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# Exploring Tourism Experiences: The Vision of Generation Z Versus Artificial Intelligence

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**Abstract:** Generation Z, known for its digital fluency and distinct consumer behaviors, is an increasingly influential demographic in the tourism industry. As a sustainability-focused generation, their preferences and behaviors are shaping the future of travel. This study explores the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z members, focusing on their travel patterns, motivations, information sources, and service preferences. A bibliometric analysis of the existing literature was conducted to identify research trends and gaps in understanding Generation Z's tourism behaviors. Using a mixed-method approach, the study integrates survey data from 399 respondents with AI-generated insights from ChatGPT 4o mini to compare traditional research methods with AI-driven analysis. It examines how AI interprets and predicts travel behaviors, highlighting the reliability and biases inherent in AI models. Key discrepancies between the two methods were found: The survey indicated a preference for car travel and commercial accommodation, while AI predictions favored air travel and private accommodation. Additionally, AI emphasized a growing interest in eco-friendly transportation and connections to natural and cultural environments, offering a broader scope than the survey alone. Both methods revealed a trend toward digital platforms for travel planning, moving away from traditional agencies. The findings suggest that AI can complement traditional research by providing actionable insights, though its limitations emphasize the need for a balanced integration of both methods. This study offers new perspectives on Generation Z's tourism experiences.

**Keywords:** youth travel trends; experiences; AI; ChatGPT; bibliometric analysis; mixed-method research

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## 1. Introduction

Considering the experiential nature of tourism, it is unsurprising that customer experience has garnered significant attention from both tourism scholars and industry professionals, leading to a substantial body of research throughout the 21st century (Kim & So, 2022; Veloso & Gomez-Suarez, 2023; Agapito & Sigala, 2024). The tourism industry is continually evolving, driven by shifting consumer preferences and technological advancements that reshape how people experience travel.

Among the most influential demographic groups in this sector is Generation Z, known for their digital fluency, unique consumption habits, sustainability focus, and desire for personalized experiences. As the first generation to have grown up with widespread access to the internet and mobile technology, Generation Z members approach travel differently from previous generations, both in how they gather information and in their preferences for travel services. Examining their tourism practices presents a significant challenge for both academic research and industry professionals in the tourism sector. This study

begins by exploring how Generation Z's tourist experiences can be comprehended. As members of Generation Z transition into adulthood, they are poised to take on leadership roles and become key players in the tourism and travel industries. To prepare for this future, it is important to invest in research that anticipates their needs and behaviors. Infrastructure development remains crucial but there is a growing need to focus on understanding the preferences and expectations of members of Generation Z in shaping their tourism experiences.

Although some studies have explored the tourism experiences and behaviors of Generation Z (Morrone et al., 2024; Orea-Giner & Fusté-Forné, 2023), there is a lack of research specifically focused on the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z tourists, an area that remains largely unexplored. To address this gap, the present study employs a bibliometric literature review to systematically analyze the existing research landscape. This approach quantitatively assesses key themes and trends in the academic literature, laying the groundwork for identifying gaps related to Romanian Generation Z's tourism experiences. Notably, existing studies have largely focused on members of Generation Z from developed countries (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018; Ding et al., 2022; Morrone et al., 2024), where tourism is a common and well-established behavior. In contrast, such research in less developed or peripheral countries remains rare (Negruș a & Toader, 2018; Băltescu, 2019), highlighting the necessity of gaining a deeper understanding of Romanian Generation Z's tourism experiences. Specifically, this study focuses on Romanian Generation Z's tourism experiences, addressing a critical gap that offers valuable insights for both academic research and industry practices. Therefore, the *first objective of the study* is to examine the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z through the application of a survey-based research method. The main analyzed dimensions of respondents' tourism experience include travel patterns and preferences related to transportation options, types of accommodation, culinary interests, entertainment activities, travel motivations, booking and information sources, and the use of technology.

Contemporary environmental challenges—such as crises, climate change, an increased focus on corporate social responsibility, a growing interest in well-being, and the technological revolution—underscore the need to update and enhance theoretical frameworks and methodologies for understanding and managing experiences (Agapito & Sigala, 2024). These shifts create opportunities to explore novel tools for studying experiences, including AI-based tools like ChatGPT. Given the limited research on Romanian members of Generation Z, ChatGPT was employed as an innovative instrument to explore their tourist experiences by leveraging the global academic literature. Consequently, the study's *second objective* was to use artificial intelligence (ChatGPT) to broaden the understanding of Romanian Generation Z's tourism experiences. Therefore, this study investigates whether AI-generated results can serve as a practical alternative to traditional research methods, which are often time-consuming and resource-intensive.

AI is becoming increasingly integrated into daily life, yet its application in tourism research is still underexplored, especially in comparing AI-generated insights with traditional research methods (Mariani et al., 2022; Vaid et al., 2023; Vidhya et al., 2023). This study compares empirical survey data with AI-generated outcomes to assess the potential of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in understanding tourist behavior. Given the rapid evolution of the tourism industry and the time constraints faced by tourism managers, it is important to evaluate whether AI tools like ChatGPT can provide efficient and actionable insights into consumer behavior. The study explores how AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, can complement traditional research methods in tourism by comparing AI-generated insights with human survey responses. Therefore, the third objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis between the survey results obtained from Romanian Generation Z

respondents and ChatGPT-generated data regarding the travel experiences of Generation Z members. This analysis offers valuable insights into the potential of artificial intelligence as an alternative to traditional research methods.

