

TRAVEL PREFERENCES OF GENERATION Y

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Abstract

There are several generations of travelers who have different travel behaviors and preferences starting from the late medieval up to the millennial period or the Generation Y. This study focused on determining the travel preferences of Generation Y. Descriptive type of research was used in this study. The researchers utilized a survey questionnaire with selected Third Year and Fourth Year students of Baliuag University, totaling to ninety five (95) as the respondents who are considered as Generation Y or millennials. Among the travel preferences of the respondents are the following: the use of internet when booking for a travel destination; they travel once to twice a year with family and relatives for two to three days; use of car as mode of transportation when traveling and going to beaches as their most preferred travel destination. Moreover, the top three reasons of the respondents when visiting a destination are to have fun and entertainment; to discover new places or things; and to meet different people and learn their culture. Safety and security is the most important consideration of the respondents in choosing a travel destination. The following are the recommendations based on the conclusions of the study: Security and safety of the guests must always be the priority of every tourists destination especially in beaches, resorts, hotels and event attractions and that travel agencies/tour operators should continuously provide more discounts, lower rates to travelers and access to various destinations to promote and support tourism industry in the country.

Keywords: travel preferences, Generation Y, millennials

Travelers have different preferences when it comes to personal considerations in selecting a travel destination. Travelers of all ages believe seeing unique attractions and increasing cultural knowledge is important. Rest and relaxation is a bigger priority for older travelers while younger travelers are more interested in active recreational activities and satisfying a sense of adventure. Older travelers might be traveling to escape from the stress of everyday work and family obligations, while younger travelers have a goal of broadening their horizons and exploring. Younger travelers are not very much concerned about what to wear and how to behave on holiday. Informality in behavior, a greater tolerance towards the differences of others, and freedom in institutionalized regulations are the characteristics of a modern traveler. (Pilcher, 2012).

The purpose of travel is connected with building social relationships, opportunities to learn and grow, and commitment. It gives us the chance to be truly engaged in an activity, to develop new skills and to discover new cultures. It brings us closer to ourselves and others. (Buhals, 2010).

Special interest tourism (SIT) is the provision of customized tourism activities that caters to the specific interests of groups and individuals. In this case, tourism is undertaken to satisfy a particular interest or need. It has been proposed that SIT consists of four main experiences: Rewarding, Enriching, Adventuresome, Experiences, Learning Experiences. Clients engaged with SIT are seeking to learn more, enrich their awareness, and express themselves. They expect high standards of service and individualized focus. Many wish to travel in an environmentally sound manner and to have authentic experiences whether it is cultural, social or environmental, in which they have a positive engagement with the host community (Egger, 2013).

There have been many studies about travelers' perceptions of a destination, but the research tends to focus only on few factors at a time. In the research study of Del Bosque and Martin (2008), it was revealed that affective image of the place, cultural environment, atmosphere, infrastructure and natural environment were the factors that influence destination

perception of the travelers. These left out many other factors that other researchers have found to be important to perception.

Potential tourists consider issues of sanitation and safety very highly for the destination they will visit. These factors are of great importance to forming a perception and choosing to visit a destination. Since risk and the aversion or seeking of it is incorporated in the positive or negative formation of a destination, demographic information connected to risk has also been considered. It has been found that men, the young, and people with previous travel experience tend to be more risk tolerant. Safety, attractions, infrastructure, levels of congestion, climate, affordability, hospitality, cultural difference, and geographic beauty have been found to affect destination choice (van Dalen & Henkens, 2012).

The experiences of growing up in dissimilar environments have produced generations of travelers who vary greatly from the other. And yet, they share certain similarities that are worth understanding in more detail. Throughout this research study, the researchers review the key features and characteristics of Generation Y travel preferences.

Generation Y travel spontaneously. They are interested in new and exciting destinations and wanted to show off in social media through pictures of exotic destinations and adventurous excursions. Travel has become top priority for this generation feeding their ego. The alarming part in this action is how do they get to manage to spend a bit of money in travelling. Survey says that more than 1 in 2 millennials borrow money from their parents statistically that is 50% of the population of Generation Y are still dependent on their parents when travelling and less financial savvy (Evans, 2015).

