

GENERATION Z VS. GENERATION Y: DIFFERENT FROM OR SIMILAR? A COMPARISON OF CENTENNIALS AND MILLENNIALS REGARDING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES

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Abstract

The tourists' decision-making process and sharing behaviors while travelling and social media are intertwined, especially for the young tech-savvy generations. Nevertheless, papers comparing generation Y and Z in this respect are scarce. By surveying two samples, this paper aims to investigate if generations Y and Z are different in terms of social media use for travelling purposes. The results indicate Centennials get more information about journeys from social networks. Moreover, they give more value to online photos during the travel decision-making than generation Y. During the actual journey, Centennials depend less on Facebook and more on Instagram than Millennials. The two samples are significantly different in terms of sharing behavior of their travel experiences. Last but not least, the number of hours spent daily on social media influences the usage of social media while travelling for both generations.

Keywords: Generation Y and Generation Z, travel, online sharing, decision-making

JEL Classification : L83, M31, M37

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1. Introduction

The emergence of the Internet and smart phones has transformed people's lives, creating a significant role for social media in day-to-day life (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Moreover, social media is an important part of the online tourism domain (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) and has changed the way travellers communicate (Huang, Basu & Hsu, 2010), search information for trip planning (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), or make purchasing decisions (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Narangajavana et al., 2017). Thus, one can speak of the transformation and remodeling of tourism (Musteață-Pavel, Surugiu & Lixăndroiu, 2021). Social media offer tourists a wide range of options to share their experiences and opinions online through text, photographs, or video, among others (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The content created through the social platforms is usually regarded as user-generated content (UGC) (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013). The information created by others is prominent in travelers' information search and decision-making processes (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012).

Millennials and Centennials are accustomed to the use of social media, online platforms, devices, and technology (Werenowska & Rzepka, 2020). Generation Y is inclined to post their travel experience on the social platforms (Sakshi et al., 2020; Oliveira, Araujo & Tam, 2020). Also, more than half of the Z generation use social media during their travel to communicate with friends (Llopis-Amoros et al., 2019). Ip, Lee & Law, (2012) noted the tendency to share travel experience online declined with age. Millennials and Centennials depend on online information to guide their travel purchasing decisions (Wong, 2016). However, papers focusing on the demographic characteristics of users of online information for travel purposes are limited (Ip, Lee & Law, 2012).

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To the best of the authors' knowledge, the papers comparing Centennials and Millennials in terms of their social media and online information use for travel are lacking. Knowing if these generations need to be treated differently would be valuable to managers and marketers of hospitality establishments and tourism destinations. On these merits, this research area qualifies for further examination. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (1) to investigate social media and other online information use during planning, reservation, and actual travel stages for generations Y and Z; (2) to examine the importance of online information in the travel decision-making processes for generation Y and Z; (3) to examine the online sharing behavior of travel information for generation Y and Z.

2. Literature review

The history of the generations that still exist in the world today extends over 100 years, starting with the year 1900. It includes, chronologically, the following categories: The Greatest Generation, The Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2018), Generation Alpha (McCrindle, 2014). The names of the generational categories are either creative or based on continuity. In direct connection with the topic of this paper, generation Y is also known as Millennials, Net Generation, Google Generation, Click 'n' go Kids, Generation whY, Ygen (McCrindle, 2014), or Internet babies (Corvi, Bigi & Ng, 2007). As for Generation Z, it is also known as Centennials, Baby Bloomers, Generation XD (Williams & Page, 2011), Zeds (Australian English), Zees (American English), the new Millennials, Tweens, the up-ageing Generation, Generation Recession, Screenagers, and iGen (McCrindle, 2014).

2.1 Characteristics of Generation Y and Generation Z

When talking about time intervals, it is important to note that "the definitions of generational boundaries are inconsistent in the literature" (Kraus, 2017, p. 62), although it does not influence their basic characteristics (Bencsik, Horváth-Csikós & Juhász, 2016). Gen Y is considered to span over 1976-1992 (Synchrony, 2014), 1977-1995 (The Nielsen Company, 2014), 1980-1995 (Duffy, Shrimpton & Clemence, 2018), after 1980 (Eckert & Deal, 2012), from the 1980s till late 1990s (McQueen, 2010). According to a synthesis made by Dolot (2018), most researchers indicate that the interval of Gen Z is represented by the early 1990s to early 2000s, also roughly corresponding to the interval 1992-2009 set by McCrindle & Fell (2019).