The structure of this paper is as follows.

Section 2 provides a review of the existing literature on tourism experiences and a more focused approach on Generation Z members and their tourism experience. A bibliometric review was used to analyze publication trends and identify research gaps in Generation Z's tourism experiences, offering a comprehensive overview and highlighting key themes for further exploration. The connection to sustainable tourism was explored through a systematic literature review, which provided deeper insights into the alignment between Generation Z and sustainability in tourism.

Section 3 outlines the research methodology, detailing the sample characteristics and data collection techniques employed in the study.

Section 4 presents the findings and discusses their broader implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the research results, a discussion of its limitations, and recommendations for future research avenues.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Tourism Experiences

Experiences are often described as subjective, intangible, ongoing, and deeply personal in nature (O'Dell, 2007; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). The concept of "experience" can be understood in two forms: the immediate, lived experience and the reflective, interpreted experience, where meaning is assigned through reflection (Highmore, 2002).

The tourist experience is a complex psychological process, making it difficult to define due to its broad range of components (Jennings, 2006; Selstad, 2007). It is often argued that tourist experiences differ from everyday experiences (Cohen, 1979, 2004; Graburn, 2001; Vogt, 1976). Tourism involves intricate interactions, memories, and emotions tied to specific places (Noy, 2004), with individuals typically seeking either an experience of the place itself or a deeper sense of self within that environment. Experience is defined as "an individual's subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e., affective, cognitive, and behavioural) of events related to his/her travel activities which begin before (i.e., planning and preparation), during (i.e., at the destination), and after the trip (i.e., recollection)" (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1369).

In tourism, understanding experiences is essential for enhancing a destination's competitiveness (Kamenidou et al., 2019). Research on tourist experiences draws from diverse methodologies and theoretical frameworks, particularly from social science and marketing/management studies (Vittersø et al., 2000; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Uriely, 2005; Volo, 2013; Campos et al., 2018; Sheldon, 2020). Tourism experiences have been conceptualized as interactions in which destinations act as "theatres" and tourists take on the roles of "actors" (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). The tourism industry plays a critical role in creating, orchestrating, and consuming these experiences by shaping locales and presenting cultural elements (Ramesh & Jaunky, 2021; Mohammad Shafiee et al., 2021; Y. Li et al., 2023).

In contrast, some authors (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021) argue that destinations neither inherently attract nor repel visitors, emphasizing the importance of focusing on individuals actively engaged in, or preparing for, tourism activities. Thus, this paper explores the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z individuals, providing a framework for analyzing these experiences. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering a holistic perspective and deeper insights into Generation Z's tourism experiences, shifting the focus from the destination to the traveler.

### 2.2. Generation Z and Tourism Experiences

Generation Z comprises individuals born in or after 1995, with the oldest members currently aged 29 (İlhan et al., 2023). However, the European Travel Commission (2020) defines Generation Z as those born after 1996 (European Travel Commission, 2020). Generation Z, largely the offspring of Generation X, grew up during the rapid technological advancements brought about by the internet, smartphones, laptops, and widespread access to digital media. This generation has also been referred to by various names such as "post-millennials", "centennials", "pivotals", and "digital natives" (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019).

The typical Generation Z individual, often referred to as a digital native (Dauksevicuite, 2016), is part of the first generation born into a globally connected, internet-driven world, making technology an integral part of their everyday lives (Cilliers, 2017).

Generation Z exhibits a distinct travel profile, differing from traditional tourism through their choices in travel, accommodation, and their interactions with the environment and local communities (Van De Walle, 2011). Though often labeled as a narcissistic generation focused on self-promotion, such as posting selfies, they demonstrate modesty during tourist experiences (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). For them, tourism is seen as a break from daily routines, often accompanied by reduced use of social media (Carù & Cova, 2006). Unlike previous generations, cultural content holds less importance for them (Negrușa & Toader, 2018). Key aspects of Generation Z's tourism behavior, as identified by Mignon (2003) or Băltescu (2019), include last-minute decision-making, a constant search for opportunities, reliance on word-of-mouth recommendations, and a growing preference for low-cost services.

To capture a wide range of studies, considering the emerging nature of research on Generation Z, it is imperative to synthesize and understand the existing literature comprehensively. To identify the research gap in the current literature on tourism experiences, a bibliometric literature review was employed. This method provides a comprehensive and systematic overview of the research field by quantitatively assessing publication trends, co-citation patterns, and key thematic areas.

The documents utilized for this review were sourced from the Web of Science (WoS) database as of 20 September 2024. An advanced search algorithm was created using specific keyword variants related to Generation Z and tourism experience terms. The use of these targeted terms was intended to ensure a consistent research focus across different studies. While these terms are interrelated, they may be employed distinctly within the academic literature. The search string implemented in WoS was as follows:

*TS = (("Generation Z" OR Gen Z OR "post-millennials") AND ("tourism experience" OR "travel experience" OR "tourist experience" OR "vacation experience"))*

To capture a wide range of studies, considering the emerging nature of research on Generation Z, no restrictions were imposed on publication years (2018–2024), languages, or document types. All analyzed documents were articles (n = 16). The top five Web of Science subject categories were "Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism" (n = 9, 56.25%), followed by "Agricultural Economics Policy", "Economics", "Food Science Technology", and "Management" (each with n = 2, 12.50%).

