

Chapter 16

Generation Z's Media Use and Preferences as a Foundation for a Destination Media Planning Process

Andrijana Kos Kavran

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1441-0321>

Polytechnic of Medjmurje in Cakovec, Croatia

Daniel Herman

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9399-6297>

Polytechnic of Medjmurje in Cakovec, Croatia

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the media use and preferences of Generation Z as a foundation for destination media planning. This chapter used a quantitative method with a questionnaire used as primary data source with a sample of 299 respondents. Data were analysed using descriptive statistic method. The results showed that the majority of Generation Z uses and prefers online media while at the same time offline media shouldn't be ignored. This chapter provides recommendations for the destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and media planners to better understand the media habits of Generation Z to use them as a valuable input for destination media planning.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to present and explore the media use of the Generation Z, to explore the media preference of the Generation Z and to create the media planning guidelines and recommendations for destination media planners when targeting Generation Z. As technology is a vital part of Generation Z's life, it perceives and consumes the information through it, which makes its tendency more individualized (Tafonao et al., 2020). With this in mind media planners should learn the differences in media use

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and preference of this generation in comparison with previous generations (Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers and Silent generation), because not every generation is alike, nor should they be treated by marketers in the same way (Williams & Page, 2011).

A new generation is becoming a very important member of the market from the consumption perspective. It is called Generation Z and follows previous very important generation Y or Millennials. This young generation members are individuals born in the 1994 and after (until 2010) and are around 26 years old in 2020. Generation Z has experienced technology development from the first day it was born. Smartphones and other smart devices made them quite different from other previous generations. Members of Generation Z represent the new tourist as they are considered to be the new actors on the demanding tourism market. They represent the most important future guests (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019) while at the same time are likely to transform tourism and destinations (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). When it comes to planning the trip they highly use different media and channels. Tourist arrivals (the number of persons (tourists) who registered and realized nights in an accommodation establishment) to Croatia for the year 2018 show that of the 18,667,000 arrivals, 2,160,698 were aged 15-24 years or 11,57% (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

In comparison with other generations Williams and Page (2011) revealed that for Silent Generation (aged 71-91) marketers should use formal written and face-to-face conversation and reach them through traditional media (radio, television, billboards, magazines and direct mail). However, this generation is increasingly becoming more tech savvy. In terms of communication with generation of Baby Boomers (aged 55-73) direct mail, e-mail and face-to-face conversation should be used. For them, TV is still a major media route, they use Internet and mobile technology but don't have high understanding of functions beyond simple voice calls and SMS. On the Internet, social networks can be effective as well as blogs. In terms of communication, the next generation – Generation X (39-54) is not always easy to reach, especially by using TV as a media. Communication methods for this generation include the Internet, e-mail, word-of-mouth, social events and direct mail. When targeting Generation Y or Millennials (23-38) marketers should use magazines, Internet sites, TV and radio programs and video games. This generation also uses e-mail, voice mail, direct mail and newspapers. Interest in television is less for Millennials than any other generation. If they do watch, they watch on their schedule, not the networks.

Earlier research of media use and preferences of Generation Z show an increasingly interest in this topic so this chapter represents a certain extension. A continuous follow up is needed for marketers and media planners to get to know this generation and to adapt to their preferences. The research in the scope of this chapter is conducted among Croatian Generation Z as the lack of similar research is noted in this country. The objective of this chapter is to provide the basic theoretical background about the Generation Z, its media use and preferences and destination media planning as a part of a media strategy. This chapter uses descriptive explorative study and the empirical research on the media use and preferences of Generation Z using an online questionnaire among members of the Generation Z.

Croatia is an EU country which highly depends on tourism, with the highest ratio of travel receipts to GDP in 2019 – 19.4%, confirming the importance of tourism in this country (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/1171.pdf>). This and above mentioned data stresses the need of proper destination promotion strategy as Generation Z is becoming a very important tourist target group for Croatia. When planning a destination promotion strategy for Generation Z, destinations should apply the principles of the integrative approach. Their media strategy should contain the combination of those various media channels which collectively will create a communication channel for delivering the desired key messages targeted to the Generation Z at the lowest costs.

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