The term millennial generally refers to the generation of people born between the early 1980s and 1990s, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. They are also known as Generation Y, because it comes after Generation X — those people between the early 1960s and the 1980s. They have been characterized in different ways. On the negative side, they have been described as lazy, narcissistic and prone to jump from job to

job. The 2008 book "Trophy Kids" by Ron Alsop discussed how the young people have been rewarded for minimal accomplishments in competitive sports, and have unrealistic expectations of working life (Main, 2017).

Millennials, (ages 24 to 35) are most likely to choose an all-inclusive vacation where they don't have to plan anything. In a 2016 report on travel by Forbes, they found out that 97% of the millennials use social media in planning for their travel and 75% post to social media network at least once per day (Fomm, 2018). They grew up in an electronics-filled and increasingly online and socially-networked world, they are connected everywhere and has never lived without a computer. According to Future Cast's (2016), The Millennial Brief on Travel and Lodging, millennials are more likely to travel for leisure in organized groups with extended family or with adults. They are willing to splurge on vacations and activities, but not on accommodations. They are looking for affordable options, making hostels a more appealing (and adventurous) choice when searching for accommodations.

The Generation Y or millennials are the ones with the least loyalty and therefore the hardest to catch as a client. They are constantly on the lookout for something better, cheaper, faster and can access and read about all they want online, instantly, as they are always online. They has never lived without a computer and they are connected everywhere. They know what their goals are and will not rest until it has been reached. They use the phone as the biggest source of information and are dependent on other opinions. Decision-making is no longer an individual effort, it has become a group effort and nobody is afraid to share this. They travel where they want and will find the best value and price, yet clinging to names and brands. (Lorman, 2017).

Millennials demand instant gratification, including speed, efficiency and convenience. In fact, fast service is so important to them that it trumps the importance of face-to-face contact or friendly service. This trend has led to the increasing popularity of check-in kiosks in hotels as an alternative to the front desk. Growing up with smartphones and constant access to the internet in their hands, they are very comfortable with last-

minute decision-making. Mobile device applications that promote last-minute, local hotel bookings on the day of the stay cater to these spontaneous decision-makers and are realizing growing success. This generation's preference for authentic experiences and self-guided booking is likely to shape the future (Anderson, 2015). Providing transparent, self-serve booking experiences can meet this generation's need for autonomy. In order to address the smart spender, hotels need to become the smart operator and invest their funds into places that will attract the customer. Today's hotels catering to millennials, often focus on offering affordable price points and free amenities, such as Wi-Fi.

Gone are the travellers who fill their bags with material items; instead, millennials want unique and interesting experiences to share with friends and family. They want amazing photo (and selfie) ops; they want stories and social media posts. In essence, they want bragging rights. Instead of merely visiting historical landmarks—something they can do via the Internet—they want authentic experiences. They want to get under the skin of their destination, break bread with locals, learn new skills and dive into a new culture. They want an adrenaline rush to document and recount (Rainbolt, 2015).

The top motivations for millennials to travel, according to findings from the WYSE Millennial Traveller Survey (2014), are interacting with locals, experiencing everyday life in a destination, and increasing their knowledge. Where older travellers are likely to pursue relaxing activities as part of their travel plans, being in a calm atmosphere was actually one of the lowest priorities for millennial travellers.

The working week for most people including the middle class was long and tiring but at nowadays, it has been shortened and relaxation has become possible throughout the year. Traveling near one's home environment to a totally strange environment, tourists search for something that will remind them of home. As soon as they find a place where they feel at home, these tourists will go back to the same place for a number of times. In the past, tourists joined package tour that were

organized by the travel agency but at the present, there are group of tourists who would like to travel and explore on their own. Before, the Generation X follows a traditional concept of conformity, but now they have a greater tolerance toward the differences of others. Freedom from institutionalized regulations is now the characteristics of the modern travelers (Cruz, 2013).