The publication and citation trends related to Generation Z and tourism experience are depicted in Figure 1, which indicates an increasing trend of both publications and citations in recent years, reflecting a growing academic interest in this research field, with 2023 being a pivotal year in terms of output and impact.

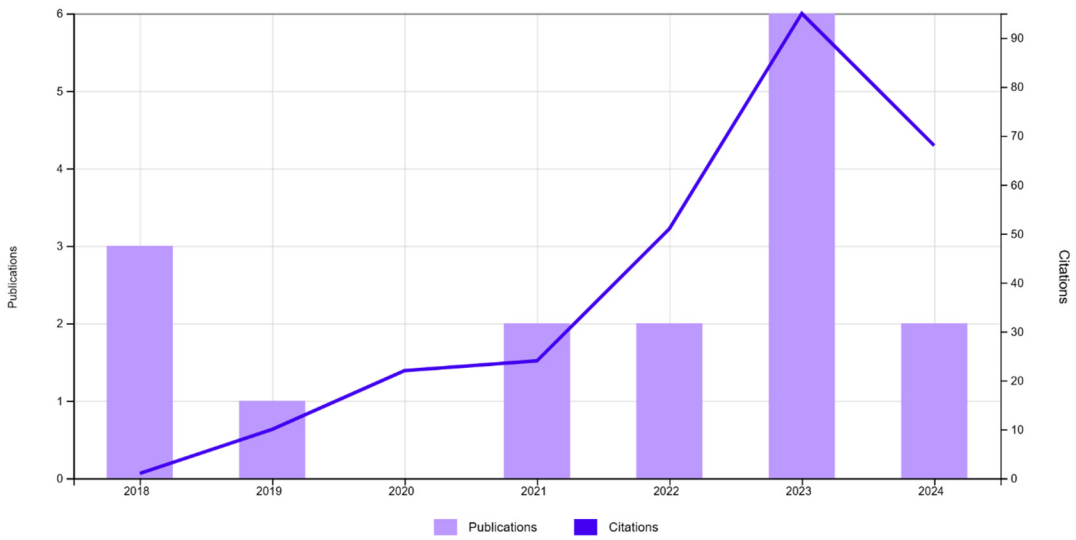


**Figure 1.** Trends of publications and citations on Generation Z and tourism experience. Source: Authors' processing in Excel, using Web of Science-indexed articles.

A consistency analysis using VOSviewer1.6.20 was conducted on keywords appearing more than three times, identifying eight key terms. VOSviewer, a free Java-based software developed by van Eck and Waltman (2010), is specifically designed for bibliometric analysis, with a strong capability to visualize co-occurrence networks and map scientific research trends (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). In this analysis, each node represents a keyword from the reviewed articles, with its size proportional to the frequency of occurrence. As shown in Figure 2, larger nodes indicate more frequently used keywords, reflecting areas of greater focus in the literature. By mapping the most common and co-occurring keywords, VOSviewer provided a clear visualization of the thematic structure and the connections between key concepts related to Generation Z and tourism experiences.

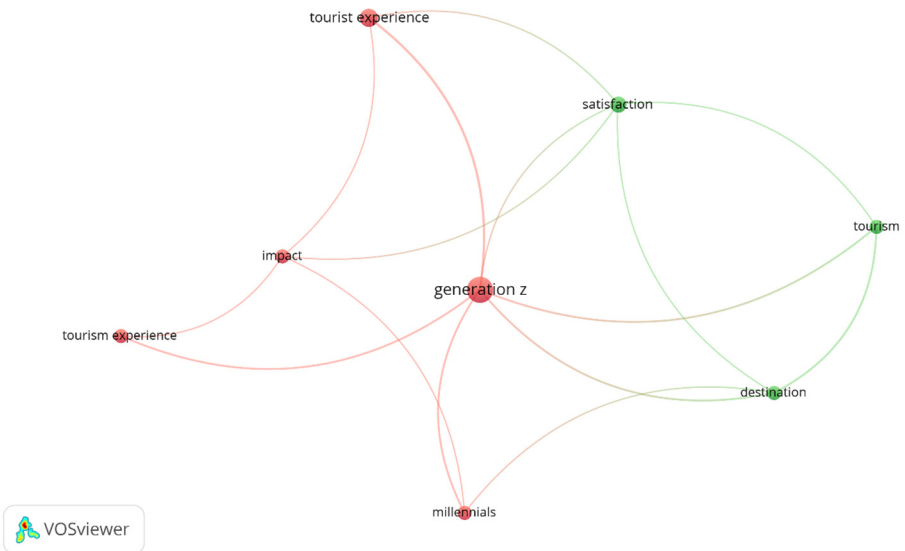


**Figure 2.** Map of the occurrences and links for terms related to Generation Z and the tourism experience. Source: Authors' processing in VOS viewer, using Web of Science-indexed articles.

