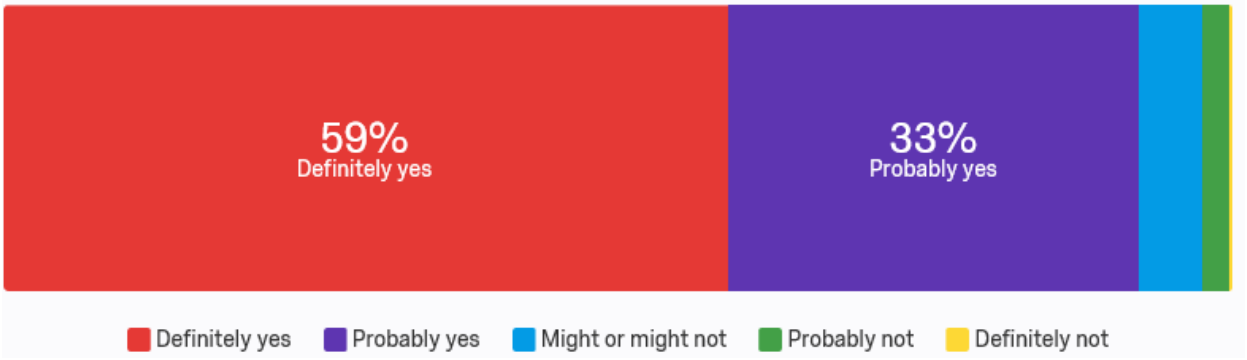


Figure: 4.18 Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 3

Question 11: Facebook user posted image: Bathroom 2

The below graph indicates that 39.13% and 43.21% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 13.86% and 3.53% said they might or might not and probably not respectively.

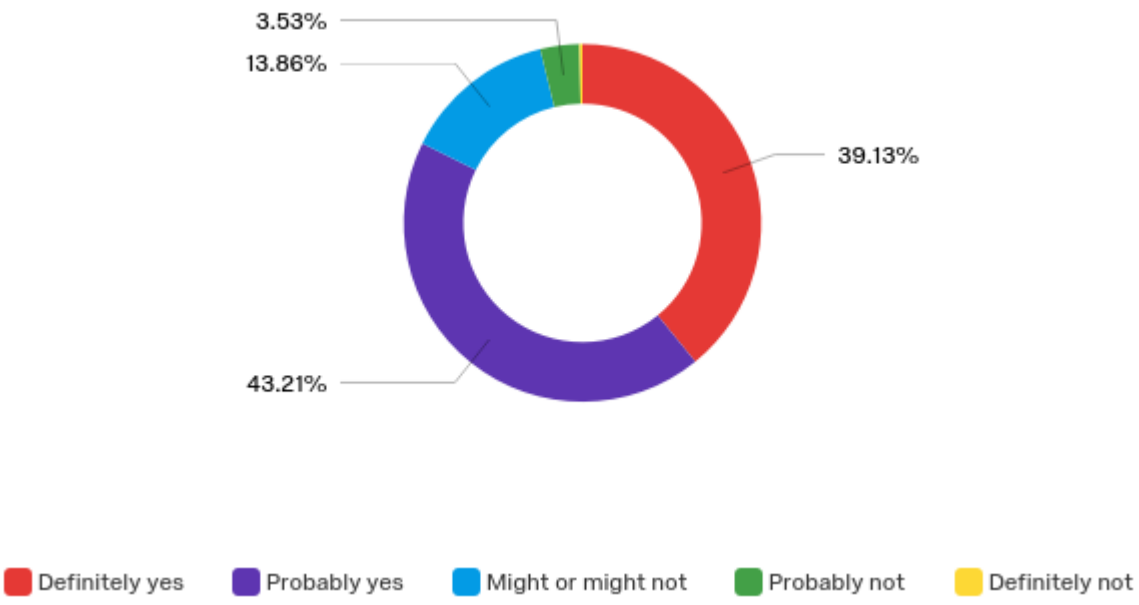


Figure 4.19 Facebook user posted image: Bathroom 2

Question 12: Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 2

The below graph indicates that 49% and 44% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 6% and 1% said they might or might not and probably not respectively.

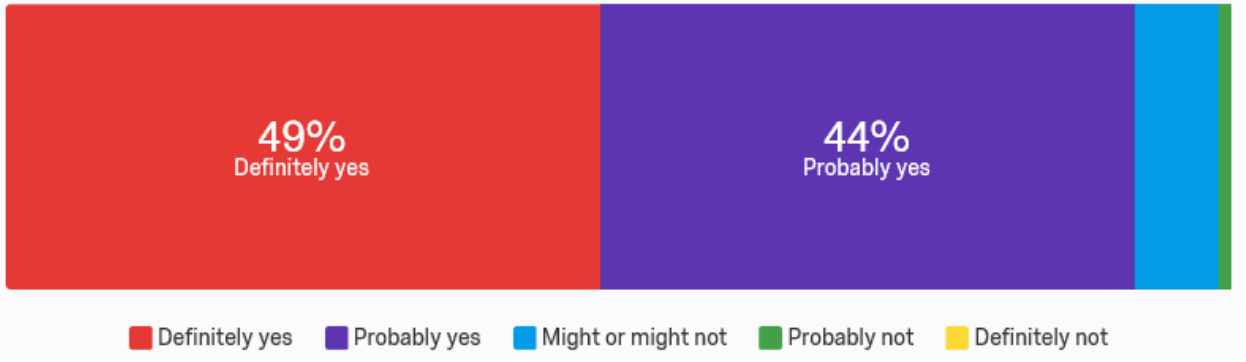


Figure 4.20 Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 2

Question 13: Facebook user posted image: Hotel Lounge 1

The below graph indicates that 42.93% and 38.04% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 12.50%, 4.62% and 1.90% said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not respectively.

