

## Generation Z's Travel Trend and Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review



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**ABSTRACT:** The study was conducted to review the works related to the travel trends and behavior of Generation Z published by reputable publishers from 2012 to 2022. The data was searched and analyzed on the website [www.lens.org](http://www.lens.org) and VOS viewer software using bibliometric analysis and content analysis methods. The research results have identified six trends corresponding to Generation Z's tourism behaviors in the current period as a basis to continue to implement further research directions and develop strategies and policies that best meet the needs of potential customers - Gen Z.

**KEYWORDS:** Overview, Trends, Behavior, Travel, Gen Z

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (Generation Z, Gen Z, iGen) is the demographic group between Millennials (Generation Y/Gen Y) and Generation Alpha, born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s. Most members of Generation Z are the children of Generation X. Generation Z is the first generation to have grown up with a holistic approach to the multi-dimensional world after the Cold War; they are exposed to the Internet, digital devices, electronics, intelligent connected devices, 4.0 technology right from a young age. iGen's meals, games, or other interactive activities are inseparable from the participation of connected technology devices, so they are always knowledgeable and proficient in using modern technology devices. They are known as citizens of the digital age. A wireless world with hyperlinking capabilities always provides knowledge and multi-dimensional information to Generation Z anytime, anywhere (McCrindle, 2014), so the world for iGen is an open book they can use.

A recent research literature review shows that many domestic and foreign articles, books, and reports focus on researching Gen Z customers as an important emerging market. In which, most of the research on Gen Z is in the fields of business administration and commerce. Nielsen (2020) also assesses that Gen Z will be the generation that has strong influences on travel consumption behavior, so an overview study to identify the travel trends of Generation Z is essential to have research and application orientations for both tourism businesses and the Government in developing tourism development strategies as well as better meeting this critical market segment.

### 2. RESEARCH METHOD

#### 2.1 Bibliometric method

According to Bakker et al. (2005), the bibliometric method is a methodological innovation that helps to review documents systematically, ensuring accuracy and science. This method has two primary data analysis tools: co-citation analysis and co-word analysis. Accordingly, citations and terms co-occurring on titles, abstracts, and keywords will be analyzed by VOSviewer software to describe the research content, thereby providing an overview of relevant documents to the travel trends of Generation Z.

In this method, secondary data is inherited from previous studies and reports of organizations and individuals related to the tourism trends of generation Z and generation Z tourists. Besides, the author used the data source from the website [www.Lens.org](http://www.Lens.org) with the keywords "Gen Z" or "Generation Z" and "tourism trends" to filter for reputable studies. To ensure scientificity and high reliability, the author only selects articles within the last ten years in the WoS and Scopus categories. These are big, reliable data sources with articles published by major publishers worldwide, such as Emerald, Taylor & Francis, Wiley, Elsevier, Springer... Next, the author uses titles, abstracts, and keywords to filter out articles that are duplicated or not related to the search topic. As a result, 87 articles on Gen Z were used to analyze the co-citation network on Gen Z travel behavior and trends worldwide and in Vietnam.

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## 2.2 Content analysis method

To analyze the research on tourism trends and the behavior of Generation Z, the author conducted a literature review and implemented a content analysis method according to the following steps:

### Step 1: Search for documents

From the data source published on the website [www.lens.org](http://www.lens.org), the main English keywords used to search for documents such as "Gen Z" or "generation Z" and "tourism" combined with "tourism" or "travel"; "tourism trends" or "tourist trends". Besides, keywords in Vietnamese are also used to search for relevant research papers such as "thế hệ Z", "xu hướng du lịch".

### Step 2: Preliminary assessment.

For studies on tourism trends, the author examines the research results of domestic and foreign authors, respectively, to indicate tourism trends in the world and in Vietnam. After the documents are selected from reliable sources, the author carefully reads the titles, abstracts, and keywords to remove duplicate articles unrelated to the research topic. As a result, 87 Generation Z studies were retained for content analysis.