The results presented in Figure 2 reveal several gaps that align with broader issues identified in the existing literature. There is a lack of comprehensive studies on how Generation Z perceives and interacts with different types of tourist experiences. Furthermore, the connection between Generation Z and their choice of travel destinations, as well as how

these destinations cater to their preferences, is underdeveloped. Lastly, deeper insights are needed into the specific factors that define a successful tourist experience for Generation Z, particularly the role of technology and digital platforms in shaping these experiences. Existing studies on Generation Z and tourism, such as those by Haddouche and Salomone (2018) and Morrone et al. (2024), primarily focus on broader geographic regions or specific contexts, such as post-pandemic behaviors or social media influence. However, these works lack an in-depth analysis of Romanian Generation Z tourists' distinct characteristics. Moreover, there is a significant gap in understanding the travel patterns, motivations, and service preferences of this demographic, which this study aims to address.

### 2.3. Generation Z's Travel Behaviors and Sustainability

Generation Z, the most ethnically diverse and technologically advanced generation, is characterized by individualism, materialism, and a strong concern for environmental issues (Dangmei & Singh, 2016). Members of this generation are deeply connected to the virtual world, which influences their behaviors and choices in many aspects of life, including travel. Their travel behaviors are increasingly shaped by sustainability, and they tend to make decisions that reflect a holistic view of environmental impact.

Generation Z is particularly drawn to eco-friendly transportation options, such as electric vehicles, shared mobility, and trains, which align with sustainable tourism goals (İlhan et al., 2023; European Travel Commission, 2020). They also seek accommodations that have sustainability certifications, demonstrating their commitment to reducing the environmental footprint of their travel (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). Members of this generation's preference for sustainability extends to dining choices as well, as they prioritize organic food and restaurants that implement measures to reduce their carbon footprint. A study by Chiciudean et al. (2024) found that younger consumers consider these factors as key influences on their restaurant decisions. Additionally, they value digital menus and place a higher importance on food quality and freshness over price, further reflecting their sustainable mindset (Băltescu, 2022).

The integration of technology plays a significant role in the travel behaviors of Generation Z. Smart destinations could leverage technologies such as IoT and AI to provide real-time eco-friendly transport options and sustainable accommodation, directly addressing the sustainability demands of this demographic. These technologies not only help optimize resources but also enhance the visitor experience by promoting responsible tourism practices (Gretzel et al., 2018; Stylos et al., 2021). The study conducted by Salam et al. (2024) revealed that the most used smart device application during travel is the maps app, emphasizing the importance of navigation and ease of access in travel experiences.

Digital communication also plays a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's travel decisions. Băltescu and Untaru (2025) explored the influence of travel influencers on this generation, highlighting how digital communication, with its zero-waste and efficient nature, supports sustainable practices. They note that Generation Z values information that promotes sustainable behavior, a preference confirmed by other studies as well (Laužikas & Miliūtė, 2020; Băltescu & Untaru, 2025).

Dabija et al. (2019) further emphasize the importance of sustainability for Generation Z, suggesting that producers must adopt green strategies to cater to this generation's values. Previous research identifies three environmentally conscious food consumer groups within Generation Z, with sustainability activists and believers being the largest, further affirming their eco-friendly orientation (Su et al., 2019).

## 3. Methodology

This study follows a multi-step methodology to examine the alignment between Generation Z's tourism experiences and AI-generated outcomes. After the systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis to map existing knowledge, data collection proceeded with two parallel approaches: an online survey of Romanian Generation Z for quantitative data, and AI-generated tourism outcomes for comparison. A comparative analysis identified similarities and differences between human and AI-reported experiences, concluding with an evaluation of AI's ability to replicate or predict Generation Z's preferences. Figure 3 presents a flow diagram which illustrates the research process.