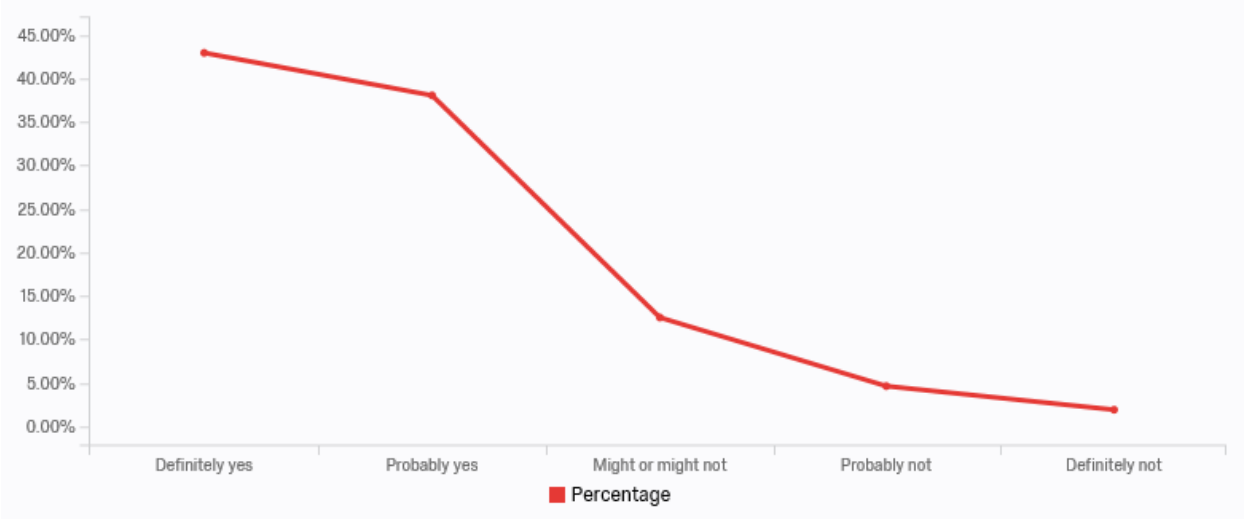


Figure 4.21 Facebook user posted image: Hotel Lounge 1

Question 14: Facebook user posted image: Bedroom 4

The below graph indicates that 65.12% and 31.61% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 2.72% said they might or might not.

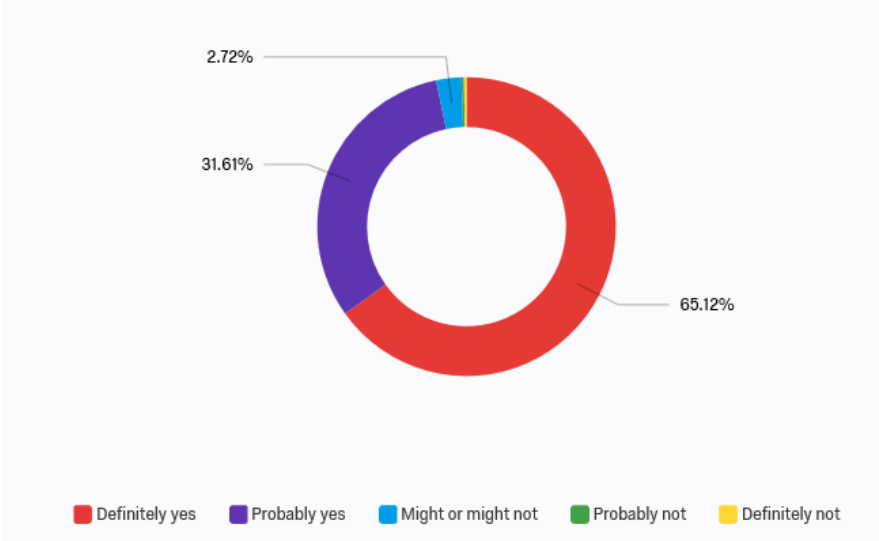


Figure 4.22 Facebook user posted image: Bedroom 4

Question 15: Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 3

The below graph indicates that 45.65% and 46.74% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 4.62%, 2.54% and 0.54% said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not respectively.

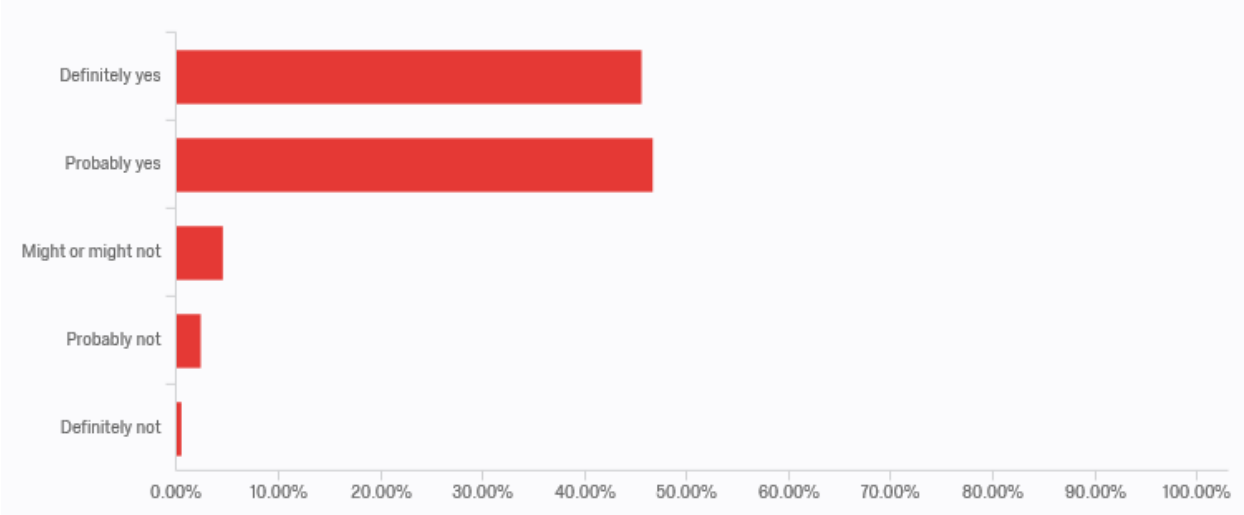


Figure 4.23 Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 3

Question 16: Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 4

The below graph indicates that 59.78% and 33.15% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 6.25% said they might or might not.