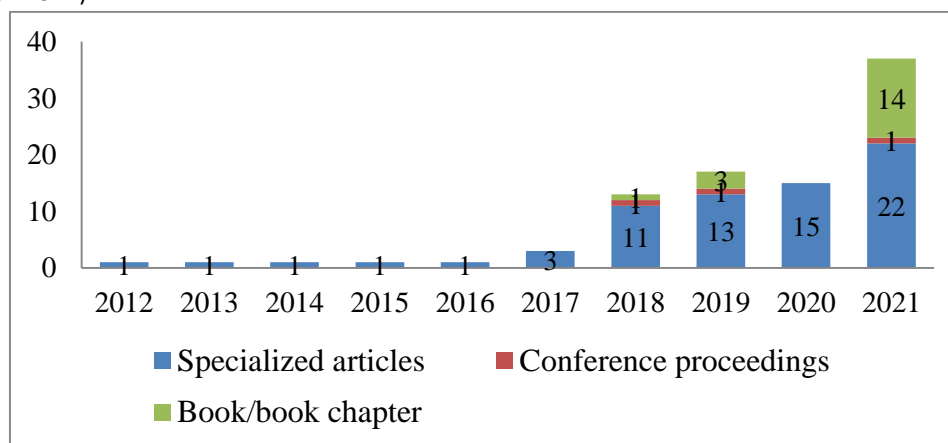
### Step 3: Content analysis

According to Elo & Kyngas (2008), content analysis techniques are used to identify the main topic groups of studies. In this study, the author has applied this method to classify previous studies into different topic groups in each category, thereby identifying research gaps for related issues.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

### 3.1 Overview of research on the behavior of Gen Z tourists

Nielsen and PwC (2020) and many other scientists have conducted initial surveys to assess the general characteristics of Generation Z in Vietnam (PWC Vietnam, 2020). For the tourism sector, research on Generation Z focuses on topics such as determining factors affecting the intention to choose a destination (Nguyen Viet Hoang et al., 2021), intention to use social networks for traveling (Ho Thi Hai Thuy et al., 2021). Nguyen Hoang Linh and Nguyen Phuong Hoa (2020) focus their research on the needs of generation Z tourists. Most of the study is done based on secondary data sources, which are publications of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), specialized journals, or conduct surveys with analyzes and assessments based on the use of theoretical models such as the theoretical model of planned behavior (TPB), the theoretical model of technology acceptance and use (UTAUT1, UTAUT2)...



Source: Author's compilation from a data source of [www.lens.org](http://www.lens.org), 2021

Figure 1.1. Number of studies on Gen Z travelers from 2012 to 2021 in Scopus, WOS journals, conference proceedings, and published books.

For studies in the world, the terms "generation Z" and "tourists" are used to search on Google Scholar. There are 6,050 results in 0.05s. When searching on Scopus database pages, there are 381 results, including 153 technical articles. If searching on the Web of Science, there will be 354 results, including 146 specialized papers. With the keywords "generation Z" or "gen Z" and "tourism" on the database system from [www.Lens.org](http://www.Lens.org), there are 149 results in all. After filtering to select relevant studies based on titles, abstracts, and related keywords in English over the last decade (from 2012 to the present) in specialized scientific journals under the list of Scopus and ISI, there are 87 relevant studies. The number of studies on Gen Z tourists is increasingly interested, shown in Figure 1.1.