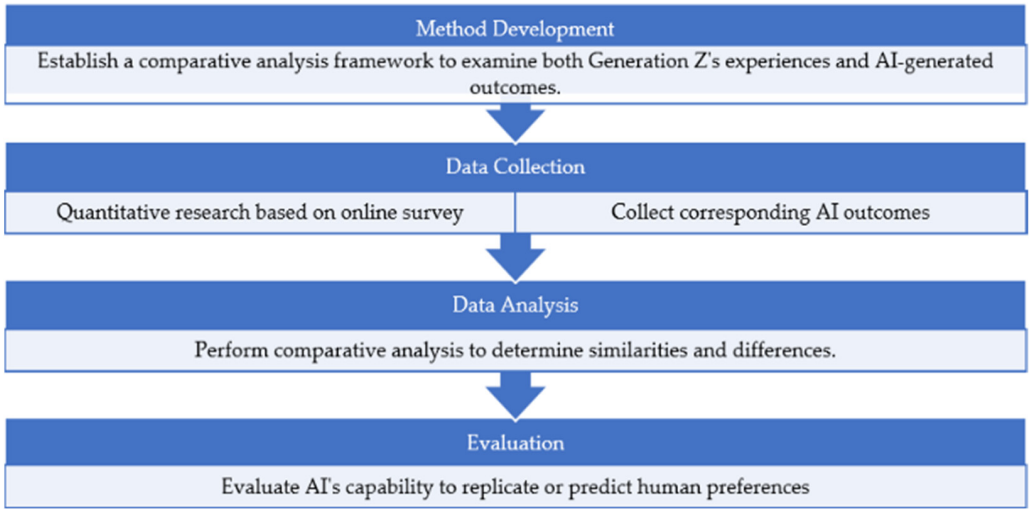


**Figure 3.** Flow diagram of the research process. Source: Authors' processing in Word.

This study utilized a quantitative survey to explore the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z. The structured questionnaire was developed based on the Flash Eurobarometer surveys of 2010, 2016, and 2021 (European Commission, 2010, 2016, 2021), which are widely recognized for their comprehensive approach to examining travel behaviors across Europe. These surveys provided a solid framework for investigating Generation Z's distinct travel patterns in a Romanian context, ensuring consistency and comparability with previous research. Reliability was reinforced by incorporating established scales from the Eurobarometer, which have been rigorously tested and standardized across various cultural contexts. Additionally, internal consistency checks were conducted on the survey responses to further ensure data reliability.

The survey covered key dimensions of the tourism experience, including travel patterns and preferences related to transportation options, types of accommodation, culinary interests, entertainment activities, travel motivations, booking and information sources, and the use of technology. To answer the first objective of the study, analyzing the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z, a series of research questions were developed:

- What are the predominant methods through which Generation Z makes travel bookings, and what platforms and technological tools do they use?
- What are the preferred sources of tourist information for Generation Z, and how does digitalization impact their information-seeking behavior?
- What are Generation Z's preferences regarding modes of transportation for travel?
- What are the decisive factors that influence Generation Z's choice of travel destinations?
- What are Generation Z's accommodation preferences?
- What dining options are preferred by Generation Z during travel?
- What types of entertainment and activities are preferred by Generation Z during travel?

The questionnaire's validity was assessed through a pilot test involving 20 participants from the target demographic, which helped refine the survey questions for clarity and relevance.

Data collection was conducted using an online survey platform, which allowed for a broad geographic reach and the efficient gathering of responses. The questionnaire is distributed between 25 July 2024 and 31 August 2024 via email, social media platforms, or WhatsApp messages by researchers to Romanian individuals aged 18–29. Respondents were encouraged to forward the survey to others within the same age group. Potential participants were invited to give their informed consent electronically before completing the survey. Participation was anonymous; therefore, a signature was not required on the consent form. The number of respondents was 399, and their sociodemographic details were unknown.

To answer the second objective of the study, following Bahak et al.'s (2023) methodology of evaluating ChatGPT as a question answering (QA) system, a specific evaluation framework has been implemented. This framework is structured around three primary components: the Prompt Builder, ChatGPT, and the Answer Evaluator. The data structure for a QA dataset typically consists of a set of triples (P, Q, and A), where 'P' is a textual paragraph, 'Q' is a question about this paragraph, and 'A' represents the corresponding answer. For each triple, the paragraph (P_i) and question (Q_i) are input into the Prompt Builder, which then formulates and sends a prompt to ChatGPT to solicit an answer for 'Q' based on 'P'. Subsequently, the response from ChatGPT, along with the correct answer ('A'), is evaluated by the Answer Evaluator using predetermined metrics.

The Prompt Builder is tasked with creating appropriate prompts based on the available data, which are then supplied to ChatGPT. The prompts were framed in a way that reflected the specific themes explored in the survey.

*QA dataset: "Given the research titled 'Generation Z and Tourism Experiences', what is the answer to the following question based on available online statistics: "+Q+"? Consider the following answer options: "+P".*

For example, a prompt asked, "*Given the research titled 'Generation Z and Tourism Experiences', what is the answer to the following question based on available online statistics: "What type of transportation do you prefer within a holiday destination?" Consider the following answer options: "Own car, Rented car, Train, Airplane, Bicycle, Hitchhiking, Public transportation (bus, metro, etc.), Taxi, UBER, Electric scooter/bike, Walking, I have no preferences*". This was designed to mirror the questions posed in the traditional survey.

In this study, ChatGPT-4 was chosen because it is the most up to date. ChatGPT generated responses by drawing on a diverse range of global studies, articles, and databases, ensuring that the outputs represented a broad spectrum of international insights into Generation Z's tourism behaviors. However, no specific outcomes were generated regarding Romanian Generation Z. To evaluate the consistency between AI-generated insights and traditional survey results and answer the third objective of this study, a direct comparison was conducted across key dimensions of the Generation Z tourism experience. A key aspect of this study is to examine the biases and discrepancies in the results between the two data sources, especially considering AI's reliance on diverse online sources such as blogs, influencers, and trade platforms.

The evaluation metric used for assessing QA systems is exact match, also used in Rajpurkar et al.'s (2016) and Bahak et al.'s (2023) research. This metric calculates the percentage of predicted answers that precisely match any of the correct candidate answers. An answer was classified as an "exact match" if ChatGPT accurately replicated the survey response option that received the most answers within its full response.

In this study, the methods complement each other. The survey data anchor the analysis by offering firsthand insights into the Romanian cohort's behaviors while the AI insights provide a meta-analysis of global trends that are not restricted to Romanian data but are essential for comparing local patterns to international behaviors. This layered approach strengthens the overall findings but also validates the results by cross-checking data from different sources.