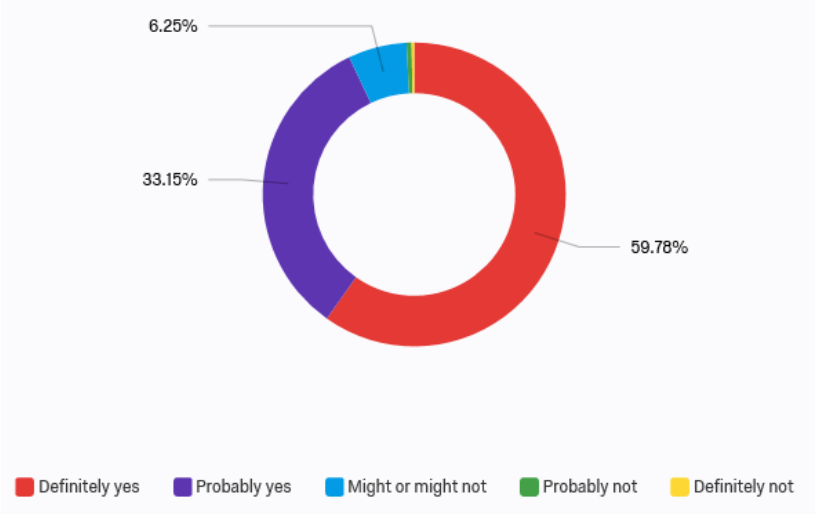


Figure 4.24 Facebook user posted image: Outside of Hotel 4

Question 17: Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 4

The below graph indicates that 47% and 43% of respondents said they would definitely book and probably book at this hotel respectively, while 9% and 1% said they might or might not, probably not and definitely not respectively.

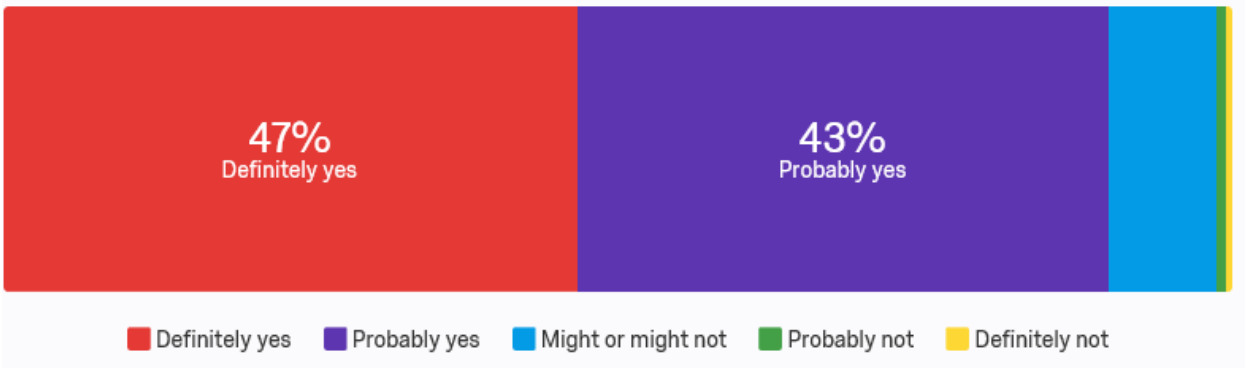


Figure 4.25 Facebook user posted image: Breakfast 4

Prior studies by (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008); (Cheung & Lee, 2012); (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007) and (Duan, Gu, & Whinston, 2008) have already proven the role and the influence of eWOM has on the purchasing intent of consumers. The results of this study prove the same findings and contribute towards the existing literature.

4.3 Reliability and Validity Measurements

This section presents the results pertaining to the measurement scales of reliability and validity. Reliability is concerned with the ability of an instrument to measure consistently and validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

4.3.1 Reliability Measurement

4.3.1.1 Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Social Media	0.928
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.883
Online Consumer Review	0.817
Purchase Intent	0.777

Table 4.2 Cronbach's Alpha

Alpha is commonly used to test reliability as high-quality tests are needed to test reliability. The Cronbach Alpha for all the variables is greater than 0.70 accepted measure, which shows good internal consistency reliability.

4.3.1.2 Composite Reliability

Constructs			Estimate	$(\Sigma\lambda Yi)^2$	$\acute{e}i$	$\Sigma\acute{e}i$	$(\Sigma\lambda yi)^2 / [(\Sigma\lambda yi)^2 + (\Sigma\acute{e}i)]$
Q12_8	<----	OCR	0.786		0.382204		
Q12_3	<----	OCR	0.845		0.285975		
Q12_6	<----	OCR	0.876	6.285049	0.232624	0.900803	0.874642144
Q24	<----	eWOM	0.746		0.443484		
Q30	<----	eWOM	0.885		0.216775		
Q32	<-----	eWOM	0.814	5.978025	0.337404	0.997663	0.856979985

Table 4.3 Composite reliability

Composite reliability is a measure of scale reliability and it assesses the internal consistency of a measure (Being, 2007). According to Fornell & Lacker to (1981), a string measure of reliability should be above 0.80. For this study, the composite reliability was greater than 0.80, which shows strong reliability.

4.3.2 Validity

4.3.2.1 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is assessed using average variance extracted and an inter-construct correlation matrix.

4.3.2.1.1 Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Constructs			Estimate	λyi²	Σλyi²	ε̇i	Σε̇i	Σλyi² / (Σλyi² + Σε̇i)
Q12_8	<----	OCR	0.786	0.617796	2.099197	0.382204	0.900803	0.699732333
Q12_3	<----	OCR	0.845	0.714025		0.285975		
Q12_6	<----	OCR	0.876	0.767376		0.232624		
Q24	<----	eWOM	0.746	0.556516	2.002337	0.443484	0.997663	0.667445667
Q30	<----	eWOM	0.885	0.783225		0.216775		
Q32	<-----	eWOM	0.814	0.662596		0.337404		

Table 4.4 AVE

The threshold recommended for AVE is 0.40 as advised by Kuo & Hsu (2001). Therefore, the table above shows that all the AVE estimates are greater than 0.40 (0.699 and 0.667), which shows strong validity.

4.3.2.1.2 Inter-construct correlation matrix

	Social Media	eWOM	OCR	Purchase Intent
Social Media	1.000			
eWOM	0.154	1.000		
OCR	0.321	0.564	1.000	
Purchase Intent	0.243	0.412	0.213	1.000

Table 4.5 Inter-construct correlation matrix

A correlation matrix shows**,** in brief, the interconnections between series of variables. It computes correlation coefficients between variables represented in the same sequence of rows and columns (White, Karotayev, & Khaltourina, 2004). The table above shows high inter-construct matrix between the variables.

4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The model fit test was done using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and from the results below, it can be seen that the model produced an acceptable fit.

