WHAT FEATURES OF DIGITAL TRAVEL-RELATED INFORMATION IS GENERATION Z LOOKING FOR?

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Abstract

Purpose - The study aims to identify segments of Generation Z based on common digital information features used for travel purposes. Generation Z is specific generation in terms of digital information use as they have grown up as digital natives unlike older generations.
Methodology/Design/Approach – Students representing Generation Z are studied by collecting data from a structured online questionnaire consisting of Likert-type scales on digital information features. The questionnaire also includes travel-related benefits and some demographic characteristics of the respondents. Principal component analysis is performed to identify the factors underlying the information features sought, followed by K-Means clustering applied to the identified factors. The characteristics of the clusters are analysed.
Findings - Based on the importance of digital travel-related information features, two distinct segments are identified to be targeted through digital marketing. The larger segment "Practical information seekers" looks for accessible and secure information and the smaller segment "Genuine information seekers" focuses on authenticity of information.
Originality of the research - The study confirms the heterogeneity of the Generation Z travel market by identifying two distinct segments that pursue different digital information features.
Keywords: Generation Z, digital information features, travel-related benefits

INTRODUCTION

While market segmentation is widely used in tourism research, segmentation research based on the importance of digital information for tourism purposes is still rare (Beritelli et al., 2007; Pesonen, 2015), although digital information is now a central part of modern tourism marketing. Since tourism products and destinations are intangible and cannot be tested at the time of the purchase decision, information about them is the only way to learn about the product or destination, and today most information is provided through online promotion or user-generated content. The internet has changed the delivery of information, making it easier and cheaper and enhancing the relationship between the supplier and the potential customer (Kullada & Kurniadjie, 2021). As Gössling (2021) noted, digital travel-related information is intertwined with tourism marketing opportunities.

Market segmentation research can make an important contribution to knowledge about digital information. To successfully reach consumer segments, it is important to understand what kind of digital information is important for a particular segment. In the diverse and heterogeneous tourism market, Generation Z poses a challenge in this respect. Having grown up as a digital native generation, the digital environment is the only familiar environment for them, unlike previous generations who acquired digital technologies later in life.

Some recent studies have been conducted on Generation Z's information behaviour (e.g. Hamid et al., 2016), but research on Generation Z's use of digital travel-related information remains scarce. Consumers who proactively and creatively plan their trips using online solutions represent an increasingly important part of tourism demand and suppliers need to be aware of their interests and lifestyles (Pencarelli, 2020). While Beritelli et al. (2007) stated more than 15 years ago that digital information is a complementary, not a substitute, source of information in the travel market, the traditional communication channels that used to be marketing effective are now inefficient and do not reach the desired attention of Generation Z (Munsch, 2021), which is a major challenge for tourism marketers. As the internet is closely linked to the tourism experience (Hunter Chung et al., 2015; Hew et al., 2017), there have been several studies on Generation Z experiences focusing on internet use for travel purposes and travel preferences (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019; Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Ozdemir-Guzel & Bas, 2021). An additional challenge for digital target marketing stems from the fact that members of Generation Z are considered "distracted multitaskers in terms of their digital behaviour" (Munsch, 2021, p.22). Therefore, it is important to understand how Generation Z can be addressed digitally and whether the Generation Z market is heterogeneous in terms of seeking digital travel-related information or whether it is a homogeneous segment.

Digital travel information is of great importance for tourism marketing in terms of easier and faster communication (Reichstein & Härting, 2018), the content delivered via digital information is also crucial and should be used to target the travel-related benefits customers are looking for. As already highlighted by Frochot & Morrison (2000), the design and promotion of tourism products must focus on the benefits sought by tourists. Indeed, several studies have highlighted the importance of understanding travel-related benefits (e.g. Sarigöllü & Huang, 2005; Frochot, 2005; Hu & Yu, 2006; Molera & Albaladejo, 2007; Park & Yoon, 2009; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012; Nemec Rudež et al., 2014) and the tourism industry and destinations are constantly striving to gain new and up-to-date insights into the benefits desired by travellers. Therefore, it is a challenge for modern tourism marketing to combine the content of digital information related to travel-related benefits with digital information features.

