

CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF TOURISM OFFERS CREATED BY GENERATION Z

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Abstract: Each generation has certain tourist preferences that they express through the media tourist offers. Generation "Z", today's students at the Tourism Specialization, have made 10 tourist offers which they presented to potential consumers of different ages. The present study presents the perception upon the potential tourism consumers have, divided by age groups. The offers have had different topics, trying to cover as wide a range of offers as possible for consumers of all types, including ones from their generation. The analysis method was that of the analysis sheets, through which each evaluator offers a score for each offer, on a scale from 1-10, taking into account their components. There were 170 sheets completed. The results highlight differences regarding the type of offer accepted towards consumption, depending on some specified components. The limits of the study are given by the number of offers and evaluation sheets. For this reason, we proposed to repeat the method of presentation. Another shortcoming was that of the online presentation. This way of presentation is less relevant and more difficult to access for those tourism consumers who are not familiar with online communication. For many consumers, face-to-face communication would have been much clearer or more enlightening.

Keywords: tourism offer, tourism consumer, Generation "Z" costs, tourist culture

INTRODUCTION

Oxford Living Dictionaries describes Generation "Z" as "the generation that has come to the adulthood age during the second decade of the 21st century". Which is very important regarding this generation is the fact that they developed in a period in which digitization has been the main form of communication. The ease of digital communication is a normality for them. The production and promotion of tourist offers is closely related to this philosophy. Sometimes, however, being aware of these specific

features, they want to escape from these limits and be part of what those before them actually consumed. They are very creative and have a very quick ability to adapt to these mixed conditions. Another easily noticeable feature is that of origins. Given their connection with the natural environment and consumption in the physical market is tight, their contribution is therefore that of bringing the virtual market into the real world, while the reciprocal phenomenon is also valid, especially for the achievement of the distribution of the product created.

Attractiveness of festivals is another specific feature (Ducman et al., 2019; Park, 2010; Lazaro et al. 2022; Lequeux-Dincă et al. 2022, Merciu et al. 2022, Mazilu et al. 2023). The novelty consists in the desire to discover traditions and everything related to intangible heritage specific to a certain geographical area (Teodorescu et al., 2017; Ducman et al. 2021; Herman et al., 2014; Ziakas, 2016; Băbăș et al. 2023). Cultural attraction is visible! One could find explanation for this type of attraction: the existence of information, especially that of historical category, as well as the existence of the many impressions left by those who had visited these areas previously (Szemkovics et al., 2022). Communication, and especially the facility created by social networks, offer the possibility of establishing a hierarchy regarding what can become important and attractive on what means the tourist offer (Teodorescu et al., 2022).

All types of tourism offer attractiveness for consumers. In order for the tourist message to reach the consumer. Festivals take on different forms. They can attract different tourists from the point of view of the type of tourist consumption, depending on its type.

Cultural objectives, monuments, buildings of special architectural value, memorial houses, occupations, traditions and others as well can represent important attractions from a tourism point of view (Teodorescu et al., 2009).

METHODOLOGY

The relationship between generations must be maintained. Young people demand new tourist offers, according to their needs and satisfaction capacity. However, tourists should not neglect the traditional consumers, who are generally older than Generation Z exponents. In this sense, the objective of the study has been taking insights on what could be those offers made by Generation Z that may satisfy as many categories of tourism consumers as possible.

In this way, 10 tourist offers have been designed by Generation Z. Their subjects referred to:

- Organizing a local festival in the rural/ urban environment;
- Educational offer without age limit through consumption of literary tourism;
- Organization and promotion of sports events;
- Black tourism;
- Yoga and relaxation tourism
- Tourism based on the consumption of specialized products; the coffee case study
- Mountain tourism/ mountain adventure tourism
- Guilds and crafts - history and tradition
- Virtual tourism
- Wine tours to wineries in Romania or wine tasting tourism, accompanied by other cultural experiences