Generation Y has been analysed by many specialists, according to various criteria such as demographic, educational, technological, consumption, work aspects, feelings, politics, relationship with the environment, etc. (Deloitte, 2015; McCrindle, 2014; Ipsos, 2018). In fact, Gopinath (2015, p.2) stated that „It seems hard to get away from the word 'Millennial' these days". Raines and Arnsperger (2002) identify trends that shape the personality of Millennials, including: societal focus on children and family, parent advocacy, over-structured and over-scheduled, multiculturalism, globalism. Undoubtedly, technology plays a fundamental role for generation Y, both cognitively and emotionally. Millennials have many more devices at their disposal compared to previous generations (Lee et al., 2020). They can instantly find out information, which is closely linked to their feelings about what they are learning. Thus, they evolve from the stage of simple users to that of being engaged online (Smith & Gallicano, 2015). In this context, mobile technology is not only important for fun and games (Telefonica, 2014). On the other hand, McQueen (2015), states that no signal on the mobile phone is out of the question for them. Digitisation has raised communication to another level, and they know virtually no barriers to it. Social networks are a habit in this generation's life, very much connected to friends and colleagues (Smith, 2011). They take from social media most information, news, and entertainment (Aikat, 2019). As Palfrey and Gasser (2008) explain, the high consumption of social media is based on the need to interact with others. The types of use encompass contributing, sharing, consuming, searching, participating, and playing (Bolton et al., 2013). In the US, 86% of generation Y use social media (Vogels, 2019).

Generation Z has, as social media landmarks, the need to connect with those around, but also an unparalleled tolerance for diversity, being themselves extremely diverse (Tulgan, 2013). They are connected simultaneously on several platforms, find out answers immediately, but also lose interest on a mouse click (JMFinn, 2019). At the same time, concurrent connectivity diminishes the ability to ask questions (Fuentes, 2014) and leads to Acquired Attention Deficit Disorder (AADD) (Savitt, 2010).

McCordle (2014) admits that in the case of Centennials visual matters more, words and phrases coming second. Gen Z is the generation that is becoming increasingly dependent on the internet, unable to live without it, and succeeding without traditional means such as books or TV (Issa & Isaias, 2016). 58% of them cannot go more than 4 hours without Internet access before they become uncomfortable. 42% believe that social media has a direct influence on how they feel, compared to 31% from Gen Y (Center for Generational Kinetics, 2016). Regarding smartphone, over 30% of Gen Z feels uncomfortable if they are away from them for as little as 30 minutes (Center for Generational Kinetics, 2018).

It is obvious that Generation Y and Generation Z have in common the “connected” attribute (Jagaciak & Fink, 2017), but they differ in the way they use the online domain. Therefore, we hypothesise:

H1. Centennials and Millennials are different in terms of daily average social media usage

2.2 Generations Y and Z, travel behavior and social media

Extensive knowledge of tourism consumption in the context of online information usage is of significant importance for the travel and tourism industry (Eletxigerra, 2021; McCabe et al., 2016; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Amaro et al., 2016). Studies show that the travel planning process mainly includes need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives (Pre-trip), purchase decision (During trip), and post-purchase evaluation including WOM - word-of-mouth (Post-trip) (Cox et al., 2009) in a sequential, multidimensional, and hierarchical approach (Choi et al., 2012). In this context, information search is found throughout the decision-making process and is not only limited to the contribution of the preliminary information search in the decision to purchase (Choi et al., 2012).

2.2.1 Use of Online Information and Social Media during the Travel Process and Decision Making by Generations Y and Z

The role of the social media on the tourism consumption behavior has been vastly researched in the literature. Whether it serves as Need Generator, Supporter, Guider or Approver (Liu et al., 2020), the social media contribution in the travel industry consists in the volume and quality of the information the decision to travel is based upon (Prebensen et al., 2012; Amaro et al., 2016) and this influence manifests in all stages of the trip - before, during and especially after the trip - due to the sharing of the destination experience, which is even more reliable than official websites or travel agencies (Sakshi et al., 2020; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Fotis et al., 2011). Among students, the permanent post of travel destinations and related discoveries became a ‘fancy’ social media habit (Țicău & Shahrazad, 2022).

Increasingly more potential tourists rely on the experiences of others in the travel related decision-making processes. Before the trip, the use of social media is especially relevant in the stage of planning to choose the travel destination and the accommodation, the eating establishments, and the travel agent (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Fotis et al., 2011); after the trip, social media is used for sharing experiences (Murphy et al., 2010) as well as for inspiration for future vacations - called the “dreaming stage” (Fotis et al., 2011). In the era of technology and information, WOM is ubiquitous and it is especially used after the trip, when experience-sharing brings joy and satisfaction (Litvin et al., 2008; Yoo, Lee, & Gretzel, 2007; Yoo, Gretzel, and Zach, 2011) many opinion leaders being, at the same time, information seekers (Yoo, Lee, & Gretzel, 2007; Yoo, Gretzel, and Zach, 2011). When it comes to the youth, the satisfaction attained after tourism consumption influences the WOM intention and is even higher than the perceived value (Chen & Chen, 2010). Although this is a vastly studied topic, only a small number of these studies refer to the components of the trip, from transportation to accommodation and other services at the destination (Liu et al., 2020).