Given the abovementioned information, this research study sought to determine the travel preferences of Generation Y. Specifically, it sought to find answers for the following sub-problems:

1. How may the Generation Y travel preferences be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 booking method when planning a trip;
 - 1.2 frequency of travel;
 - 1.3 time duration;
 - 1.4 travel companion;
 - 1.5 mode of transportation; and
 - 1.6 travel destination?
2. What are the reasons of Generation Y for traveling?
3. What factors do Generation Y consider when choosing a travel destination?

This study can help the students specifically the BSHM and BSTM students of Baliuag University in understanding the travel preferences of Generation Y that will further enhance their knowledge in the development and planning of tourist destinations and attractions.

Conceptual Framework and Model of the Study

The factors that determine the travel preferences of the respondents include the booking method when planning a trip, frequency of travel, time duration, travel companion, mode of transportation, travel destination, reasons for travel and considerations when choosing a destination.

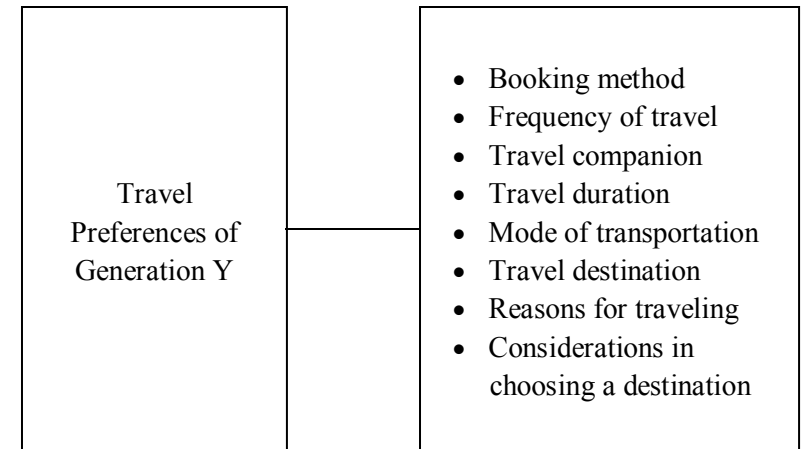


Figure 1. Model showing the travel preferences of Generation_Y

Method

The descriptive type of research was utilized in the research study to describe the travel preferences of Baliuag University students enrolled during the First Trimester of School Year 2018-2019 who are considered as Generation Y (millennials). The researchers used a self-made questionnaire as the main instrument. The questions consisted of the factors that describe the travel preferences of Generation Y or the millenials. The survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected 95 Third Year and Fourth Year students enrolled in the different colleges/departments of the Baliuag University for School Year 2017-2018.

The responses to every item in the questionnaire were tabulated, interpreted and transmitted into percentages. The percentages of responses to every item were determined by dividing the total number of responses by the total number of respondents. Some data were interpreted based on ranking.

Results and Discussions

Table 1. Respondents' preferred booking method in planning a trip

Booking	<i>f</i>	%	Rank
Internet	60	63.1	1
Walk-in	24	25.3	2
Travel Agents	11	11.6	3
Total	95	100	

As presented in table 1, 63.1 % (rank 1) of the respondents are using internet in planning for a trip followed by 25.3% who do walk-in booking and 11.6% are using travel agents. In a 2016 report on travel by Forbes, they found out that 97% of the millennials use social media while travelling and 75% post to social media network at least once per day (Fomm, 2018).

Table 2. Frequency of travel

Frequency	<i>f</i>	%	Rank
Once to twice a year	74	82	1
3-5 times a year	21	22	2
6 or more time a year	1	1.0	3
Total	95	100	

Table 2 shows that the 82% of respondents travel once to twice a year, while 22% of them travel 3-5 times a year. It may be assumed that since the respondents are still students, their travel activities are limited to once to twice a year.

Table 3. Travel companion

Companion	<i>f</i>	%
Family	40	42
Relatives	32	34
Friends	23	24
Total	95	100

As shown in Table 3, 42% of the millennials travel with their family followed by 34% who travel with relatives. Only 24% of the respondents travel with friends. In the article of Barton (2013) of the Boston Consulting Group, she mentioned that millennials are more likely to travel for leisure in organized groups with extended family or with adults.