Using CFA, the following statistical indicators fared as follows with standards:

CFA for model fit: Standards	CFA for model fit: Results
Chi-square value < 3	Chi-square value = 2.45
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) > 0.9	Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.935
Augmented Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) > 0.9	Augmented Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.935
Composite Fit Index (CFI) > 0.9	Composite Fit Index (CFI) = 0.987
Incremental Fit Index (IFI) > 0.9	Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.988
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.9	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.975
Normed Fit Index (NFI) > 0.9	Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.935
Random Measurements of Standard Error Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08	Random Measurements of Standard Error Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.08

Table 4.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

4.5 Path Modelling and Hypotheses Testing

4.5.1 Path Modelling

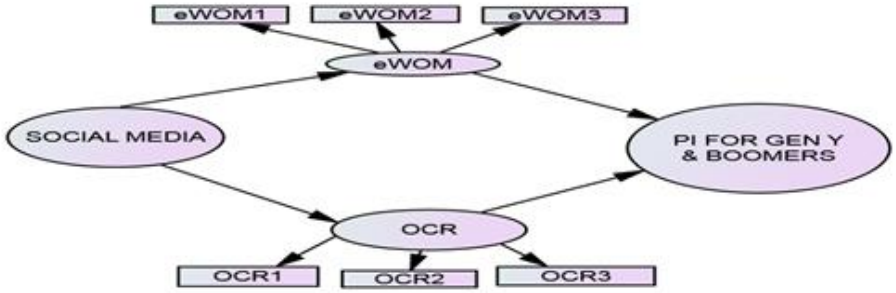


Figure 4.26 Path Modelling

In statistics, path modelling is used to determine a relationship on variables. The above figure is in line with the conceptual model presented in Chapter 2. The hypotheses results are presented below.

4.5.2. Hypotheses results

The study was aimed to test the below hypotheses as detailed in Chapter 2.

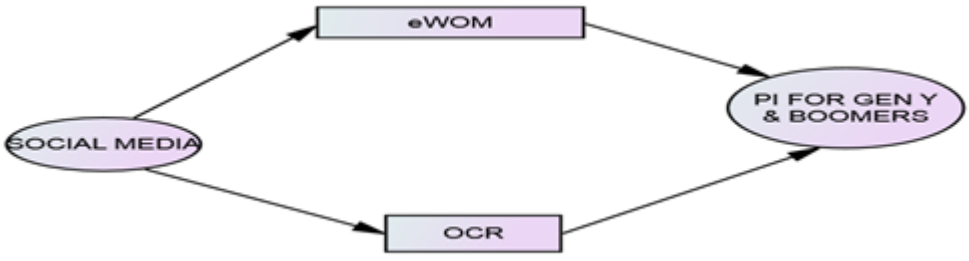


Figure 4.27 Conceptual Model

The hypotheses results are depicted on the table below.

Path coefficient	Hypothesis	Estimate	P-Value	Result
Social media → eWOM	H_{1A}	0.430	***	Significant and supported
Social media → OCR	H_{2A}	0.389	***	Significant and supported
eWOM → Purchase intent	H_{3A}	0.618	***	Significant and supported
OCR → Purchase Intent	H_{4A}	0.622	***	Significant and supported

Table 4.7 Hypotheses testing results

4.5.2.1 H1A: Social media has an influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

The path coefficient of H1A was 0.430, and this advocates a significant relationship between social media and eWOM. The P-value indicates a 0.01 level of confidence, which then confirms the hypothesis is significant and supported.

4.5.2.2 H2A: Social media has an effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation.

The path coefficient of H2A was 0.389, and this advocates a significant relationship between social media and eWOM. The P-value indicates a 0.01 level of confidence, which then confirms the hypothesis is significant and supported.

4.5.2.3 H3A: eWOM influences purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

The path coefficient of H3A was 0.618, and this advocates a significant relationship between eWOM and Purchase Intent. The P-value indicates a 0.01 level of confidence, which then confirms the hypothesis is significant and supported.

4.5.2.4 H4A: OCR affects purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers.

The path coefficient of H4A was 0.622, and this advocates a significant relationship between OCR and Purchase Intent. The P-value indicates a 0.01 level of confidence, which then confirms the hypothesis is significant and supported and that it was a very strong relationship for these variables.

4.6 Conclusion of the hypotheses results

The data collected on all 425 respondents was analysed using SPSS. As indicated above, it met all reliability and validity requirements. To test the hypotheses, we used the path modelling, the results indicated that the hypotheses were significant and supported; H4A had the strongest relationship while H2A had the weakest. These findings are discussed in greater length in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter makes deductions from the findings discussed in Chapter 4. The findings are discussed referring to the two generational cohorts; analysing their individual respondents and comparing them against each other.

5.2 Demographics

Statistics show that 40.93% of respondents are male Baby Boomers and 59.07% are female. Generation Y had 36.59% males and 63.41% females. This indicates that within both generational cohorts, females are the majority Facebook users as the females are 18.14% higher than males within the Baby Boomer category and 26.82% higher than males within the Generation Y category. Females being the majority users ties in with the (Stats, 2015) report that details that South African has more females than males.

Black Africans were the majority respondents. Generation Y had a high of 72.20% and Baby Boomers 46.63% Black African respondents. There has been a growth in the middle class, hence we see many Black Africans who are now socially equipped with smart phones – they are also digitally and technologically exposed, unlike in the past. Whites followed with 19.69% within Baby Boomers and 8.29% within Generation Y. Indians and Coloureds settled at 12.95% and 12.44% respectively within Baby Boomers while Generation Y had 10.05% Indians and 9.55% Coloureds. Both cohorts had a small percentage of Asians, with 7.77% and 3.41% for Baby Boomers and Generation Y respectively.

The highest education level for both cohorts was Matric: Baby Boomers had 32.64% matric respondents whilst Generation Y had 29.76%. Education is therefore not prevalent among South Africans due to poverty; also, most of the Black African Baby Boomers could not study further because of apartheid, hence the high number of matric qualification results is justifiable. Diploma, Degree and Postgraduates all have a similar split of 24%, 22% and 20% amongst both generations.

The study did not discriminate against the unemployed individuals as it considered Baby Boomers who are past retirement age. The unemployed, however, only made a very small percentage of 4.66% and 2.93% for Baby Boomers and Generation Y respectively. Most of the respondents were employed; making a split of 51.30% amongst Baby Boomers and 69.27% within Generation Y. Baby Boomers had several self-employed respondents sitting at 38.34% while Generation Y only had 6.83%. Understandably, Baby Boomers only had 1.04% of students while Generation Y had 15.61%. These results indicate that there is still a huge population of Baby Boomers that are still in the employment sector, thus are contributing to the economy of the country.

5.3 Social Media Engagements

5.3.1 Do you read Facebook posts on holiday accommodation?

Baby Boomers who responded favourably with a yes to this question were a percentage of 87.56% while 12.44% said no they did not read Facebook posts on holiday accommodation. Generation Y also had a positive response of 81.95% of respondents who indicated with a yes on reading Facebook posts, with only 18.05% who said no. The high percentages on both cohorts are a clear indication that both generational cohorts engage with Facebook and they use the platform as their research tool.