The aim of this study is to investigate whether the behaviour of Generation Z is heterogeneous and thus forms different segments in terms of digital travel-related information search. More specifically, it is about identifying the market segments of Generation Z in terms of the importance of digital travel-related information features and thus finding a solid basis for online marketing strategies that focus on the provision of digital information.

The article is structured as follows. First, previous literature is presented and testable hypotheses are developed. Second, the methodology and data used are described. Third, the empirical results are presented. Fourth, the main conclusions are drawn and implications and recommendations for online tourism marketing for Generation Z are discussed.

1. PREVIOUS LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

As the ubiquitous use of the internet has changed tourists' information-seeking behaviour (Pesonen, 2015), the internet has become the most important tool for travel planning regardless of consumers' age, with younger generations using the internet more actively and engagingly for travel purposes (Xiang et al., 2015). The customer experience has been transformed by digital technology (Parise et al., 2016) and online content can attract more tourists (Majeed et al., 2020). Digital information enriches consumers with new knowledge (Kitsios et al., 2022), is perceived by tourists as an important source of information (Kim et al., 2014) and has a direct impact on the travel experience as well as on attracting more tourists (Kullada & Kurniadjie, 2021). Online information offers tourists new experiences in real time (Pencarelli, 2020; Kullada & Kurniadjie, 2021) and can, thus, encourage the purchase of tourism products that are distant in space and, in most cases, time. Information accessibility, interactivity, network benefits and customer reviews play an important role in online travel purchasing (Khare et al., 2020). Moreover, online tourist information in the form of ratings and reviews can also predict tourists' preferences (Ahani et al., 2019). Important information features include accuracy of information (Wang & Strong, 1996; Grudzień & Hamrol, 2016; Shamala et al., 2017), relevance and objectivity of information (Wang & Strong, 1996; Shamala et al., 2017), reliability (Delone & McLean, 2003; Shamala et al., 2017; Kullada & Kurniadjie, 2021), completeness of information or amount of information (Bastida & Huan, 2014; Delone & Mc Lean, 2003), credibility of information (Kullada & Kurniadjie, 2021), understandability and certainty of information (Delone & McLean, 2003), and quickly accessible and up-to-date information (Wang & Strong, 1996).

Segmentation based on consumers' assessment of the digital travel-related information is of particular importance to successfully target the market, which may differ in the way digital travel-related information is perceived. The literature on tourist behaviour is rich on market segmentation studies, but segmentation based on consumer perceptions of travel-related digital information features is rare. Generation X and Generation Z play an important role in the smart tourism market segment, which is very well versed in information technologies and has willingness to co-create and share data (Gajdošik, 2020). Tourism segmentation studies often take into account the information search channels used by the identified segment, with information search channels limited to the description of the identified segments. Furthermore, Pesonen (2015, p. 215) notes that "in the majority of earlier travel motivation segmentation studies the Internet was only one information source among others". Further research in this area is important as segments with similar demographic and psychographic profiles may differ in the way they seek information (Adhikary & Adhikari, 2019).

Age and age-related lifestyle are important in defining consumer behaviour and perception of digital information. Generation Z consists of digital natives, i.e. people born between 1997 and 2004 who have fully grown up with information technology, in contrast to digital immigrants, represented by older generations who become accustomed to information technology later in life. The use of digital information and traditional information is different among digital natives and digital immigrants (Lim et al., 2021). In fact, Kesharwani (2020) found behavioural differences between digital natives (which include Millennials as well as Generation Z) and digital immigrants in relation to information technology. To better understand consumer behaviour and their specific needs in relation to digital tourism information, the concept of a posteriori segmentation (Mazanec, 2000) is useful to divide the Generation Z market into more homogeneous segments that are not known in advance.