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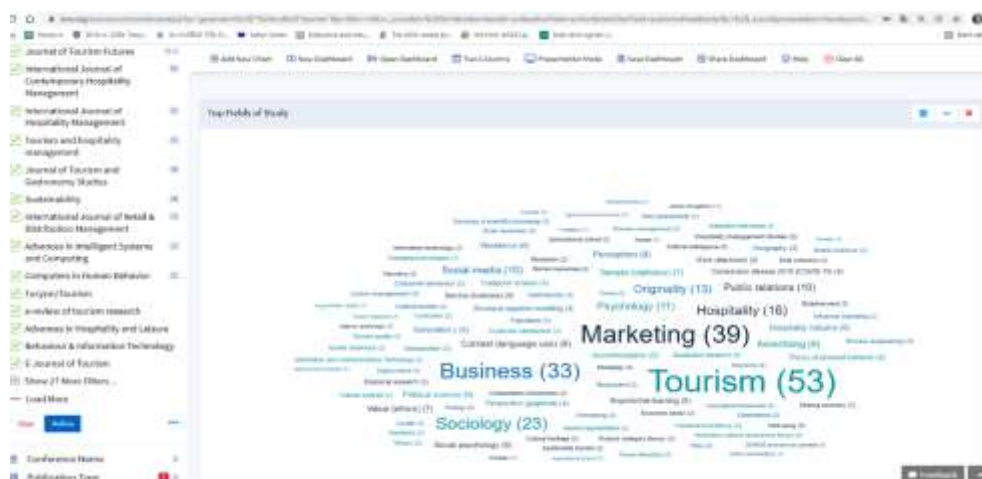


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..1. Research results on Generation Z by field

Figure 1.2 above shows that the authors are most interested in researching Gen Z tourists in the fields of Tourism and Hospitality (53 articles), Marketing (39 articles), business (33 articles), sociology (22 articles), psychology (17 articles), advertising (9 articles), tourist behavior (7 articles)... and other fields. The journals with many research publications on Gen Z tourists need to be mentioned, such as Emerald (19 articles), Springer International Publishing (15 articles), Elsevier (9 articles), MDPI AG (5 articles); This topic has also begun to be of interest to researchers in Asia such as China, Taiwan, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, etc.

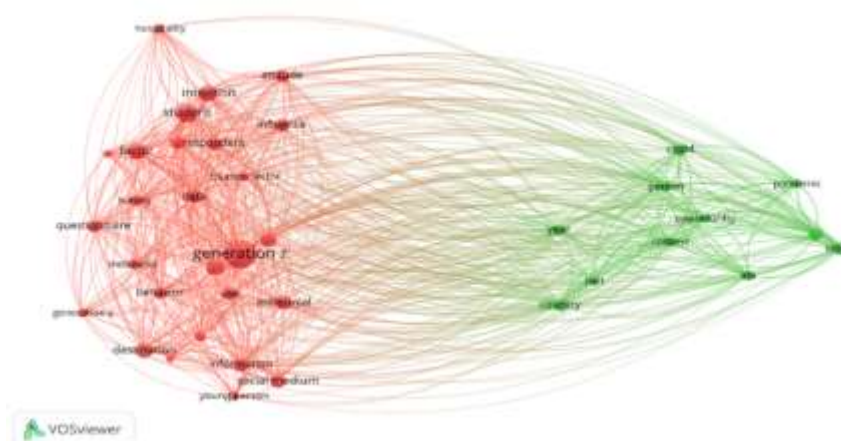


Figure 1.3. Graph of terms co-occurrence from title and summary of research articles on Gen Z travelers from 2012 to present.

Research topics on tourists are quite diverse, such as studying and assessing the characteristics of generation Z tourists or comparing the characteristics of generation Z with other adult generations (Dwidienawati & Gandasari, 2018; Monaco, 2018; Schlossberg, 2016). Some studies focus on factors affecting the needs, behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, intentions and choice of travel destinations or tourism services of Generation Z through social networks, e- WOM, innovative technology, online advertising, digital technology... (Baltescu, 2019; Haddouche & Salomone, 2018; Nguyen Viet Hoang et al., 2021; Ninan et al., 2020; Ho Thi Hai Thuy & Ha Hien Minh, 2020; Tseng et al., 2021; Vidya Jha, 2021). Several other studies have pointed out the characteristics of tourists in the hospitality and catering industry (Monaco, 2018; Mulyadi et al., 2020; Stergiou, 2018; Thach et al., 2021; Wiastuti et al. , 2020). In addition, some authors focus on studying the behavioral characteristics, travel decision-making process, favorite activities and tourist information channels of Generation Z during travel (Baltescu et al. , 2019; Pramono et al., 2020; Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Slivar et al., 2019). The authors have pointed out the types of tourism associated with Gen Z customers such as education tourism, volunteer tourism, sustainable tourism, culinary discovery tourism, entertainment tourism with rewards, eco-tourism, religious-spiritual tourism, and sports tourism.