5.3.2 Do you read online reviews on holiday accommodation?

80.83% of Baby Boomers responded yes to reading online reviews while 19.11% responded with a no. 80% of Generation Y also had a positive response, answering with a yes, while only 20% said no they do not read online reviews on holiday accommodation. Insights from this question confirm findings from Litvin et al (2005) that consumers use online reviews as a reliable source of information. Facebook users trust what other fellow users have to say about their experience other than hearing it from the service provider. That is why users read online reviews before purchase as indicated above.

5.4 Social Media, eWOM and OCR Measurement Scale

5.4.1 Social Media Measurement Scale

As addressed on sub-problem two, the study will investigate the relationship both cohorts have with social media and how each factor influences their purchasing decisions. The findings are as follows:

I share my holiday accommodation posts on Facebook

51.30% of Baby Boomers who exceeded 40% of Generation Y indicated that they agreed with this statement. A further 16.06% and 18.13% of Baby Boomers and Generation Ys respectively expressed that they strongly agreed with this statement. Although there was an indication of 10.36% and 16.6% of Baby Boomers that stated they strongly disagreed and disagreed with this statement and a further 12.68% from Generation Y who indicated they also did not agree with the statement, we can make an analysis that the majority from both cohorts responded favourably, meaning social media plays a critical role as their communication channel, thus they have a favourable relationship.

I often consult other consumers on Facebook regarding holiday accommodation

A majority of Baby Boomers of 51.09% agreed with the statement while 42.11% of Generation Y also agreed. 16.85% of Baby Boomers strongly agreed, exceeding 12.11% from Generation Y. Baby Boomers seem to be the stronger group in having Facebook as an influencer in their purchasing intention. There is a small percentage from both cohorts that disagreed with the statement and they are broken down as follows: 9.78% and 16.85% of Baby Boomers indicated they strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement respectively. 15.26% and 17.89% of Generation Y also responded unfavourably by strongly disagreeing and disagreeing with the statement. Although there is a little over 27% of Baby Boomers and 33% of Generation Y who indicated no interest in utilising Facebook to consult other consumers, most users rely on Facebook to reach out to other users for information sharing, thus again proving a strong relationship.

I often click on the article link on Facebook to read on holiday accommodation

It is not surprising that Baby Boomers are keen on reading an article to gain more insight on holiday accommodation as they have been classified as a generation that is devoted to reading and learning. As such, 54.40% and 17.10% of Baby Boomers agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Generation Y followed the same sentiments as 51.71% and 14.15% agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

Facebook keeps me informed on holiday travel through blogs, friends' posts, users' reviews and articles.

57.61% combined with 18.65% of Baby Boomers agreed and strongly agreed with this statement, while 51.22% and 19.02% of Generation Y agreed and strongly agreed with this statement. Only a combination of 8.81% and 4.15% Baby Boomers disagreed, likewise, with an 8.29% and 5.37% of Generation Y in disagreement.

The high take out percentages from both cohorts indicates that a positive relationship exists.

5.4.2 OCR Measurement Scale

Ten online reviews were selected to analyse if respondents would likely or unlikely have an intention to purchase hotel accommodation after reading the review. All ten collectively gave the following results:

54% of Baby Boomers that read online reviews are extremely likely to purchase followed by 42% that are likely to purchase accommodation based on the online reviews they read. This is a very high percentage indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. We can therefore deduct from the analysis that OCR influences the purchasing intent on Baby Boomers.

Furthermore, analysis on Generation Y indicates that 42% are extremely likely to purchase and 48% are likely to purchase hotel accommodation after reading a review from a Facebook user. Deductions from the analysis are: OCR affects the purchase decision for Generation Y. These findings share the same insight as studies done by

(Zhang, Zhao, Cheung, & Lee, 2014), as well as (Almana & Mirza, 2013) indicating that characteristics of reviews are effective factors in consumer purchasing intention.

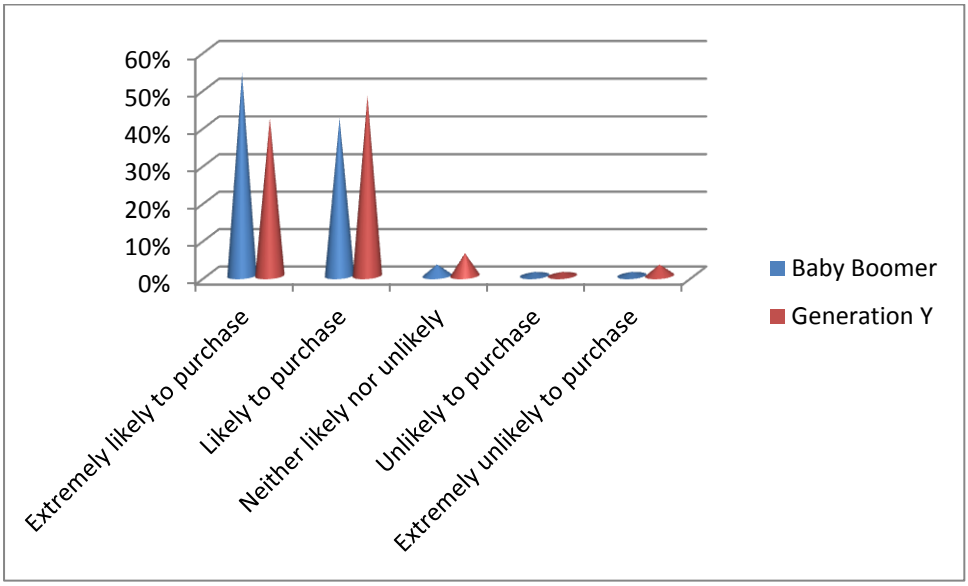


Figure 5.1 OCR influence on Baby Boomers and Generation Y

5.4.3 eWOM Measurement Scale

Lastly, section D of the measuring tool analysed the influence of eWOM on purchasing intent for both cohorts. The findings are as follows:

38% of Baby Boomers said they are extremely likely to purchase and a high of 54% said they are likely to purchase hotel accommodation based on eWOM. Generation Y cohort, although also indicating a favourable relationship with eWOM, did however come at a lower percentage than Baby Boomers, as 37% said they were extremely likely to purchase and again 37% said they were likely to purchase. This means Generation Ys are more influenced by OCR over eWOM regarding their purchasing intention.