The use of a mixed-methods design in this study aligns with a growing trend in social sciences and tourism research to combine quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Tourism research, due to its multi-disciplinary nature, benefits from this approach as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of complex behaviors like Generation Z's travel preferences (Mackay & Campbell, 2004; Lemelin, 2006). By integrating survey data (quantitative) with AI-generated insights (qualitative), this study provides both localized, specific data and a global perspective, enhancing the overall validity and depth of the findings. Mixed-methods approaches are becoming increasingly common in tourism studies as they offer richer insights into multi-faceted phenomena (Riley & Love, 2000).

## 4. Results and Discussions

The comparative analysis between survey results and ChatGPT-generated data regarding the travel experiences of Generation Z members offers valuable insights into the potential of artificial intelligence as an alternative to traditional research methods.

ChatGPT's responses were based on 12 online sources, which included industry reports, articles, and research publications (detailed in Table 1). The AI-synthesized data from a diverse range of sectors, including travel technology, economic reports, and consumer behavior studies, provided a broad understanding of global Generation Z tourism experience trends.

The composition of sources used by ChatGPT includes 33.33% blogs, 25% articles based on research, and 41.67% online articles. Analyzing the business fields of these sources, a substantial focus is directed towards travel-related services and technology, which together constitute nearly 75% of all sources. Furthermore, the temporal distribution of these sources is with half dating from 2023 and a forward-looking perspective with 33.3% slated for 2024.

The data encapsulated within the responses from ChatGPT correspond with the content drawn from specified source texts. On average, approximately 2.625 sources were utilized per response. The range of sources varied, with a minimum of one source (question: which of the following attractions is the most important for you when you select a holiday destination?) and a maximum of five sources (question: what are your dining preferences when traveling?).

The comparative analysis reveals that 43.75% of the survey responses aligned with the ChatGPT-generated results, while 56.25% did not match. This significant proportion of matched responses indicates that AI has a considerable capacity to replicate traditional research findings accurately. However, more than half of the responses did not match, highlighting the limitations of relying solely on AI-generated data. Figure 4 presents a visual comparison between survey results and AI-generated results (ChatGPT) regarding Generation Z's travel experiences. Responses are grouped into four main categories: travel patterns and preferences, reasons and motivations for travel, booking and information sources, and technology use. In the following, a detailed analysis of the results is presented.

**Table 1.** Details about ChatGPT's sources.

| Author | Source | Title | Business Field | Source Type | Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Travel and Leisure" magazine | Travel+ Leisure (2024) | How Gen Z Is Changing the Travel Industry—and Where They Plan to Go in 2024 | Online magazine | Online article | 2024 |
| CEBR | CEBR (2023) | Globetrender–Gen Z and Millennial travel intentions revealed for 2023 | Economic consultancy | Article based on research | 2023 |
| Flywire | Flywire (2022) | Gen Z & Millennial travelers turn to travel agents to plan luxury trips | Payment solutions | Article based on research | 2022 |
| GQ magazine | GQ (2024) | The 2024 world's most exciting destinations for Gen Z travellers, according to study | Online magazine | Online article | 2024 |
| Michael Brito | Brito (2023) | 2023 Gen Z Trends, Facts & Statistics & Media Consumption | Digital strategy consulting | Online article | 2023 |
| Rezdy | Rezdy (2023) | Generation Z travel trends and how to attract them to your tours & activities | Travel technology | Blog | 2023 |
| Roller | Roller (2024) | Gen Z Travel Trends & Statistics in 2023 | IT, customer experience | Blog | 2024 |
| TELUS International | Telus International (2021) | How Generation Z is changing, and challenging, the future of travel | IT, customer experience | Online article | 2021 |
| The Wandering RV | The Wandering RV (2023) | Travel Statistics by Age Group (2023)//Latest Research | RV travel insights | Article based on research | 2023 |
| Toast | TOAST (2023) | Tracking the Latest Gen Z Food Trends in 2024 | Restaurant management system | Blog | 2023 |
| TravelPerk | Travelperk (2024) | 30+ Gen Z travel statistics and trends [2024 update] | Corporate travel management | Blog | 2024 |
| TripPursuit | Trippursuit (2023) | Gen Z Travel Trends 2023: Rethinking the Future of Tourism? | Travel content platform | Online article | 2023 |

In examining the travel experiences of Generation Z respondents over the past 12 months, quantitative data obtained from the online survey conducted among Romanians revealed that traveling 2–3 times was the most frequent occurrence, noted by 39.10% of respondents. This finding is supported by the ChatGPT-generated analysis, which highlighted the same frequency as the dominant travel pattern for Generation Z. ChatGPT's response cited findings from sources such as Roller (2024), suggesting Generation Z's preference for multiple trips annually, often blending leisure with exploration. This consistent observation across both empirical data and synthesized reports suggests the need to accommodate the unique travel preferences and patterns of younger generations.

