

Chapter 15

The Impact of the COVID–19 Pandemic on Holiday Preferences at the Example of Z Generation Within the Youth Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Youth travel is an important segment of the tourism market. The motives of travel as we knew them until 2020 were more or less constant, but the pandemic situation had a huge impact on the interest in travel. For this reason, it is important to test the reaction of young people to current pandemics in the tourism market and their current attitudes and views on travel. This chapter deals with changes in consumer behavior on the example of Slovak youth, based on the implemented qualitative research on a sample of more than 300 Slovak youths who participate in tourism activities. The aim was to identify changes in consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic, their motivations, and barriers to travel. The results of the empirical part bring clear conclusions that the pandemic significantly affected the interest, purchase, and overall behavior of youth in the context of travel.

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INTRODUCTION

Young people gain certain experience not only by being educated in an educational institution or in a family, but also by their own experience. It is about surviving certain things / phenomena, managing tasks, problems, coping with failure, or, conversely, feeling pride and increasing self-esteem or self-confidence and self-esteem by success. One of the possibilities is participation in tourism. From an early age, young people prepared for their future occupations by traveling to or from various places. Gaining certain knowledge, experience and independence can also be gained by participating in tourism. Currently, traveling and participating in tourism is not only for young people to gain experience, knowledge and skills, but also to experience something pleasant and fun. Author Aşan states that Youth tourism has considered being an experiential travel type (Aşan, 2020). Youth tourism has developed as a certain specificity of tourism for a specific segment - young people (Matušíková, 2019). It takes into account their requirements, offers them new possibilities, adapts to them. Creating a product for young travelers requires knowledge of this segment. The creation needs to know the behavior of this segment, habits, opinions, needs, preferences, reasons and motives why they are willing to leave the comfort of home and embark on a journey, as well as the way and possibilities of communication itself not only between young people but also with the outside world. In this context, it is necessary to realize a very important fact that will affect future tourism. In the case of youth tourism, it is about creating and shaping travel behavior, which is formed by the very personality of a young person. This is the contrast between the holiday spent with the parents, where they took part in as children, and the parents decided on the choice as well as the course of the leave. This could help to precisely create their own preferences and habits during their youth.

The chapter describes youth tourism in general, focusing on determining the segment in terms of generational groups, while focusing on the characteristics of generation group Z. Subsequently, the theoretical background is forwarded by the study conducted in the Slovak Republic, focusing on the change in travel behavior of the Z generation during pandemic of COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

Fundamentals of Youth Defining

All tourism activities performed by youth travelers are then considered as what creates youth tourism. From being only a small group consisting of young aristocrats of the last century (Horak and Weber, 2000), youth travelers in the last decades represent a very important tourism segment as tourists traveling internationally.

By mentioning the term youth tourism we understand the form of travel of young people aged 15-25 years. Due to their age, this group no longer belongs to children, but not everyone is yet included in a certain socio-economic group (Hesková, 2011). Eloquent definition also characterizes youth tourism as youth travel, which includes all independent trips of persons aged 16 to 25 (29) for a period of less than one year. The segment is motivated by a desire to get to know another culture, build life experiences and / or take advantage of formal and informal opportunities to acquire knowledge outside their usual environment (UNWTO – WYSE TC, 2016).

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