A previous study by (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008) has already indicated the growing trend of eWOM's influence on purchasing behaviour. The findings of this study support this notion as it's evident from the combined percentage of extremely likely to purchase and likely to purchase on Baby Boomers, which is 92%, while the combined percentage for extremely likely to purchase and likely to purchase on Generation Y is 74%.

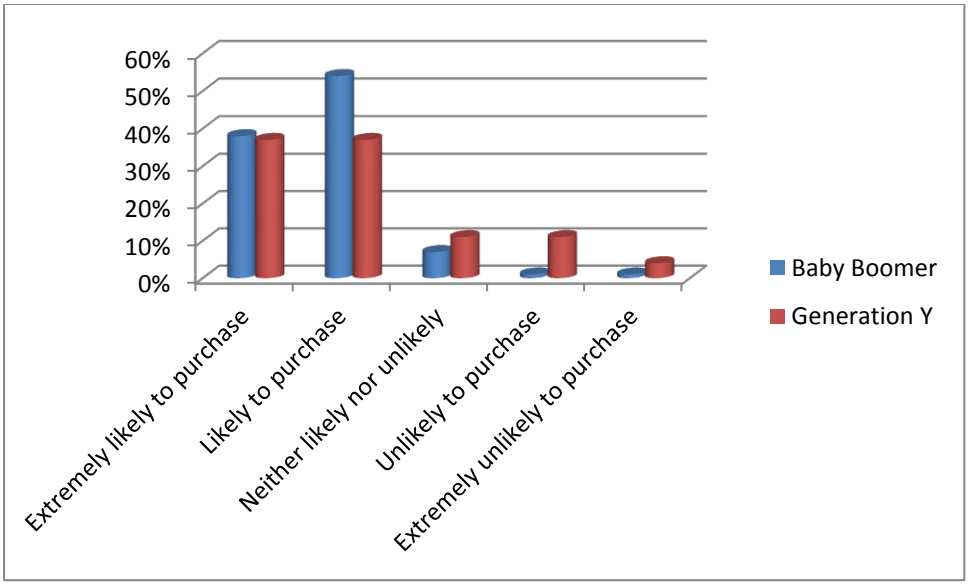


Figure 5.2 eWOM influences on Baby Boomers and Generation Y

The above graph indicates that Baby Boomers are more influenced by eWOM than Generation Ys. These new findings reverse studies by (Nyemba, Mukwasi, Mhakure, Mosiane, & Chigona, 2015) where they stated that Baby Boomers inhibit participation on social media platforms. It is evident that more and more Baby Boomers are now technologically perceptive and are starting to trust platforms such as Facebook.

5.4 Hypotheses Discussion

Findings from each hypothesis are discussed below:

5.4.1 Social Media and eWOM

Social media is one of the biggest communication and advertising channels used as it allows consumers to interact with businesses in real time, assess information about products and services and provide direct feedback (Momany & Alshboul, 2016). Many studies from researchers such as Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler (2004) and Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn (2008) have already established that social media has an influence on eWOM. The result of this study also reveals that there is a significant relationship between social media and eWOM. The P-Value indicates a 0.01 level of confidence, which confirms the hypothesis is significant and supported. Social Media has facilitated people to express and share ideas, thoughts and opinions with

others, as such; eWOM plays a pivotal role in consumers' decision-making process (Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides, 2012).

5.4.2 Social Media and OCR

In the travel and accommodation sector, OCR plays a critical role as an information source for potential travelers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). This is because the travel and accommodation sectors are experiential, thus tangible – as such, consumers rely on other consumers to share their experiences regarding the product or services they utilised. Over the years, OCR has become relevant; hence, the second objective of this study was to investigate the effect social media has on OCR. The results indicate that social media does affect OCR as the path coefficient was 0.389 representing a significant relationship. The P-Value indicates a 0.01 level of confidence, which proves that the hypothesis is significant and supported. Although this hypothesis was the weakest from the rest, we cannot deny the importance of the use of social media on OCR as established by Chen & Xie (2008) who declared that it is the new element of the marketing mix. Ayeh, Au, & Law (2013) indicated that the existence of social media has given rise to prominent platforms like OCR that are now widely used for decision-making purposes.

5.4.3 eWOM and Purchase Intent

The advent of the Internet has extended consumers' options of gathering unbiased product information from other consumers and provides the opportunity for consumers to offer their own consumption-related advice by engaging in eWOM (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). eWOM deserves serious attention from marketers, as such; this study is contributing to the already existing literature of the influence of eWOM on purchase intent. Although most studies had focused on Generation Y as the wired generation, there is limited literature that took interest on Baby Boomers, as it is important for marketers to understand how Baby Boomers perform in comparison to the younger generation. The results of the study showed that both cohorts are influenced by eWOM for purchasing intent. A study that relates similar results, although not focusing on different cohorts, is by Duan, Gu, & Whinston (2008) where they analysed how eWOM increased sales of a product. The results of the study demonstrate a

positive relationship. It is proven based on a path coefficient of 0.618, which is the second strongest relationship from other variables. The P-Value advocates for a 0.01 level of confidence, which confirms the hypothesis is significant and supported.

5.4.4 OCR and Purchase Intent

To reduce the purchase-associated risk and to cope with intensive decision-making, consumers rely on OCR. Since another user who is a fellow customer that has experienced the product generates customer reviews, customers believe that OCRs are more important than any other information (Chen & Xie, 2008). Zhang, Zhao, Cheung, & Lee (2014) findings are in line with the outcomes of this study as they both indicate that OCR affects Purchase Intent. This is evident based on the path coefficient of 0.622, establishing a very strong relationship. This is the strongest in all the hypotheses tested for this study. The P-Value of 0.01 for the level of confidence was established, indicating that the hypothesis is significant and supported. A study by Funde (2015) demonstrated that OCR affects Generation Y; however, the rise of Baby Boomers' interest on social media platforms should not be ignored.

5.5 Conclusion

The results from Chapters 4 and 5 discussed above support the notion from Prinyaka (2013) that social media will play a large role in influencing purchase intention. The analysis further supports many researchers' findings that social media factors, namely eWOM and OCR, play a critical role towards the purchase of a product or service.

This will enable organisations to have direct access to their customers, so they know exactly what they need. Using platforms like OCR and eWOM will create a transparent environment between organisations and the users.

The next chapter will look at the conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 6.

6.1 Introduction

This last chapter looks at the conclusion and recommendations following the findings from the study. As indicated in the literature review, there are existing studies that confirm that Generation Y is influenced by eWOM and OCR to purchase a particular product or service. However, none exists where the same is applied on Baby Boomers, neither a study that analysed the two cohorts in comparison with each other.