The significant role of social media in the tourism purchasing decision has been amply discussed and argued (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Narangajavana et al., 2017), due to the positive relation between travelers’ behavior and their involvement in hotels’ social networking (Leung, Xi & Bai, 2013); the youth is much more influenced by and grant more credibility to user generated content, which is for searching and sharing tourism information (Murphy et al., 2010), most popular being images and photographs (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). Simultaneously, information search along with the personal experience are of great significance when choosing the destination, the focus being mainly on the aesthetic and functional pleasure generated by the photographs (Vogt et al., 1994; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012).

Studies focusing on the impact of social media show the age group differences are significant especially before the trip, during the period of planning and purchasing decision, as well as after the trip when youth are more inclined to use social media and less so during the trip (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Fotis et al., 2011). For that matter, both Millennials as well as Centennials are familiar with the digital environments and use social media extensively. However, Millennials tend to use more of the text and voice type of content (Skinner et al., 2018; Llopis-Amorós et al., 2019) and the information search in social media impacts their behavioral intention, not their actual behavior (Javed et al., 2020). On the other hand, Centennials prefer video messaging and are more influenced by the social media (Skinner et al., 2018; Llopis-Amorós et al., 2019). Therefore, we hypothesise:

H2. The Centennials and Millennials are different with regards to the importance of online elements in their travel decision-making process: a) photos b) comments c) videos d) ratings

2.2.2 Sharing Behavior of Generations Y and Z about their Travelling Experiences

With the Millennials generation being the consumers of the present and the Centennials generation considered the consumers of the times to come, they are also separated by characteristics and features, including in the field of tourism but also in the way they use technology while travelling (Llopis-Amoros et al., 2019). Travelling for tourism purposes is regarded as a three-fold process, encompassing the pre-trip, during-trip and post-trip stages. As shown previously, the representatives of the two generations have highlighted differences in terms of average use of devices and social media sources, as well as in the way they make the decisions for holiday and trips (Mingyu et al., 2020; Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Generation Y have been the first to embrace modern technology into their lives, while the Centennials are the first generation born within the world of technology and devices (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2011; Llopis-Amoros et al., 2019). They are also true and stable co-creators of user-generated content on social media. The reasons behind their participation in the user-generated content range from pleasure or promotion of oneself to the desire of modifying a public perception regarding a tourism service or destination (Mangold & Smith, 2012; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As they have high levels of confidence in the reviews, user recommendations and self-experiences expressed in various online forms – comments, images, ratings, videos – especially Millennials also show a tendency towards being active creators of online content through sharing their own experiences, photos, opinions (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Oliveira, Araujo & Tam, 2020).

With the highest number of trips per year, Millennials rely prominently on the information provided by online platforms. Millennials are, according to studies, prone towards posting their travel experience in the social media (Sakshi et al., 2020). As they have grown up in the digital era, the representatives of the Y generation are willing to share their travel experiences (Oliveira, Araujo & Tam, 2020). According to TravelPulse (2015), 74% of them post on Facebook pictures and short videos from the destinations they visit and leave comments and ratings for the accommodation and food establishments they visit during their trip.

On the other hand, the Centennials are the digital generation and they are already starting to gear their Millennial parents' online behavior, including during travels (Chatterjee & Mandal, 2020). The Z generation is formed by explorers, online-dependent young people, 84% of which consider social media as a very important element of their travels (Hysa, Karasek & Zdonek, 2021). Also, according to the same study, the two generations are different in terms of the moment of their posting online. Millennials tend to post photos, videos and review during the trip, while Centennials are more likely to share their travel experience with photos after the trip is over (Hysa, Karasek & Zdonek, 2021). The scientific research regarding further differences is scarce; therefore, we analyse the following:

H3. Centennials and Millennials are different in terms of frequency of sharing online travel experiences through: a) photos b) comments c) videos d) ratings

Unlike the generations that precede them, Millennials and Centennials have created a society that gravitates around social media and online platforms, devices and technology (Werenowska & Rzepka, 2020). There are, however, differences in the way and lengths they use their phones and the social media preferences they show. Millennials use social media platforms a few times a day and content community

platforms once a week. As opposed to them, Centennials tend to use social media platform slightly more on a daily basis, as well as content communities. Both generations use blogs and tourism platforms on rare occasions (Iglesias-Sanchez et al., 2020). According to a study (Weforum, 2019), generation Y has slightly reduced the time spent on social media, reaching an average of 2 hours and 38 minutes a day. On the other hand, generation Z spends two hours and 55 minutes on social media on a daily average. The aforementioned differences in terms of social media preferences are kept also during their travels. Slightly over half of the Z generation use online social platforms such as Instagram and YouTube during their travels in order to keep in touch with friends (Llopis-Amoros et al., 2019). According to a study by TravelPulse (2015), around 46% of Centennials use Instagram in order to post information regarding their trips, while 63% of Millennials prefer Facebook as their photo-sharing platform. Therefore, we hypothesise:

H4. Average daily social media usage influences the way young people use social media while traveling

3. Method and respondents' profile

We aimed to study and analyse comparatively the importance of online information in travel decision-making and some sharing behaviors while travelling of generation Y and generation Z. Thus, we planned to identify several aspects such as frequency and motivations of using social media, the online sources used in planning, booking and carrying out the trip, or frequency of sharing online information about Millennials' and Centennials' travel experiences. For this purpose, a survey was conducted based on a questionnaire consisting of 15 questions; most of the questions asked were closed with multiple answers, some being dichotomous; the scaling method used was mostly Likert. Research variables such as the daily average social media usage, importance of online photos, comments, videos, and ratings in the travel decision-making process, the extent to which someone shares information online about the travel experience were included in the questionnaire. We used two samples of respondents, one for each generation. Based on a control question about birth year, a few answers have been eliminated from the analysis. In the end, the samples included 387 Millennials' and 435 Centennials' valid responses.

With regards to data analysis, frequencies, percentages, and medians are the descriptive statistics appropriate given most variables in the study. Aside from looking at these measures, we used the Mann-Whitney U test to compare the answers of Centennials versus Millennials with respect to a few variables such as daily average social media usage, importance of online photos, comments, videos and ratings in the travel decision-making process, the extent to which someone shares online information about the travel experience through photos, comments, videos or ratings. Given the fact that these variables are of ordinal type, these tests are appropriate (Nachar, 2008).

Moreover, Jamieson (2004, cited in Sullivan & Artino, 2013) indicates that frequencies, medians, the Mann-Whitney U test, the Spearman rho measurement, or χ^2 tests should be used with Likert scale data. The Mann-Whitney U test is also appropriate when normality assumptions are not met. Therefore, we employed the Mann-Whitney U test with our two sample groups (1 = Millennials, 2 = Centennials) to compare and identify if there is a difference in how they behave. The null hypothesis of this test implies there is no difference between the medians in the measured variable, while the alternative one says there is such a difference. Last, we used the Spearman rho test to check the relationships among variables that describe the travel sharing or decision-making behavior and social media use of the sampled respondents.

As seen in Table 1, within the Millennial sample 76% of respondents are female and 61% within the Centennial sample. Moreover, 8.6% of Millennial respondents are born between 1980 and 1985, 11.7% between 1986 and 1990, and 79.6% between 1991 and 1995. Almost 48% of Centennials are born in 1996 and 1997, slightly above 47% in 1998 and 1999, and the rest in 2000 and above.

Table 1. Demographic background of respondents

Content	Millennials (Y)		Centennials (Z)	
	N	Valid %	N	Valid %
Gender				
Female	292	76.0	263	60.7
Male	92	24.0	170	39.3
Birth Year				
1980-1985	33	8.6		
1986-1990	45	11.7		
1991-1995	305	79.6		
1996-1997			207	47.8
1998 -1999			205	47.3
2000 and above			21	4.9
Personal monthly income (lei)				
below 200	21	5.5	35	8.1
201 - 450	70	18.2	48	11.1
451 - 900	97	25.2	108	24.9
901 - 1800	111	28.8	151	34.9
over 1800	86	22.3	91	21.0

Source: Authors' own work

4. Results and discussion

We hypothesised that the way people use technology and social media in their daily lives influences the way they use it while they travel. So, the first step was to understand the main behaviours and attitudes toward technology use. The results are shown in Table 2 with regard to the equipment owned and used daily, social media sites and reasons to use. The study has intended to identify the equipment owned and used daily by Millennials and Centennials. 59% of all millennial respondents have a desktop computer, 93% own a laptop, 52% a tablet and 97% have a mobile phone with Internet connection. In case of Centennials the percentages for all the devices except phone are lower.

Almost all respondents (99%) in the Centennial group own a phone with Internet connection, but only 52% have a desktop, 86% a laptop, and 42% a tablet. We could explain this reduction in computer devices ownership by the fact that modern phones can do almost everything, and young people are used to utilise them for activities they've previously done on computers. The daily usage of these devices is quite similar within the two analysed samples. The phone is used daily by almost every respondent in the surveyed groups (97% of both Y and Z). Desktop, laptop, and tablet daily usage percentages are one to three points lower for Centennials than for Millennials. Besides phones, laptops are the most preferred devices.