### 3.2 Overview of overseas research on travel trends of Generation Z

Research on tourism trends is conducted mainly by UNWTO to assess global tourism performance in the past time and forecast for the future. Tourism trends are determined through the contribution of the tourism industry to global GDP, the impact of the

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macro environment on tourism development, and the characteristics of tourist demand through indicators of visitor numbers, length of stay, the purpose of the trip, favorite travel activities, spending structure, means of transport used. In addition, trends of travelers are also mentioned in the business results summary reports of application platforms such as Tripadvisor, Booking.com, Aibnb...(Stoleriu et al., 2019).

The annual report of the World Tourism Organization usually focuses on assessing development trends in visitor numbers, visitor markets, revenue, types of tourism, and tourist consumption behaviors over the years. Accordingly, there are six groups of trends to be researched (shown in Table 1.1), including (1) Development trends of a new type of tourism; (2) Evaluation of new trends that will be formed in the future tourism industry; (3) Trends in the demand/behavior of the tourist market; (4) Factors affecting/changing tourism trends; (5) Tourism development trend of a country/continent; (6) Assess global tourism trends.

**Table Error! No text of specified style in document..1. Classification of tourism trend groups**

Trend groups	Tourism trend groups	Authors
(1) New trend of a specific type of tourism	Eco-tourism	Lew (1998)
	Nature tourism	Björnsdóttir (2018)
	Rural tourism	Susa & Epuran (2016)
	Culinary tourism	Yeoman & McMahon-Beatte (2016), Lau & Yip (2020), Gheorghe et al. (2014)
	Cultural heritage tourism	Timothy (2014)
	Islamic tourism	Samori et al (2016), Rasul (2019)
	Family travel	Schañzel & Yeoman (2014)
(2) Assess the emerging trends in the tourism industry	Smart tourism	Vasavada & Padhiyar (2016), Li et al (2017), Gretzel (2018), Boes et al (2016)
	Creative tourism	Csirmaz & Pető (2015)
	Culinary tourism	Gheorghe et al (2014)
	Fishing and relaxation tourism	Techera (2012)
(3) Trends in the needs/behavior of the tourist market	European tourist area	Weston et al. (2019)
	Using the Internet in trip planning	Xiang et al. (2014)
	Tourist to Sri Lanka	Perera (2017)
	Greek tourist	Kapiki (2012)
	Hong Kong tourist goes abroad	Law et al. (2011)
	Generation Y tourist in Poland	Kowalczyk-Aniol (2013)
	Youth tourist in Germany	Kuhnimhof và cs (2012)
(4) Factors affecting/changing tourism trends	Age, gender	Sabina & Nicolae (2013)
	New generation in Italy	Monaco (2018)
	Weather conditions	Wilkins et al. (2018)
	Social networks, information and communication technology	Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou (2013)
(5) Tourism development trend of a country/continent	India	Vethiraja & Nagavalli (2014)
	Asia Pacific	Tolkach et al. (2016)
	Oman	Baporikar (2011)
	China domestic travel	Wu et al. (2000)
	Republic of Guinea	Diakite et al. (2020)
(5) Assess global travel trends	Experiential tourism, digital tourism, sustainable tourism, co-creative tourism and smart tourism.	UNWTO (2000-2020), Rao (2014), Singh (2012), Bowen & Whalen (2017), J. Gomes (2016), OECD (2020)

**Source:** Compiled by the author, 2020

Through secondary data, studies on tourism development trends of a specific period are carried out to assess tourists' development process, characteristics, and behavioral tendencies. Besides, quantitative studies by an actual survey of tourists' behavioral characteristics in recent years to determine current and future tourism trends. Specifically:

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Table Error! No text of specified style in document..2. Outstanding travel trends in the world