Online communication via the internet is ubiquitous and serves tourism providers to identify consumer needs and desires (Gretzel, 2011; Xiang et al., 2015). With the growing importance of the internet in providing digital information, content about travel-related benefits is increasingly provided online. Digitally delivered content about tourism benefits is the main target of

digital travel-related information. So far, research on the content of digital information in tourism has been highlighted mainly in studies on user-generated content provided online (for instance, Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019; Hu & Trivedi, 2020; Ray & Bala, 2021). This is particularly important for Generation Z, which is still quite under-researched, although they largely engage with digital information when looking for travel-related benefits.

Knowing what kind of travel-related benefits are sought online by specific segments helps tourism suppliers get closer to customers, develop successful online targeting for specific segments and develop online positioning strategies. Digital information can be directly linked to content marketing, which is one of the most important marketing tools that has significant benefits and influences on traveller behaviour (Mathew & Soliman, 2021). As some previous studies segment tourists based on the type of online information sources (Almeida-Santana et al., 2018; Van Dyk et al., 2020), segmentation based on the digital information features is needed.

Digital information features tailored to the target market can help to better communicate about the benefits a supplier has to offer to consumers. Intangible benefits of tourism that are distant in time and space for a consumer planning a trip can be brought closer to the consumer through online information. In this regard, online travel-related information is important to improve understanding of the benefits and develop a better online user experience (Kullada & Kurniadjie, 2021). Information searched online motivates consumers to buy (Bagdoniene & Zemblyte, 2009) and specifically to buy travel (Albayrak et al., 2019).

Research into the benefits customers seek when buying online is necessary to shape content marketing using online information and communication. The travel behaviour literature focuses on the benefits sought by consumers, which are important for predicting tourism demand and making appropriate management decisions (Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele & Beaumont, 2009). To identify segments of travellers motivated by online travel purchasing, Albayrak et al. (2019) identified three segments of travellers: multi-benefit seekers, convenience lovers and utilitarian benefiters. Consumers of the same generation have been shaped by the same environments and experienced the same events at the same time (Pendergast, 2009; Gardiner et al., 2012; Santos et al., 2016). This shapes their travel behaviour and the benefits they seek online for their trips. The differences in online purchasing between generations are also highlighted by Dhanapal et al. (2015). In terms of age, Beritelli et al. (2007) found that younger and more educated travellers place a high importance on online information sources. As more consumers use the Internet for travel purposes, the environment in which consumers grow up plays an important role in how they perceive the online environment, online information and travel-related benefits they seek.

The travel-related benefits Generation Z is looking for online are relevant for online target marketing. Indeed, different generations look for different travel-related benefits. For example, older tourists were identified by five benefit factors: 'excitement', 'social bonding', 'fulfilment of role expectations', 'relaxation' and 'general enjoyment' (Nimrod & Rotem, 2010), which shows the benefits that need to be communicated to them online. A qualitative and meta-analytical review of previous findings on the benefits sought by older tourists shows that they are "by no means standard tourists" and that "they have specific preferences and motivations codetermined by their age (and related attributes)" (Patuelli & Nijkamp, 2016, p. 859). For the much younger generation, Millennials, which is being replaced by Generation Z, four factors for travel-related benefits have been identified (Cavagnaro et al., 2018): "personal, inner development", "development through interpersonal exchange", "socialising and entertainment" and "escapism and relaxation." There is no evidence in the literature of travel-related benefits that Generation Z as the digital native generation, seeks online. This generation has a very short attention span (Williams et al., 2010; Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019), so it is necessary to focus communication on relevant benefits.

This study seeks to find out if there are different segments of Generation Z that pursue different digital information features. Generation Z uses the internet for travel purposes more than other age groups in the third decade of the third millennium. In addition, the study wants to find out whether the travel-related benefits sought that shape the travel experience differ between the identified segments. Therefore, the following hypotheses are tested:

> Hypothesis 1: Generation Z is heterogeneous in terms of the online information features they demand for travel purposes.
> Hypothesis 2: There is a clear difference between the travel-related benefits sought by the different segments of Generation Z.