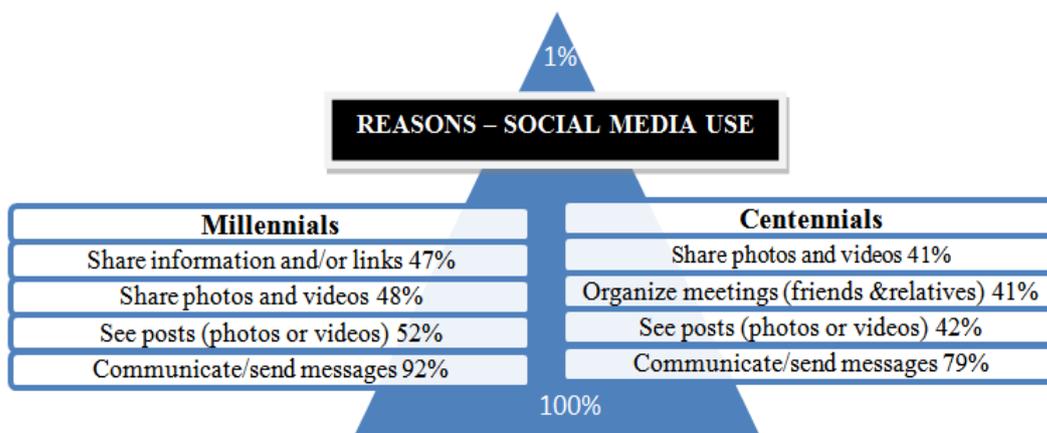


Fig. no 1. Main reasons for social media use among Millennials and Centennials.

Source: Authors' own work

Slightly above 98% of Millennials use Facebook, 53% use Instagram, and only 9% prefer Twitter, as seen in Table 2. Other social media sites mentioned by respondents from the Millennials group are LinkedIn (most mentions), Pinterest, Swarm, Twitch, Snapchat, and Tumblr. We can see a big behavioral difference within the Centennial group, with an increase to 83% use of Instagram. Generation Z respondents also use more than generation Y Twitter (30%) and other social networks such as Snapchat (most mentions), WhatsApp, and TikTok.

With regard to the main reasons for which respondents use social media platforms, we found out that Millennials and Centennials hold similar viewpoints in terms of ranks but different in terms of percentages (as seen in Table 2 and Figure 1). Today social media is used for different reasons. Millennials and Centennials in Romania mainly use it to communicate and send direct messages (92% versus 79%), see posts such photo or video (52% versus 42%), share photos and videos (48% versus 41%), share information and links (47% versus 30%), organise meetings with friends and relatives (44% versus 41%). Only slightly above 16% of Millennials and 11% of Centennials state they use social media for commercial purposes. Moreover, only 10.7% of Millennials and 21.5% of Centennials get information about journeys from social networks.

Table 2. Respondents' behaviors and attitudes with regard to phone and social media use

Question	Item	Millennials (Y)		Centennials (Z)	
		N	Valid %	N	Valid %
What equipment do you own?	Desktop	230	59.4	222	52
	Laptop	361	93.2	360	85.5
	Tablet	197	52	179	41.7
	Mobile phone with internet connection	376	97.2	411	98.8
What equipment do you use daily?	Desktop	125	34	121	29.7
	Laptop	278	72.8	293	68.5
	Tablet	82	22.2	88	21.7
	Mobile phone with internet connection	375	96.9	415	97.2
I use Facebook	Yes	380	98.2	390	89.9
	No	7		44	
I use Twitter	Yes	33	9.2	131	30.3
	No	325		301	
I use Instagram	Yes	193	52.9	360	83
	No	172		74	
I use other social networks	Yes	94	26.3	60	40
	No	264		90	
The main reasons I use social networks are:	To communicate and send direct messages	356	92	327	79
	To share information and links	182	47.3	122	29.5
	To find and keep professional contacts	98	25.5	57	13.8
	To find information about organising and developing a trip	41	10.7	89	21.5
	To organise meetings with friends and relatives	171	44.4	169	40.8
	To spend free time in a pleasant way	121	31.4	129	31.2
	To share photo and video posts	185	48.1	168	40.6
	Commercial purpose	63	16.4	48	11.6
	To see video and photo posts	200	52	173	41.8

Source: Authors' own work

With regard to the daily average social media usage (Table 3), the Mann-Whitney Test indicates that there is a significant difference between the analysed generations ($U = 67440.0$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The time spent daily, on average, on social media is significantly greater for generation Z (Median of 3-5 hours) than for generation Y (Median of 1-3 hours). Therefore, at a 0.05 or 0.01 level of confidence, we

can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis H1 affirming that the two samples are significantly different in terms of time spent daily on social networks. Therefore, we validate H1. This finding concurs with other authors. Viens (2019) and Gilsenan (2019) show that Millennials are surpassed by Centennials in daily activity on social media with almost 3 hours spent per day globally.