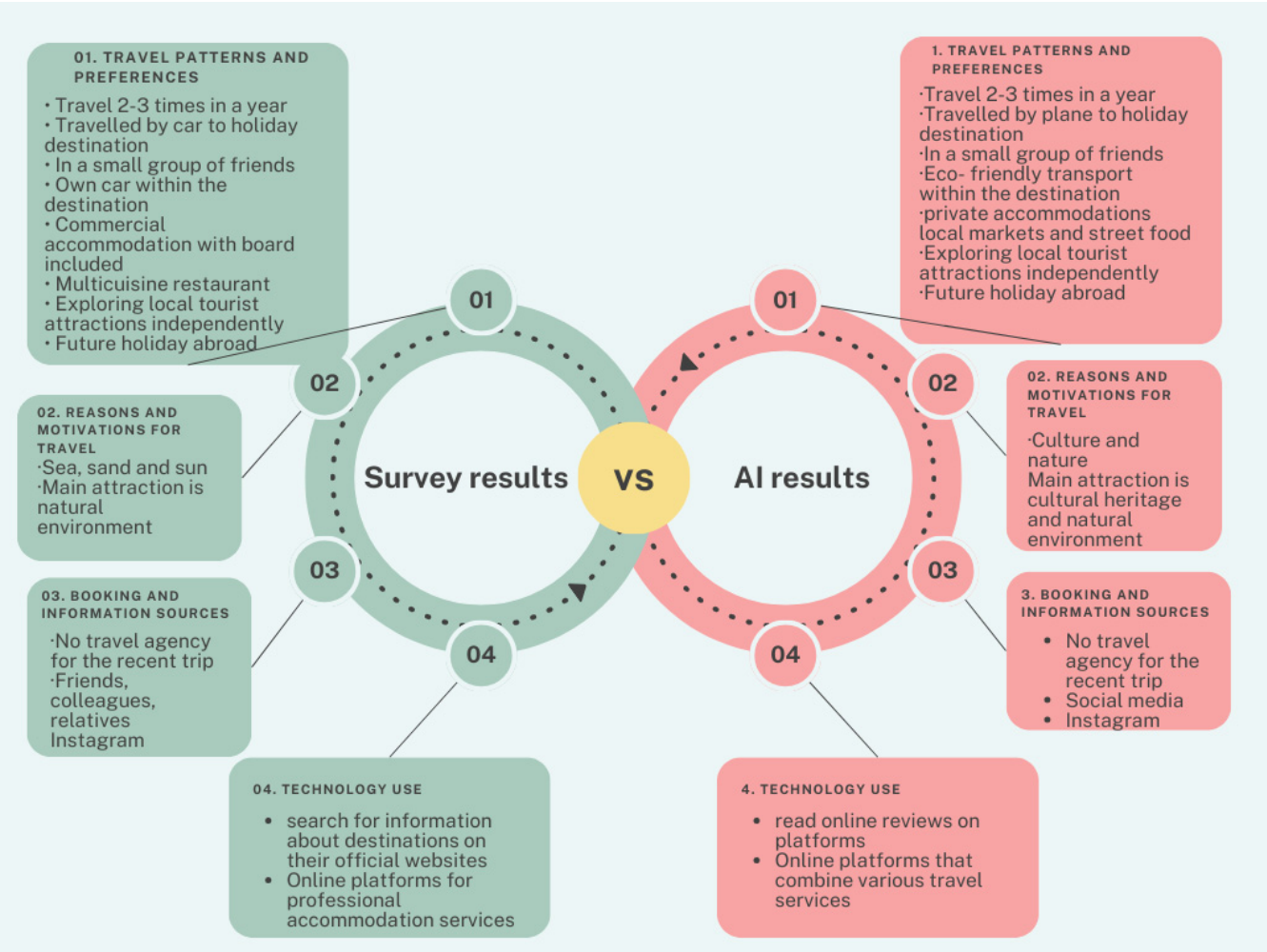


**Figure 4.** Visual comparison between survey results and AI-generated results (ChatGPT) regarding Generation Z's tourism experience. Source: Authors' processing in Canva, using research results.

In the last 12 months, 6.77% of the sample studied did not travel for tourism purposes. The online survey results revealed that the predominant reason for this lack of travel among Generation Z individuals is financial concerns, with 77.78% of non-travelers citing economic constraints as the primary deterrent. The analysis indicates that other factors such as personal reasons, time constraints, or safety concerns had minimal impact, underscoring economic factors as the central barrier to travel within this group. This finding is corroborated by a ChatGPT-generated analysis, which also highlights the cautious spending habits of many Generation Z individuals, particularly in the face of ongoing economic uncertainties that have continued to shape travel behaviors post-pandemic. This financial prudence is particularly evident in their preference to economize on transportation and other travel costs while still seeking enriching travel experiences when possible (Travelperk, 2024; Trippursuit, 2023; Roller, 2024). This emphasis on financial concerns as a significant barrier to travel among Generation Z is also supported by other studies, indicating a consistent trend across research. Notably, İlhan et al. (2022) highlight that Generation Z often travels with a limited budget, further emphasizing the need for strategies that facilitate effective financial management while traveling.