Identifying the online travel-related information features for Generation Z can provide relevant and useful insights into consumer behaviour to gain accurate and up-to-date knowledge about online information features and develop innovative positioning strategies targeting Generation Z.

2. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The study conducts a market segmentation on Generation Z's online information features. The survey is based on a structured questionnaire. The cover letter for the questionnaire contained the introduction to the research, the purpose of the research and instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were informed that participation in the questionnaire was

voluntary and anonymous and that they could leave the questionnaire at any time without completing it. The questions of the questionnaire were designed following previous studies that addressed the digital information features and benefits sought by tourists. The content of the questionnaire was divided into three parts.

The first part of the questionnaire contains nine variables to measure the digital information features, which are adopted from the studies of Wang and Strong (1996), Delone & McLean (2003), Bastida & Huan (2014), Grudzień & Hamrol (2016), Shamala et al. (2017) and Kullada & Kurniadjie (2021). They are: relevance or usefulness of information, accuracy of information (error free), objectivity of information (neutrality), reliable source of information, easily understandable information, quickly accessible information, complete information, safely accessible information and up- to date information. Respondents were asked to rate their answers on a five-point Likert scale (from 1 - not at all important, to 5 - very important). These statements were analysed using factor-cluster analysis. The second part of the questionnaire also took the form of a five-point Likert scale (from 1 - not at all important, to 5 - very important) and explored the benefits that Generation Z seeks when travelling. It was developed based on the literature on travel-related benefits (Frochot, 2000; Park et al., 2014; Nemec Rudež et al., 2014). The third part of the questionnaire examined some demographic and travel-related characteristics of the respondents.

A random sample of students from the University of Primorska in Slovenia was used to select participants and collect data. University students are good representatives of Generation Z. A relatively homogeneous sample profile contributes to a high internal validity of the data. The data were collected online in the period from May to December 2022. When the questionnaire was sent to the first group of 18 respondents inviting them to complete the questionnaire, they were asked to indicate whether the questions were clear and easy to understand. As there was no feedback from the respondents about problems in completing the questionnaire or about the clarity or misunderstanding of the questions asked, no further improvements to the questionnaire were necessary and the pilot study questionnaires were included in the analysis. Using the web survey software 1KA (2021), 340 students were invited to complete the online questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, the survey data were exported to SPSS (version 28.0). Only fully completed questionnaires without missing information were analysed.

A total of 203 completed questionnaires were collected. Since the respondents belong to Generation Z and are students, the age groups are composed of 48 (23.6 %) respondents aged 18-19 years, 103 (50.7 %) respondents aged 20-21 years, 36 (17.7 %) respondents aged 22-23 years and 16 (7.9 %) respondents aged 24 years or older. 149 (73.4 %) of the respondents were female and 54 (26.6 %) of the respondents were male. Travelling with family and travelling with friends were reported as the preferred form of travel companionship. 144 (70.9 %) respondents travel with family and 133 (65.5 %) respondents travel with friends. In terms of sources of information, internet sources are the most frequently used. Supplier websites and booking intermediaries (186 or 91.6 % of respondents) and internet browsers (178 or 87.7 % of respondents) are most commonly used to search for travel-related information. This is followed by relying on the opinions of friends and acquaintances (126 or 62.1 % of respondents), social media (95 or 46.8 % of respondents) and travel agencies (90 or 44.3 % of respondents). Traditional sources of information are used less, as also expected among Generation Z representatives. Only 23 (11.3 %) of the respondents use them. Their engagement in information is also reflected in the fact that only about one tenth of them leave the search for information about travel to others.

First, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation is conducted to identify the factors underlying Generation Z's search for online information. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine whether the items of a single construct are reliable. Then, K-Means clustering is applied to the factors. The characteristics of the clusters are examined and the benefits sought are analysed for each cluster using descriptive statistics and the t-test for independent samples.

3. FINDINGS

The factors underlying online information features were investigated. After conducting a principal component analysis, a three-factor varimax rotation was selected. Bartlett's test for sphericity revealed a statistically significant correlation matrix (p < 0.001) and a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.899.

Table 1 shows the factor loadings, eigenvalues, explained variance and Cronbach's alpha of the selected factors. The three factors explained 75.023 % of the total variance across the nine variables included. The first common factor is called "Information reality", which explains 31.0% of the total variance and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.843. It includes four variables as follows: "Information is useful", "Information is accurate", "The information is objective" and "Information comes from a reliable source". The highest weighting is 0.848 and the overall mean of items included is 4.42. The second common factor is called "Quick and simple information". It explains 22.9 % of total variance and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.815. It includes two items: "Information is easy to understand" and "Quick access to information". The highest factor loading is 0.827 and the overall mean of this factor is 4.28. The third common factor which explains 21.1 % of the total variance and has Cronbach's alpha of 0.760 is called "Reliable information". It includes three items: "Safe access to information", "Information contains all important data" and "Up-to-date information". This resulted in an overall mean of 4.38 and the highest factor loading is 0.884.

Table 1: **Factor analysis results of online information features**

Factors and items	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Alpha	Mean
Factor 1: Information reality		2.791	31.013	0.843	
Information is useful	0.594				4.38
Information is accurate	0.848				4.40
Information is objective	0.844				4.55
Information comes from reliable source	0.688				4.35
Factor 2: Quick and simple information		2.063	22.918	0.815	
Information is easy to understand	0.827				4.25
Quick access to information	0.746				4.30
Factor 3: Reliable information		1.896	21.092	0.760	
Safe access to information	0.884				4.32
Information contains all important data	0.586				4.43
Up-to-date information	0.672				4.39

KMO = 0.899, Bartlett's test of sphericity = 956.980 at d.f. = 36 with a significance of $p < 0.001$

The three factor scores were used as new variables and input for the cluster analysis. A two-cluster solution was chosen based on the features of each cluster. The T-test for independent samples between the two clusters shows that significant differences ($p < 0.001$) can be confirmed for the factor "Information reality" and the factor "Quick and simple", while there is no significant difference between the two clusters with regard to the factor "Reliable information" (Table 2).

Table 2: **Results of cluster analysis of online information features (n = 203)**

Factors	Cluster I – Genuine information seekers (n = 53)	Cluster II – Practical information seekers (n = 150)	F test (Sig.)
Information reality	0.69812	-0.24667	7.599 ($p < 0.001$)
Quick and simple information	-1.09234	0.38596	-10.602 ($p < 0.001$)
Reliable information	-0.04372	0.01545	-0.385 (0.701)

The first segment is called "Genuine Information Seekers", which is positively evaluated with the factor "Information Reality". This segment comprises 53 or 26.11% of the respondents. It has the highest proportion of respondents aged 20-21 years (49.1%). In terms of travel companionship, respondents in this segment travel with family (75.5 %), followed by more than two-thirds of respondents who travel with friends (see Table 3). More than 90 % of the respondents use internet browsers as well as websites of tourism providers or booking intermediaries as a source of information for travel, followed by word of mouth (56.6 %) and both travel agencies and social media (43.4 %). Purely traditional sources (such as commercials and brochures) are less used in the search for travel-related information (9.4 %).

The second segment is that of "Practical information seekers". It is larger and represents 150 or 73.9% of the respondents. It is positively rated with the factors "Quick and simple information" and "Reliable information". 51.3% of this segment are between 20 and 21 years old. About two thirds of the representatives of this segment travel with family (69.3 %) and friends (64.0 %). As in the first cluster, more than 90% of respondents seek information about travel from tourism providers and booking intermediaries and about 85% through internet browsers, followed by 64 % of respondents who get information through word of mouth, 48% through social media and about 45 % through travel agencies. As with the first cluster, only a small proportion of respondents (12 %) also use purely traditional media to obtain information.