Table 3. Daily average social media usage

Question	Item	Millennials (Y)			Centennials (Z)			Mann-Whitney Test
		N	Valid %	Median	N	Valid %	Median	
On average, what is the duration of daily use of social networks?	< 1 hour	49	12.8		23	5.6		Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon W Z Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	1-3 hours	171	44.5	1-3 hours	153	37.0	3-5 hours	
	3-5 hours	99	25.8		165	39.9		
	> 5 hours	65	16.9		73	17.6		
	Total	384	100.0		414	100.0		

a Grouping Variable: Generation (Y or Z)

Source: Authors' own work

As shown in Table 4, generations Z and Y are different only in terms of importance allocated to online photos in their decision-making process of tourism services (Mann-Whitney U = 76896.5, p = 0.025 < 0.05). Centennials consider photos more important in their travel decision (Median is “very important”) compared to Millennials (for which Median is “important”). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative H2a concluding that Centennials are different from Millennials with regard to importance given to online photos when deciding where to travel or type of services. 50% of Centennials think online photos are very important to their travel decision-making process, while 42.5% think online photos are important. All others p-values of the Mann-Whitney test are above the 0.05 level of significance for the importance allocated to comments, videos and ratings, making it impossible to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we have to infirm H2b, H2c, and H2d. The conclusion is that opinions are similar within the two sampled groups regarding these variables, both generations considering comments, videos and ratings equally important in their travel decision-making.

% of people who use different online resources during different stages of their trip

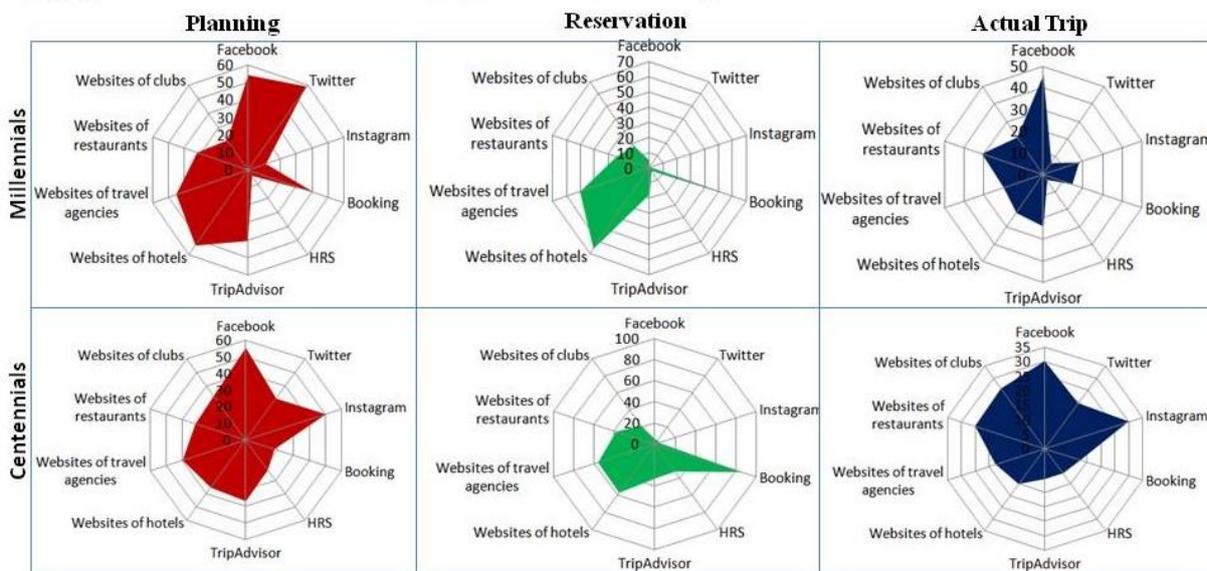


Fig. no. 2. Usage of online sources during different stages of travel.

Source: Authors' own work

As it was already shown in the literature, both generations feel the need to access and share information, but we wanted to see if there is a difference in how they use online sources during their travel. Figure 2 depicts the usage of online resources during different stages of travel for Millennials and Centennials.

Firstly, both generations use a lot of online resources for planning, reservation, and actual journey such as Facebook, Twitter, Booking, TripAdvisor, and hotels or travel agencies websites. Secondly, there are some differences in how Millennials and Centennials behave or use online information for travel purposes.