Each theme had one or more offers, but included in this theme. The young people have presented the tourist offers to the competent people from the point of view of their evaluation (employees in tourism agencies, owners of tourism agencies - ANAT members). Each evaluator filled out an evaluation form for some criteria:

1. Chosen subject – the interest presented by the topic (offer)
2. Quality and clarity of presentation
3. Tourism / hospitality relationship
4. The tourist offer relationship
5. On a scale from 1...10, what is the desire to purchase the tourist offer
6. List 3 weaknesses of each offer
7. Mention 3 strong points of each offer

A hierarchy of the score obtained by each tourist offer has been made. The age criteria of the evaluators have also been established. In this way, according to the age group, it has been much better to observe what are the preferences they have in relation to the offer created by the representatives of Generation Z.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

170 files have been analyzed. Each of them contains the number of points and comments related to the strengths and weaknesses of each offer. Each of the educators has had a unique perception, age, tourist experience, the level of discovery in the content of the offer (tourism consumption being by excellence a subjective consumption).

The involvement of the young generation is a necessity for any economic activity. During the current period, when the external factors have been and still are diverse, including that of pandemic nature, they can exercise strong influences upon the type of tourist preferences.

In this way, combining the desire for tourism with the ease of using digital technology, virtual tourism has resulted. The promotion of this type of tourism, from what Generation Z claims, is a necessity for all forms of tourism. It is not tourism in itself, but a way of manifestation, usage, promotion, discovery of existing values for all forms of tourism. A historical and a cultural tourism need a prior preparation of consumers (Szemkovics et al., 2021; Teodorescu et al. 2019; Rădoi et al., 2020; Teodorescu et al., 2016).

Many of the potential consumers of such tourism give up possibly very attractive offers, as a result of the misunderstanding. The virtual tourism comes with this advantage of prior preparation. Equally, a virtual tourism can come to support those who cannot move in a real, physical way (Cioclu et al., 2022; Teodorescu et al., 2017).

Very busy work schedule or lack of income can represent important barriers. The organization of spaces with the possibility to travel virtually can really help in a considerable manner.

The point of view of this generation is not to be neglected. They are the ones who can create offers today that bring people of their age on trips while also maintaining a connection with those who have overpassed this age.

Tabel. 1 The results of the evaluations of the tourist offers made by Generation Z.

Evaluators' preferences and justifications, specific to each age group:	Evaluator age group	Number of forms or sheets completed	Observations
90-100 points: - Offers that included urban/rural festivals; - Tourism offered by specialized coffee; - Guilds and crafts - history and tradition - Mountain tourism/ mountain adventure tourism - Oenological tours to wineries in Romania or wine tasting tourism, accompanied by other cultural experiences; - Virtual tourism	25-35 years old	45	Most of the observations were concerning the quality and clarity of the presentation - despite the close age with those from Generation Z. They wanted more animation!!

They noted the tourism-hospitality relationship, and the topic with the price of the offer			
<p>90-100 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational offer - literary tourism; - Offers that included: urban/ rural festivals; - Yoga and relaxation tourism - Mountain tourism/ mountain adventure tourism - Wine tours to wineries in Romania or wine tasting tourism, accompanied by other cultural experiences - Virtual tourism <p>They noted the subject with the price of the offer.</p>	36-44 years old	35	It is recommended to go from the Museum of Literature to the memorial houses of poets and writers, not the other way around as the offer is presented!
<p>90-100 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization and promotion of sports events; - Offers that included urban/ rural festivals; - Educational offer - literary tourism; - Mountain tourism/ mountain adventure tourism - Guilds and crafts - history and tradition - Wine tours to wineries in Romania or wine tasting tourism, accompanied by other cultural experiences <p>They noted positively Selected subject - the interest presented by the topic</p>	45-65 years old	80	There is recommended more involvement of the young generation in rural festivals, by promoting products made in a family environment;
<p>90-100 points obtained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guilds and crafts - history and tradition - Educational offer - literary tourism; - Offers that included urban/ rural festivals; - Wine tours to wineries in Romania or wine tasting tourism, accompanied by other cultural experiences 	Over 65 years old	10	There is recommended the promotion of rural architecture, woodworking and ceramics during festivals!