Table 4. Length of stay in the destination

Length	<i>f</i>	%
One day	10	10
Two-three days	72	76
Three days or more	12	13
More than a week	1	1
Total	95	100

Table 4 shows that majority (76%) of the respondents stay in the destination for two to three days while only few (10%) travel for a day tour only. It may be assumed that since the respondents are still college students, their budget and stay in their preferred destinations is limited to two-three days only.

Table 5. Preferred mode of transportation when traveling

Mode of Transportation	<i>f</i>	%
Car	73	77
Bus	12	13
Airplane	8	8
Train	2	2
Total	95	100

Based on the results of the survey, majority (76%) of the student-respondents preferred riding in a car when travelling, while only 12% and 10% preferred to travel in a bus and airplane respectively. It may be assumed that since majority of the respondents travel with their family and relatives, their transportation vehicle is mostly car.

Table 6. Preferred travel destination

Attraction/Destination	<i>f</i>	Rank
Beaches	53	1
Mountains	27	2
Resorts	25	3
Hotels	17	4
Museums/Historical Sties	4	5
Total	126	

As shown in Table 6, beaches ranked 1 (42%) as the most preferred travel destination of the respondents followed by mountains (21%) and resorts (20%) that ranked two and three respectively. Moreover, 17% of the respondents also prefer to visit hotels. According to Future Cast's (2016), The Millennial Brief on Travel and Lodging, millennials are willing to splurge on vacations and activities, but not on accommodations. They are looking for affordable options, making hostels a more appealing (and adventurous) choice when searching for accommodations.

Table 7. Reason/s for visiting a tourist destination

Reasons	<i>f</i>	Rank
To have fun and be entertained	57	1
To discover new places or things	49	2
To meet different people and learn their culture	32	3
To rest and relax	23	4
To visit relatives and friends	16	5
To involve in sports and recreation	12	6
To do things that they have never done before	10	7
To avoid the hustle and bustle of daily life	6	8
Total	205	

As seen in Table 7, to have fun and be entertained ranked 1 (28%) as one of the many reasons of the respondents in visiting a destination or attraction. It is followed by to rest and relax with 24% responses and to meet different people and learn their culture with 15% responses. Moreover, to discover new places or things also got responses of 11% that ranked number 4 in the reasons of the respondents in visiting a tourist destination. The result of the study was supported by the findings from the WYSE Millennial Traveller Survey (2014) which revealed that the top motivations for millennials to travel are interacting with locals, experiencing everyday life in a destination, and increasing their knowledge.

Table 8 shows that safety and security was the top (ranked 1) consideration of the respondents in choosing a destination, with friendly locals and exciting adventure that ranked 2 (21%) and 3 (18%) respectively. According to van Dalens & Henkens (2012), potential tourists consider issues of sanitation and safety very highly for the destination they will visit. These factors are of great importance to forming a perception and choosing to visit a destination. It is also a tourism sector's concern if it claims to adhere to the principles of responsible tourism.

Conclusions

1. Use of internet is the preferred travel booking method of most of the Generation Y respondents.
 - 1.1 Majority of the Generation Y respondents travel once to twice a year.
 - 1.2 Majority of the Generation Y respondents travel with family and relatives.
 - 1.3 More than half of the respondents stay in their preferred destination for two to three days.
 - 1.4 Majority of the respondents prefer to ride in a car when traveling with family and friends.
 - 1.5 Beaches are the most preferred travel destination of the respondents.
2. The top three reasons of the respondents when visiting a destination are to have fun, and be entertained, to discover new places or things and to meet different people and learn their culture.
3. Among the factors considered by the respondents in choosing a destination are safety and security, friendly locals and exciting adventure.

Recommendations

1. Security and safety of the guests must always be the priority of every tourists destination especially in beaches, resorts, hotels and event attractions.
2. Travel agencies/tour operators should continuously provide more discounts, lower rates to travelers and access to various destinations to promote and support tourism industry in the country.
3. Conduct another study using another population (group of travellers).

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