As primarily stated, the purpose of the study was to analyse Facebook's influence on the purchasing intention of holiday accommodation for Baby Boomers and Generation Y (Prinyaka, 2013) and further understand how eWOM and OCR influence purchasing intent on the two cohorts.

6.2 Conclusion of the study

The hypotheses were created to analyse the influence of Facebook on purchasing intentions amongst Baby Boomers and Generation Y. The outcome was consistent with the hypotheses put forward as the result indicated that eWOM and OCR influence purchase intention of holiday accommodation in both generations. Baby Boomers and Generation Ys grew up differently, hence the study sought to understand how they would each react on the two Social Media factors.

The findings of the study indicate the shifts in behaviour of Baby Boomers as they have now become more socially inclined and comfortable to be on Facebook. Previous studies by Littrell, Ma, & Halepete (2005) referred to Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation that is reserved and not technologically perceptive. Further studies by Nyemba et al. (2015) classified Baby Boomers as the generation that does not trust online platforms like social media as they believed the content to be untrue, they had fraud concerns and said social media offers no privacy. However, the result of the study shows a shift in mind-set as their Facebook usage has increased. The result of the study indicates that Baby Boomers utilise eWOM slightly more than Generation Y. They also rely on eWOM as their information source for their travel arrangements.

The hypothesis tested on all path co-efficiency specified supported and significant results. This means that social media has a relationship with eWOM and OCR; eWOM influences purchasing intent on Generation Y and Baby Boomers and that OCR affects the purchasing intent on Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

6.3 Recommendations

The purchase of holiday accommodation is intangible in nature, which has resulted in both generations developing a reliance on eWOM and OCR for their purchasing intent. Therefore, companies who offer intangible services need to build online platforms either on their websites or on their social media pages for consumers to share their reviews and rate them. There are some sectors that have caught on to this action item, however, there is still resistance from some organisations as they fear that they have no control over what the users will post - it could be negative feedback that could tarnish their brand.

Marketers also need to understand and be equipped with the latest social media marketing developments as it has proven that it offers a greater audience reach at the lowest cost compared to traditional platforms (McGoldrick, 2013). In addition, more and more consumers use the platform for research purposes and engagement with the brand (Barrowcliff, 2014).

6.4 Future Studies

Prior research has focused on Generation Y but has taken no interest in the social media behaviour of other generational cohorts; hence, this study introduced the analysis of Baby Boomers. However, the study of other cohorts, namely the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z is also prevalent for marketers to better understand how to market and engage with all the different cohorts, as they are all different. An umbrella approach would not serve the purpose.

It would also be interesting to see how the social influence of each cohort influences their purchase intent as they all have a different upbringing, referring to different lifestyles, behaviours, cultures etc.

Lastly, what would be the future of brick and mortar stores for Generation Z seeing that they have exposure to the internet at birth – how will this affect their purchase behaviour? Will brick and mortar stores still be relevant in future or not?

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to confirm the findings of this study that substantiated that the four hypotheses are supported and significant, thus proving insights to sub-problem one that assessed the influence of eWOM and OCR on Purchasing Intent of holiday accommodation. The second sub-problem examined the relationship the two generational cohorts have with social media. The results indicated that Baby Boomers' engagement on social media had increased and was on par with Generation Y, thus proving a positive relationship.

The chapter also provided recommendations and made suggestions for future research studies that can contribute towards the study of behavioural science.

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APPENDIX A: Actual Research Instrument

SECTION A

Please tick the appropriate response

Q 1: What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

Q 2: What is your ethnic group?

Black/African	
White	
Indian	
Coloured	
Asian	
Other	
I prefer not to say	

Q 3: Please indicate your highest academic level

High School	
Diploma	
Degree	
Post graduate degree	
Other (specify)	

Q4: Please indicate your employment status

Student	
Employed	
Self employed	
Unemployed	
Other (specify)	

If Unemployed, please do not proceed with the survey

Q 5: Please indicate which category of year ranking you were born in

1946-1962	
1981-2000	

If not in any of these age groupings, please do not proceed with the survey

Q 6: Are you on Facebook?

Yes	
No	

If No, please do not proceed with the survey

Q 7: Do you read Facebook posts on holiday accommodation?

Yes	
No	

If No, please do not proceed with the survey

Q 8: Do you read online reviews on holiday accommodation?

Yes	
No	

SECTION B

You can indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 Strongly Agree

Please tick only one number to each statement

SOCIAL MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON EWOM & OCR

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
I share my holiday accommodation posts on Facebook							
I often click on an article link on Facebook on holiday accommodation							
I often consult other consumers on Facebook regarding holiday accommodation							
Facebook keeps me informed of travel holidays through blogs, friends' posts, users' reviews and articles							

SECTION C

You can indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by ticking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale below:

1 = Extremely likely to purchase; 2 = Likely to purchase; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Unlikely to purchase; 5 = Extremely Unlikely to purchase

Please tick only one number to each statement that you agree or disagree to make you purchase hotel accommodation

OCR ON PURCHASING INTENT

	Extremely likely to purchase	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely Unlikely to purchase
Very sophisticated hotel. Really cosy and comfortable rooms, beautiful design, the services are awesome and really kind. Would recommend a second time. The location is perfect, probably one of the best places to be in the City.							
Excellent hotel and staff are very attentive. Fantastic room on the 5th floor. Nice and quiet. Turn down service offers a nice little treat each night. Amazing view across							

the harbour from the roof terrace, which has sun beds and a small plunge pool. Wine is reasonably priced.							
The hotel is nice, and the people are very friendly. It is a five-star! Moreover, I could eat on the terrace above. However, at seven o’clock in the morning, every day, a dog barking right next to the window without stopping and this hotel becomes a nightmare! In addition, the hotel tells you they cannot do anything.							
The big positives with this hotel were the size and cleanliness of the room and the location of the hotel itself. Unfortunately, the breakfast was very poor with inattentive waiting staff, "hot food" left to go cold and who likes rubbery scrambled eggs and soggy cold bacon?							
Comfortable rooms with king size bed. Nice decoration and great equipment both in the room							

and bathroom. Pool area is a great place to relax. But the real plus is the hotel team kindness. Location is prefect for a short stay							
The breakfast is legendary, with the best granola/muesli you can imagine, great smoothies and great cooked choices. Once you arrive at the hotel, everything is complementary, laundry, welcoming champers, use of a mobile phone, pre-dinner cocktails and nightcaps. We stayed three nights and loved sitting around the open fire in the outside courtyard in the early before we sauntered off to dinner.							
The excellent rooms, service and food at the hotel delighted us but the experience was soured significantly but one incident. One afternoon we came back to our room to find the Hotel Manager showing three people around. The Hotel							