There should be noted that the least appreciated have been the offers aiming at Black Tourism, which have obtained the lowest score. It has targeted the emotionally charged areas of Buzau county (cemeteries and forests with unsolved mysteries). The visits or itineraries to the specialized cafés did not benefit from great success either, mentioning the very high prices and the health problems that many of those who consume coffee in excess may have (although the "tasting" was mentioned and not the excessive consumption. They were equally reserved with the mountain type offers, many tourists appreciating the quality of the preparation of the offer and its presentation as well, but they should not be counted among those who would purchase such an offer.

The most appreciated were those related to the organization of local festivals, especially in the rural environment, which include bands of traditional musicians, but also those in the urban environment with modern music. The justification is to capitalize on the local potential offered by the producers in the area, but also the possibility to get in touch with the latest information related to music and event organization.

The offer that refers to literary Tourism, seen as education tourism, is also positioned with a very low score on the hierarchy. The requirement for such tourism is not only for the literary value, but the attraction being also given by the thematic tourism of personalities, or the desire to meet people of great importance from a certain city or county. This type of offer wins followers among all tourism consumers and not only.

Traditions, history and guilds are as attractive as the offer. The way in which the young generation, or Generation Z, make the presentations, really makes them much more attractive.

Their presentation was chosen not only to be informative, but also was meant to involve a simulation of the activity of each guild. The costume has an important role from their point of view. In this way, the perception of those who consume such an offer is much clearer. For this reason, all age groups seem to be interested in such an offer.

Oenological tours in which cultural values are discovered or other tastings of local cheese sorts or meat products subjected to a certain local process can be done, and all these represent a great source of interest and attention as well for those oriented towards the development of tourism. The tourism specialists express their desire to get in touch with the ideas of this generation, realizing that many of their ideas can bring an addition to the existing preferences. This oenological tourism in Romania is insufficiently exploited. The combinations of tastings, or the adaptation of wine tastings, together with other local products, can have multiple effects. The

advantages can be both for those who organize such tours, but also for the owners of the wineries and for the locals who have a possibility to offer or make their products widely known. Each geographical region in Romania can create such tourism based on local natural resources.

In the case of the analysis by age groups, training and interest in tourism, this offer had a fairly high score. What determined them? From the answers given relative to the strong points, the most tourists mentioned the existing infrastructure followed by the possible relationship between the producers and their common interest. There has been added a good documentation related to existing wineries and organizational possibilities. In addition, the young producers of the offer have come with clear arguments related to the quality of the wines, the prizes that could represent an asset and the "registered brand" products for meat and cheese sorts that could complete the range of tourist offers.

Several geographical areas in Romania are presented connected to the places where these oenological routes can be followed.

There are suggestions from those with experience regarding the relationship that rural festivals and oenological routes can have. Generation Z comes up with arguments by which the two types of tourism should be separated. The arguments they come up with are:

- they address to different tourism consumers.
- the costs of each offer differ - the oenological ones are generally higher.
- consumer preferences are from different categories - in the oenological routes, award-winning wines, special wines are the most sought after; at local (rural) festivals there are local wines, without an award-winning label or special content.
- the duration is different and attention to explanations is not what can be done in the case of rural festivals.

Their arguments for each type of offer are numerous and adapted to each situation. In their offers, the consumer segment is well defined. It is a novelty in the sense of finding a specialized consumer, or a profiled one on the respective type of tourism. I am also of the opinion that there may be "new" consumers who are not necessarily attracted by the offer they are greeted with, rather they place them in the area of "those who are just trying". Among them, some can become loyal consumers (which is desirable), while others are only on a first and last try. The biggest gain is to attract as many new followers as possible (through attractive presentation methods or through the tourist program offered).