Table 3: **Sample and cluster demographic of respondents and travel-related sources (in absolute number and in a percentage)**

	Cluster I - Genuine information seekers (n = 53)	Cluster II – Practical information seekers (n = 150)
Age		
18 to 19 years	20 (37.7 %)	28 (18.7 %)
20 to 21 years	26 (49.1 %)	77 (51.3 %)
22 to 23 years	6 (11.2%)	30 (20.0 %)
24 and over	1 (2.0 %)	15 (10.0 %)
Gender		
Male	16 (30.2 %)	38 (25.3 %)
Female	37 (69.8 %)	112 (74.7 %)
Travel companionship*		
Travel alone	7 (13.2%)	18 (12.0 %)
Family	40 (75.5 %)	104 (69.3 %)
Friends	37 (69.8 %)	96 (64.0 %)
Others	1 (1.9 %)	14 (9.3 %)
Information source*		
Internet browsers	48 (90.6 %)	130 (85.6 %)
Supplier websites or booking intermediaries	49 (92.5 %)	137 (90.3 %)
Social media	23 (43.4 %)	72 (48.0 %)
Travel agency (online or offline)	23 (43.4 %)	67 (44.7 %)
Traditional channels (brochures, commercials etc.)	5 (9.4 %)	18 (12.0 %)
Friends, acquaintances	30 (56.6 %)	96 (64.0 %)

* more than one answer is possible

T-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there were differences between the clusters in terms of travel-related benefits. The mean values for benefit sought for the two clusters are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: **Mean values of benefits sought by cluster and t-test for independent samples**

Benefit sought	Cluster I – Genuine information seekers (mean)	Cluster II – Practical information seekers (mean)	t- test (p-value)
To get away from everyday life	4.11	4.02	0.579
To be engaged in physical activity	3.68	3.71	0.843
To release tensions	4.19	4.21	0.916
To enjoy peace	3.83	3.94	0.469
To relax	3.77	4.04	0.102
To learn new things	4.55	4.56	0.783
To get new experiences	4.45	4.48	0.850
Spend free time in a different way	4.23	4.30	0.549
To have fun	4.30	4.32	0.923
To meet new people	3.92	4.09	0.278
To get batteries recharged	3.68	4.02	0.010*
Spend time with friends	3.98	4.20	0.140
Spend time with family	3.81	4.26	0.013*
To enjoy comfort	3.70	3.95	0.102
To think about life	3.45	3.65	0.254

* Statistically significant differences

Regardless of the segment, the items "engage in physical activity", "enjoy peace", "enjoy comfort" and "think about life" received the lowest scores. The overall comparison shows that there are no differences between the two segments in terms of desired benefits, except for two benefits. "Practical information seekers" scored higher on the benefit of recharging their batteries and spending time with family. Thus, benefits sought are mainly evenly distributed between the two segments. Easy-to-understand and quick information as well as reliable information are important when it comes to communicating benefits related to spending time with family and recharging batteries when travelling.

4, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study confirms that a large and important market of Generation Z shows heterogeneous behaviour when searching for online information about travel. Taking into account the digital information features that are important for the two identified segments helps to better position the tourism supply which in turn helps tourism suppliers to improve their promotion by adapting communication to the different segments. In this way, a closer relationship can be built with Generation Z tourists, who are identified as 'Genuine information seekers' and 'Practical information seekers'. Thus, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. Similar to Adhikary and Adhikari (2019), who identified different segments of tourism information-seeking behaviour, the present study confirms that Generation Z is not homogeneous in terms of online information features either.