Table 4. Importance of online information in the travel decision-making process

Question	Item	Millennials (Y)			Centennials (Z)			Mann-Whitney Test
		N	Valid %	Median	N	Valid %	Median	
In your decision-making process of tourism services, which is the importance of the information obtained online through photos?	Not at all	4	1.0		4	.9		Mann-Whitney U 76896.5 Wilcoxon 151201.5 W -2.247 Z .025 Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	important	22	5.7		9	2.1		
	Of little importance	14	3.6	Important	17	42.5	Very important	
	Of average importance	176	45.7		185	50.5		
	important	169	43.9		220	100.0		
	Very important	385	100.0		435			
	Total							
In your decision-making process of tourism services, which is the importance of the information obtained online through comments?	Not at all	10	2.6		7	1.6		Mann-Whitney U 80387.0 Wilcoxon 175217.0 W -1.126 Z .260 Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	important	26	6.7		17	3.9		
	Of little importance	33	8.5	Important	77	17.7	Important	
	Of average importance	160	41.5		169	38.9		
	important	157	40.7		165	37.9		
	Very important	386	100.0		435	100.0		
	Total							
In your decision-making process of tourism services, which is the importance of the information obtained online through videos?	Not at all	7	1.8		9	2.1		Mann-Whitney U 77595.5 Wilcoxon 150748.5 W -1.734 Z .083 Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	important	38	9.9		34	7.8		
	Of little importance	78	20.4	Important	78	17.9	Important	
	Of average importance	173	45.3		196	45.1		
	important	86	22.5		118	27.1		
	Very important	382	100.0		435	100.0		
	Total							
In your decision-making process of tourism services, which is the importance of the information obtained online through ratings?	Not at all	17	4.4		16	3.7		Mann-Whitney U 82113.0 Wilcoxon 176943.0 W -.440 Z .660 Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	important	28	7.3		44	10.1		
	Of little importance	42	10.9	Important	65	14.9	Important	
	Of average importance	157	40.9		142	32.6		
	important	140	36.5		168	38.6		
	Very important	384	100.0		435	100.0		
	Total							

a Grouping Variable: Generation (Y or Z)

Source: Authors' own work

In the planning stage, Centennials use less Twitter, Trip Advisor (only 36.8% compared to 40% for generation Y), and websites of hotels (only 35% compared to almost 53% for generation Y). On the other hand, they depend more on Instagram (50% compared to 11% for generation Y), HRS (22% compared to 4% for generation Y) or websites of clubs (33% compared to 21% for generation Y). For reservation, Centennials use less the direct booking through the websites of hotels (57% compared to 65% for Millennials) and use more services such as Booking (85.6% compared to 58% for Millennials), HRS (32% compared to 2% for Millennials) or the websites of restaurants (38% compared to 24% for Millennials).

Table 5. Online sharing of travel information

Question	Item	Millennials (Y)			Centennials (Z)			Mann-Whitney Test	
		N	Valid %	Median	N	Valid %	Median		
How often do you share online your travel experience through photos ?	Never	8	2.2		19	4.4		Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon W Z Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	72660.0 146196.0 -3.314 .001
	Almost never	23	6.3	Almost	17	3.9	Almost		
	Rarely	26	7.1	every time	15	3.4	every time		
	Sometimes	79	21.5		59	13.6			
	Almost every time	109	29.6		135	31.0			
	Every time	123	33.4		190	43.7			
	Total	368	100.0		435	100.0			
How often do you share online your travel experience through comments ?	Never	50	13.6		45	10.3		Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon W Z Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	74935.5 148088.5 -2.484 .013
	Almost never	52	14.2		58	13.3			
	Rarely	72	19.6	Sometimes	74	17.0	Sometimes		
	Sometimes	125	34.1		137	31.5			
	Almost every time	45	12.3		80	18.4			
	Every time	23	6.3		41	9.4			
	Total	367	100.0		435	100.0			
How often do you share online your travel experience through videos ?	Never	90	24.9		73	16.9		Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon W Z Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	61009.0 131885.0 -6.255 .000
	Almost never	82	22.7		52	12.0			
	Rarely	75	20.8	Rarely	76	17.6	Sometimes		
	Sometimes	68	18.8		97	22.4			
	Almost every time	31	8.6		83	19.2			
	Every time	15	4.2		52	12.0			
	Total	361	100.0		433	100.0			
How often do you share online your travel experience through ratings ?	Never	97	26.5		80	18.4		Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon W Z Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	66367.5 139138.5 -5.005 .000
	Almost never	67	18.3		58	13.3			
	Rarely	61	16.7	Rarely	71	16.3	Sometimes		
	Sometimes	93	25.4		100	23.0			
	Almost every time	36	9.8		86	19.8			
	Every time	12	3.3		40	9.2			
	Total	366	100.0		435	100.0			

a Grouping Variable: Generation (Y or Z)

Source: Authors' own work

During the actual trip, Facebook is used a lot less by Centennials compared to Millennials (30% compared to 46%), as well as the websites of hotels, travel agencies, and restaurants. While traveling, Centennials rely more on Instagram (30% compared to 18%) and Twitter (19% compared to 6.5%). Interestingly, the aforementioned online sources are used less during the actual travel than in the planning stages. We can infer that Facebook and Instagram are used more for information acquiring in the planning stage and less for sharing experiences during the journey. KPMG (2017) indicates that people increasingly use social media sites for posting and reviewing feedback. The results of our survey can be explained by the fact that the comments and reviews from social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter represent a valuable source of information in the decision-making process, respectively in the planning stage of a journey.