DISCUSSIONS

The young generation itself is a source of inspiration for all those interested in tourism creation. The offers they created are not different in name from those known by previous generations. What is different is the way they are structured. What they want is animation and interactivity. They believe that there is a need for the greatest involvement of tourists in the tourist activity, in the discovery of new things (as a topic of reflection given to tourists!). Just the simple presentation or description of the objectives by a tourist guide is not enough. It is necessary to involve tourists in choosing the objectives, in finding particularities in their architecture, art, color, shape, age. In this way, the knowledge is much deeper, as the existing details are generally in the case of buildings with heritage value, it can bring an important added value in the development of heritage and cultural tourism (Szenkovics et al., 2018; Dumitraşcu et al. 2023).

These arguments are valid for those who have a way of thinking similar to theirs. This may be due to the similarity of age (age is what brings them into the same tourist attraction group) or they may be tourism consumers who are attracted by interactivity, concerns, communication style (regardless of age). The offers they propose are generally demanding for tourists.

In addition, they forward novelties that they implement in the offer. One type of novelty is the QR code. Its use for details related to the objectives, the location, the "game" it develops related to the objectives and the details to be discovered, can stimulate and attract the tourist, but it can also guide and help him in discovering certain important details. These details can be of a social, cultural or economic nature (Teodorescu et al., 2022; Kasagrande et al., 2016). Most of those present at the evaluation of these offers (the 170 participants) have been delighted to discover such things. However, there were also those who encountered difficulties in using the technology and considered that it is not necessary on vacation (when people want to rest) to play such games that "seem demanding".

CONCLUSIONS

Society is changing and economic and recreational activities are also in permanent change. Technology is a good that people must use to make their work easier and to be able to have a faster way to benefit from the information they may need. Accessibility to all tourist attractions may be under technological constraints

The relationship between the generations was and will remain. The differences of opinion, of perceptive concepts and activities also existed and will exist. That is precisely why these things must be understood in accepting, step by step, new ideas that young people come up with. The baton exchange between generations is done gradually. Appreciation of ideas and especially of the way in which "old" ideas are renewed, represents progress. Tourism needs changes. Any economic activity needs changes and acceptance of progress, innovation and technology.

Experience should not be weighed against novelty, as it does not lead to the achievement of the economic goal that tourism has: winning tourism consumers in as large a number as possible: but, on the contrary, to their removal. Many of these consumers prefer to form their own offers and discover the news individually. For those who have a company in the field of tourism, this should give them something to think about.

Romanian domestic tourism is not exploited as much as it should be. Many of the rural areas have an economic potential that is hard to imagine. Young people see a possibility in these areas. Their experience, however, is not the one that helps them and guides them to find the best ways to capitalize. In these situations, the new and the old must work together to find the best solutions.

Big cities also come with their possible offer. Getting to know the people next to us can become the desire of many urban residents. Houses with historical value, with attractive and interesting stories, with people who created here and left something behind them can be important attractions. Every tourist offer is important. It brings an addition, a novelty, an attempt at discovery. Despite obtaining lower scores, these can also represent a plus for those who want to learn more about these phenomena. Yoga and relaxation tourism is in this case an offer that has not found many followers. Tourism consumers in the tourist market may have a different opinion. A similar situation also faced the offer for Buzoian black tourism. It was not a denial, it was not a response to these tourist offers. They just had a lower score (obtained by a not very large number of participants). The limits of the study are given by the rather small number of those who participated in the evaluation of young people's offers. For these reasons, for the future we propose to repeat the offer-evaluation relationship, in order to be aware of the changes that may appear both in terms of the content of the offers, but also in terms of those with experience in services and tourism. Each generation, each person brings a plus in terms of everything that tourism and services mean, from each geographical region.

To discover all this, knowledge is needed. Knowledge is achieved through education and training. This takes time. This is exactly what leads us to maintain that tourism is not an activity that lends itself only to certain generations, but only through the wisdom and knowledge of experienced generations but enhanced by the creativity of the young and perfectly adapted to today and especially to tomorrow. These are the ones from Generation Z.

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