"Practical information seekers" represent a large segment whose members want accessible and secure information. This is in line with the findings of Vieira et al. (2020) and Arar & Yueksel (2015), who find that Generation Z values the speed of things and prefers quick answers because they were born and raised in a digital environment. A fast, easy-to-understand and reliable customer experience is a useful foundation to address to this segment, with online presence and protection of user data building trust and creating customer experience. It is in line with Duffett (2017) that Generation Z values continuous and instant access to the internet. Frustration can arise among young people when information is not easy to find (Holliday & Li, 2004). In this context, Kuhlthau et al. (2008) report the problem that young people tend to skip search phases and only get superficial information when searching digitally.

In order to address the smaller segment of "Genuine information seekers", it is important to disclose information that is considered authentic. Therefore, accurate, objective information that comes from a reliable source creates the confidence that is necessary for this segment. This also applies to the use of user-generated content on social media, which is seen as authentic, in contrast to advertising, which is not perceived as authentic by Generation Z, as Munsch (2021) states. Reviews and opinions of previous travellers are important to provide trustworthy communication to this segment with the help of real people and highly credible influencers. To attract their attention, not only authentic but also appealing information should be conveyed.

The design of digital information for Generation Z should shift from generation-oriented digital marketing to segment-oriented digital marketing, which highlights some important differences between Generation Z segments. Identifying segments and understanding the behaviour of online information seekers is important for the development of digital marketing strategies for Generation Z. However, the two segments are difficult to identify in terms of age or gender. Both "Genuine information seekers" and "Practical information seekers" travel mainly with family and friends. For both segments, the most important sources of information are internet browsers and websites of suppliers and booking intermediaries, followed by word of mouth through friends and acquaintances. Social media are also important. However, traditional channels are not recognised as an important source of information for Generation Z. This is in contrast to the study by Beritelli et al. (2007), according to which digital information is more a complementary source of information than a substitute.

By and large, there are no differences in the benefits sought between the two segments looking for different online travel-related information features. Only two differences were found between the two segments in terms of recovering energy and spending time with the family. Thus, hypothesis 2 is rejected. Apart from the two benefits mentioned, there is no reason to adapt digital information with a view to the benefits sought. In other words, Generation Z enjoys similar travel-related benefits, regardless of the digital information feature used for travel search. Therefore, the content of the messages conveyed can be similar, but the segments should be reached in different ways to provide them with a modified and adapted online consumer experience. As it is difficult to identify segments based on demographic characteristics, Generation Z can be targeted by creating and enhancing tourism experiences with digital information features that are recognised as valuable by specific segments.

The study contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of the intragenerational heterogeneity regarding the importance digital travel-related information features. It addresses an important segmentation topic related to generation-based digital information features. Generation Z is an appropriate population group to research this topic as they are the generation most familiar with the digital world. In response to the lack of research in this area, this study identifies two segments based on the importance of digital travel-related information. The results show that the demographic and travel-related benefits sought do not differ between the two groups.

In terms of management implications, understanding the different segments of Generation Z based on digital information features can improve the development of digital marketing strategies by integrating and enriching digital experiences with practical information and authenticity. Regardless of the travel-related benefits persuaded, the development of travel-related digital information for Generation Z should be oriented towards the larger segment of "Practical Information Seekers" who seek practical digital information and the smaller segment of "Genuine information seekers" who value the authenticity of travel-related information. Thus, the former requires the use of communication tools that promote easy and fast communication, and the latter requires the development of communication that is real and trustworthy in the perception of the users.

Limitations of the study include that it focuses on university students in Slovenia. Since the study is limited to 203 university students, one should be cautious in generalising the results to the entire Generation Z. At the same time, this limitation of the study offers clues for further research. In a longitudinal study, the sample could be extended to a larger population and the results could be compared. The study also offers a starting point for comparing Generation Z between different countries and cultures as well as generations. It would be welcome if the study of digital information were expanded to include the field of artificial intelligence, which is even more important in the service industry (Vitezić & Perić, 2021). Ongoing studies are needed to identify changes and developments in online information seeking behaviour.

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