Manager told us they were agents, but it hardly matters who it was. We were not asked permission for this to happen and felt it a serious breach of our privacy, especially when the hotel emphasize the importance of privacy for their guests.							
Beautiful accommodations in a beautiful setting. The service is over the top and the accommodations are very nice. No need for a car, they drive you wherever you need to go. The estate, which they own, is the most beautiful wine estate I have ever seen.							
My friend and I came here for two nights. It is a very pretty small hotel. The style is grey contemporary and lacks imagination but blandly pleasant. The staff is very nice, and rooms are well appointed. My bed was uncomfortable, big dip in middle and bed linen smelt of fried food, most unpleasant. At breakfast, we asked for fresh fruit, which smelt of							

onions. The manager agreed and apologised profusely.							
Good orientation of hotel, we stayed in room 10, which is roadside which we were initially disappointed with, but not problem at all, good-sized room and good-sized bathroom, this room has a private garden and terrace. Great service, excellent housekeeping, great pool area, near all attractions and restaurants							

SECTION D

Refer to images, blog post and Facebook comments below and indicate if you would likely or unlikely book at the hotel.

1 = Definitely Yes; 2 = Yes; 3 = Neutral; 4 = No; 5 = Definitely No

Please tick only one number to each statement that you agree or disagree to make you purchase hotel accommodation

EWOM ON PURCHASING INTENT

	Definitely Yes	1	2	3	4	5	Definitely No










Kym Norrish Vasile
5 May ·
We stayed 5 nights at this litt
and bathrooms (by Europear
Double glazed windows to th
husband is a very light sleepe
The location is unbeatable, w
need to use it because you a
Like
Comment


Smoothie







HOME / SOUTH AFRICA HOTELS BLOG

02
JUN 2017

HOTEL SPECIALS: Free Night Stellenbosch and Cape Town



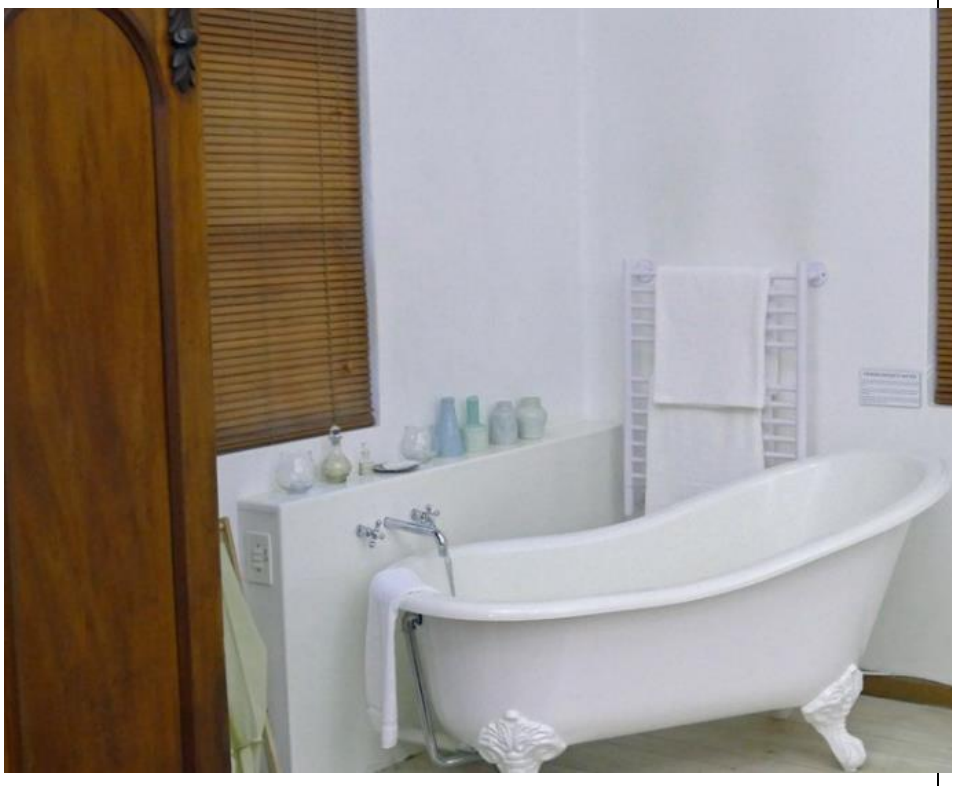
Cathedral Peak Hotel, Drakensberg Warm hospitality, sumptuou
recreational facilities for the whole family await at the Cathedral
for five nights or more between 22 June and 23 July 2017. FREE

POSTED BY: RYAN MACKIE













APPENDIX B: Consistency matrix

Problem or scope of project stated here					
Sub-problem	**Literature Review**	**CHAPTER 7. Hypotheses or propositions or questions**	**Source of data**	**Type of data**	**Analysis**
To investigate the influence social media has on eWOM and OCR	(Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003); (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004); (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2005); (Wang & Rodgers, 2011); (Rensink, 2013)	H_0 Social media has no influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation H_A Social media has an influence on eWOM in the purchase of holiday accommodation H_0 Social media has no effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation H_{1A} Social media has an effect on OCR in the purchase of holiday accommodation	Questionnaire questions that will provide the data	Ordinal data	Describe the specific analysis method you will use

Problem or scope of project stated here					
Sub-problem	**Literature Review**	**CHAPTER 7. Hypotheses or propositions or questions**	**Source of data**	**Type of data**	**Analysis**
To investigate the influence eWOM and OCR has on purchasing intent on Generation Y and Baby Boomers	(Barnes & Buttons, 2016); (Bevan-Dye, 2016); (Bolton, et al., 2013); (Chandra, Goswami, & Chouhan, 2012) (Duffet, 2015); (Mangold & Smith, 2012); (Rai, 2012) and (Funde, 2015)	H_0 eWOM influences purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y and Baby Boomers H_{3A} eWOM does not influence purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers H_0 OCR does not affect purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y and Baby Boomers. H_{4A} OCR affects purchase intention of holiday accommodation among Generation Y members and Baby Boomers	Questionnaire questions that will provide the data	Ordinal	Describe the specific analysis method you will use

END OF RESEARCH REPORT