The frequency of sharing online information about the travel experience is shown in Table 5. Results illustrate that Centennials share more things on the Internet about their travel experience than Millennials. All p-values of the Mann-Whitney test are below the confidence level of 0.05, the differences being statistically significant for all elements: photos ($U = 72660.0$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$), comments ($U = 74935.5$, $p = 0.013 < 0.05$), videos ($U = 61009.0$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), and ratings ($U = 66367.5$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

These results show that the frequency is significant higher for Centennials in all analysed cases. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level and affirm that Centennials and Millennials samples are

significantly different in the extent to which they share online their travel experiences through photos, comments, videos, and ratings. Therefore, H3a, H3b, H3c and H3d are validated. Photos are the most shared online. 29.6% of generation Y respondents post travel photos almost every time and 33.4% every time, and 31% of generation Z respondents post almost every time and 43.7% every time. Comments are less popular, most travelers sharing only sometimes information in this form. Even though videos and ratings are not too popular within the Millennials group, respondents from the Centennials sample appreciate they share online travel videos and ratings more frequently (as in Table 5). In these latter cases, the median changed from “rarely” for Millennials to “sometimes” for Centennials.

Another aim of our paper is to correlate the use of phone, social media usage and average daily time spent on social media with the travel behavior of Millennials and Centennials. We hypothesise that the daily time spent on social media affects young people's usage of social media while travelling.

Table 6. Analysis of correlation between use of technology and social media, travel and sharing behavior

Technology use variables	Tourism behaviors and use of technology while travelling			
	Millennials (Y)		Centennials (Z)	
	Spearman's rho coefficient		Spearman's rho coefficient	
	OITDM	OSTE	OITDM	OSTE
EQU	-.089	-.138**	-.095*	-.003
SMUF	-.014	-.047	-.102*	-.267**
SMUI	.024	-.225**	-.191**	-.346**
DASMU	.104*	.254**	.176**	.203**

Obs. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

EQU Daily use of a phone with Internet connection	OITDM Online information importance in travel decision-making (photos, comments, videos, ratings)
SMUF Social media use: Facebook	OSTE Online sharing of travel experience in different forms (photos, comments, videos, ratings)
SMUI Social media use: Instagram	
DASMU Daily average social media usage	

Source: Authors' own work

Table 6 shows that some correlations are substantial and statistically significant at a 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance. Some tourists sharing behaviors while travelling are correlated with their mobile phone usage, social media usage, and average time spent daily on social media. The variable Instagram use (SMUI) is significant correlated with most tourism sharing and decision-making behaviors for both generations. The strongest relationships prove to be between Instagram use and the degree to which people share online information while travelling (Spearman's rho of -0.225** for generation Y and of -0.346** for generation Z). This result indicates that people that do not use Instagram are less inclined to share photos, comments, videos, and ratings about their travel experience. In case of Facebook usage and tourism sharing behaviors, the correlations are significant only for Centennials. The daily average social media usage (DASMU) is significant correlated with all the analysed tourism behaviors for both generations. Overall, this result translates into a higher usage of social media while travelling for the respondents that spend daily more hours on social media in their regular lives. Therefore, H4 is supported. It is not difficult to understand that those who spend daily more hours on social media platforms value more the information found online in their decision-making process and are more willing to share information about their travel experience.

5. Conclusions

This study analyses social media usage and online information use in travel decision-making processes by generations Y and Z to verify if they are similar or different. First, the results indicate generation Z spent more time daily than generation Y on social networks. Moreover, Centennials are more inclined to get information about journeys from social networks than Millennials. In terms of the importance allocated to photos, comments, videos, and ratings in travel decision-making processes, generation Z and Y are different only with regards to significance given to photos. The two generations differ in how they use online resources for the planning, reservation, and actual journey. For reservation, generation Z uses less direct booking through the websites of hotels (57% compared to 65% for Millennials) and uses more services such as Booking (85.6% compared to 58% for Millennials).

During the actual trip, Facebook is used a lot less by Centennials compared to Millennials (30% compared to 46%), as well as the websites of hotels, travel agencies, and restaurants. While travelling, Centennials rely more on Instagram (30% compared to 18%) and Twitter (19% compared to 6.5%). Interestingly, the aforementioned online sources are used more in the planning stages than during the actual travel. This may be explained by the fact that Facebook and Instagram are valuable for information acquiring in the planning stage. Another finding is that the two samples are significantly different in the extent to which they share online their travel experiences through photos, comments, videos, and ratings, Centennials being more inclined to post travel information in the aforementioned forms.

Last but not least, the daily average social media usage is significant correlated with the importance allocated to online information in travel decision making and with online sharing of travel experience through photos, comments, videos, ratings for both generations. This result indicates people spending daily more hours on social media have a higher usage of social media while travelling.

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