Areas	Outstanding Trends Discovered
Middle East and Asia (Horwath HTL, 2009)	<p>Tourism demand trends focus on growth for both the gray-haired tourist market (elderly), generation Y and Z; in which the middle class has the highest increase in tourism demand; Emerging destinations are the center of attraction for tourists.</p> <p>Tourism supply trends are influenced by the technological revolution with the emergence of digital platforms in the field of tourism; Interested in tourism products for health, sustainable tourism and healthy lifestyle development.</p>
Global (Bowen & Whalen, 2017)	<p>During this period, tourism focuses on four basic trends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technology: with the leading role of robotic technology and artificial intelligence. Technology is increasingly participating in employment positions in the tourism service industry, including hotel services, restaurants, tourist destinations, and tour presentations.</li> <li>- Big data: Technological advances in database systems and analysis software have led to the rapid development of big data applications for the tourism industry in general and hotels and restaurants in particular.</li> <li>- Social networks and online communities: Social media has become more advantageous by developing platforms that allow individuals and businesses to communicate through the connecting role of technology and big data.</li> <li>- Sharing economy: Individuals share their assets, creating new experiences for visitors at competitive prices through a platform using big data.</li> </ul>
Italia (Monaco, 2018)	<p>Forming a new travel trend for Generation Y and Z through technology applications, which is a means of frequent interaction, especially Gen Z. Both generations are deeply influenced by evaluations of social networks community in the decision to choose tourism products and services. New technology helps maximize the travel experience, especially the introduction of virtual tourism through technology devices and social networks.</p>
Latin America (Axon, 2018)	<p>Personal travel is the main trend in Latin American countries with many favorite destinations. Types of tourism, recovery, public service and MICE were selected the most.</p> <p>The motive of travel is to seek out unspoiled nature; experience adventure; explore local history, culture, and cuisine; attend events and concerts.</p>
Europe (Ketter)	<p>Four global travel trends focus on Gen Y :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creative tourism: Building life's experiences is a top priority for gen Y. Besides, living a meaningful and happy life is about creating memories and incredible experiences through travel.</li> <li>- Off-the-beaten-track tourism: For this generation, part of the motivation to travel is seeking novelty, discovering a different way of life, experiencing new things, visiting new places, and acquiring new knowledge. When choosing a destination, they look to less popular places. However, they are still imbued with wildness and originality to avoid overcrowding in crowded tourist destinations and contribute to sustainable tourism development.</li> <li>- Alternative accommodation : Many Y Gen tends to save room rent for other unique experiences. They are also the generation that spends less time in hotels, spending more time in common areas to connect and interact with other travelers, the community, and the world.</li> <li>- Full digital tourism: Generation Y is also the first generation to make journeys associated with technology, changing business models of businesses, making some supplier's service provision has become obsolete and is the driving force behind the development of technology in tourism</li> </ul>
Global (UNWTO, 2019, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regarding the source of visitors: The growing middle class in China has created a boom in the tourism service industry, bringing opportunities to many countries and continents, including Southeast Asia.</li> <li>- About the purpose of organizing the trip: Travel to change: experience life like a local people, seek the original, wild and transform; Travel to share every moment, destination, and experience; Travel towards a healthier life: walking, wellness and sports travel</li> <li>- Regarding the form of trip organization: Solo travel and multi-generational tourism due to the increase in the proportion of single people and the elderly population</li> </ul>



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Areas	Outstanding Trends Discovered
	<p>- Tourism behavior: Raising awareness about sustainable development, climate change and the role of plastic waste reduction; Limit the use of cash, instead use the form of transfer, e-wallet; Social networks and applications on smart devices are indispensable components in the stages before, during and after the trip; Spending structure focuses on entertainment and shopping (instead of focusing on food, accommodation, and transportation as before)</p> <p>- The trend of "niche tourism", that is, the trend of developing specialized tourism products to meet the needs of special market segments, including Gen Z. Accordingly, these specialized products are indicated to meet requirements such as: Adventure trips, short days, the role of food, LGBT+, personal feelings rather than brand loyalty, health, friendly travel, eco-friendly travel, social media, technology application, unique experiences, sharing economy and OTA...</p>

Source: Compiled by the author, 2022

Thus, the above studies show that there are currently five clear trends in the world that businesses, management agencies and investors in the tourism sector need to pay attention to. (1) The tourism market is quite diverse, with three groups of potential customers including the "silver-haired" generation (elderly people), the Y generation and the Z generation. (2) Discover new destinations and form emerging destinations in line with the needs and tastes of the market guests that love to learn, explore and experience. (3) Experience with unspoiled, original destinations; interested in sustainable development, safety and health. (4) Using smart technology with the active participation of applications of the sharing economy on smart connected devices as an integral part of the selection, experience and sharing process information about tourism products. (5) Alliances and associations contribute to creating new products and experiences for tourists, also known as the trend of co-creating the value of tourism products and services.

### 3.3 Domestic research on Gen Z travel trends

Research on annual travel trends published by the Travel Advisory Board (TAB) with key information such as travel time; frequency of travel; criteria for choosing tourism products when planning a trip; the form of organizing the trip; type of tourism to be prioritized for selection; favorite destinations; spending structure, the form of accommodation or tourism market... (VOV2, 2022). When researching tourism trends, in general, the authors in Vietnam focus mainly on studying the factors that affect the trends in choosing tourism products choosing tourist destinations (Hoang Hoai et al., Thi Thu Huong, 2016; Tran Thi Kim Thoa, 2015).

In the post-Covid-19 context, some domestic tourism trends of Vietnamese tourists were pointed out by the TAB council, such as (1) Short-term travel, (2) Family or group of friend's travel, (3) Criteria of safety, flexibility, and price matching quality in choosing tourism destinations and products, (4) Resort tourism is the preferred choice, (5) Online payment is becoming a trend. As for the trend of overseas travel of Vietnamese people, online payment, resort travel, travel insurance, and contactless travel... are the most mentioned keywords on OTA platforms like Booking.com, Tripadvisor, Airbnb...

According to Pham Thi Thuy Nguyet (2016), Gen Y and Gen Z tourists are those who have mastered Internet skills, so they like to explore the world starting from the prism of the Internet from which appear trend of personalized tourism through the following activities: (1) Self-discovery of tourist information without through traditional marketing channels; (2) Using smart connected devices to search for tourist information, consult others; booking and reservation of travel services; (3) Self-booking of travel services, usually in advance of a trip; (4) Make your own travel program; (5) Prefer traveling alone or in small groups. Besides, there is the need for self-service with convenience, available anytime, anywhere in an increasingly "smart" world (Pham Thi Thuy Nguyet, 2016).

Thus, the trend of personalized travel has a very close relationship with the "blooming" development of smart connected devices and mobile travel applications (TMAs), which are not only used by Generation Z in the world but also are popular in Vietnam today. This shows that using TMAs is a prominent trend in the current Gen Z tourist market. The tourism service industry should pay attention to having appropriate policies and strategies to attract this target audience.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the review results show that there are many studies interested in Generation Z, many of which focus on this new generation's behavior and consumption trends. Some studies focus on clarifying the factors affecting the needs, behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, intentions and choice of Generation Z travel destinations or tourism services, such as the Internet and social network, e-WOM, smart technology, online advertising, and digital technology. Some other studies have shown the

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characteristics of tourists in the hospitality and catering industry or studied behavioral characteristics, tourism decision-making processes, favorite activities and communication channels, and reference travel information of Generation Z during travel. Regarding the tourism trend of Generation Z, most research shows that educational tourism, voluntary tourism, sustainable tourism, culinary discovery tourism, entertainment tourism, eco-tourism, religious-spiritual tourism, sports tourism, resort tourism, and Islamic tourism... are the main trends favored by Gen Z. In addition, the trend of using digital and personalized experiences for travel is also of particular interest to Gen Z, such as using mobile applications, online software, or co-creating travel products through the platform social network.

Generation Z has become the target customer of many industries, including tourism. In which, the study of tourism behavior and trends is one of the new directions that has received much attention in the past ten years, so the results of this review will help researchers have more suggestive ideas to continue to study more deeply about the consumption behavior of this customer group.

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