The most common mode of transportation used by Romanian Generation Z members for reaching their most recent holiday destination was the car, with 55.64% of respondents choosing this option. This finding contradicts the ChatGPT-generated analysis, which claims that the most popular transportation mode is the airplane, with an estimated 60% of

Generation Z travelers preferring air travel. In this study, the survey shows that only 48.87% of respondents traveled by airplane. The significant discrepancy between the actual survey data and the ChatGPT answer highlights a mismatch in the understanding of Generation Z's travel preferences. Moreover, the ChatGPT response discusses a generational trend towards valuing time-efficiency and convenience, commonly associated with air travel, and the pursuit of budget-friendly options via budget airlines (Trippursuit, 2023). This difference likely stems from the sources that ChatGPT relied on, which focused on global trends where air travel is more prevalent among Generation Z in developed countries, particularly for international travel. Romanian respondents, however, may have chosen car travel due to shorter distances, lower costs, and the infrastructure in Romania, which may not always prioritize air travel for domestic trips. This highlights the limitation of AI in accounting for specific regional and economic factors when generating outcomes based on global data.

The survey results and the analysis provided by ChatGPT both point to a significant trend among Generation Z regarding the use of travel agent services. According to the survey data, a vast majority of respondents (351 out of 399), equivalent to about 88%, did not employ the services of a traditional travel agent or agency for their most recent trip. This aligns well with the ChatGPT-generated commentary that the majority of Generation Z prefers using online travel agents (OTAs) for their bookings, managing their travel itineraries independently, relying on online reviews and social media for travel recommendations (Travelperk, 2024; Roller, 2024; Rezdy, 2023). These data underscore a broader trend of moving away from traditional travel booking methods towards more autonomous, technology-driven solutions. Furthermore, both academic research (Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2022; Nemec Rudež, 2023) and insights from ChatGPT highlight that members of Generation Z prefer to independently manage their travel itineraries and generally use online travel agents (OTAs). This preference is rooted in their comfort with digital technology. Notably, when Generation Z individuals opt for OTA services, it is specifically to arrange luxury travel experiences, driven by their desire for exclusive and highly personalized travel options (Flywire, 2022).

According to İlhan et al. (2022), the primary motivation for this generation's travel is to escape the monotony of daily life. The survey findings provide an understanding of Generation Z's travel motivations compared to ChatGPT's synthesized results, highlighting the diversity within Generation Z's travel preferences. "Sea, sand, and sun" is the most popular choice of Romanian Generation Z respondents (72.18% of the interviewed individuals opted for this travel motivation). This contrasts with the ChatGPT analysis, which emphasizes cultural experiences, nature, and city breaks as the main attractions for Generation Z travelers. According to the survey outcomes, visiting family/friends/relatives and nature-themed trips also scored highly, with 49.62% and 57.89% of the responses, respectively, suggesting a strong inclination towards these categories as well. City breaks and cultural experiences, though valued according to ChatGPT's analysis for their dynamic urban environment and rich local customs (Travelperk, 2024; Trippursuit, 2023), respectively, attracted slightly fewer respondents (49.62% and 46.62%, respectively), aligning partially with the AI's suggested results. The lower priority given to wellness/spa treatments and sports-related activities, with only 13.53% and 17.29% of the responses, respectively, contrasts with the AI's assertion that physical and mental wellness are increasingly important for the members of Generation Z.

The survey data reveal a pronounced preference for natural environments among Generation Z when selecting holiday destinations, with 48.12% of respondents indicating this choice. While the ChatGPT-generated analysis does not perfectly align with the survey results, it still correctly identifies that Generation Z places significant importance on both

cultural heritage and natural environments, synthesizing information from sources such as Travelperk (2024). Cultural heritage is secondary to natural environments in terms of priority for Generation Z respondents, garnering 19.55% of responses. Other attractions such as gastronomy, entertainment facilities, and festivals received even fewer mentions, with 12.78%, 9.02%, and 8.27% of responses, respectively, highlighting that these elements, though relevant, are not as critical in decision-making for holiday destinations among Generation Z.

The survey results indicate a clear preference among Generation Z for traveling in small groups of friends, with 39.85% of respondents favoring this mode of travel. This preference is echoed in the ChatGPT analysis, which notes that traveling in small groups aligns with Generation Z's values of sharing new experiences and exploring together, thereby enhancing the enjoyment and communal aspect of their trips (Travelperk, 2024; Roller, 2024). Such group travels also allow for more flexible coordination of plans and cost-sharing, making trips more accessible and budget-friendly (CEBR, 2023).

With 43.61% of the survey respondents being involved in a relationship, traveling with a partner or spouse is also popular, as indicated by 31.58% of responses. ChatGPT results align with this finding. This result may suggest that this demographic also values intimate and shared experiences with significant others. The preference for family travel is noteworthy as well, with 19.55% of respondents indicating this choice. An explanation for this result can be that 28.57% of respondents use their family and/or own sources as the main source of funding for holidays. Very few Generation Z individuals prefer traveling alone, in large groups, or with strangers, as these options garnered significantly lower responses—3.76%, 2.26%, and 0.75%, respectively. Additionally, 9.77% of respondents have no particular preference, indicating a flexibility in travel style within this demographic.

Friends, colleagues, and relatives emerge as the most trusted sources for travel information, gathering 69.17% of responses. This reflects a strong preference for personal recommendations within respondents' social networks. The same preference is somewhat captured in the ChatGPT analysis, though it places more emphasis on social media platforms and content shared within digital networks as primary information sources. Furthermore, only 39.85% of respondents consider social media pages (of accommodation units, transportation, dining, etc.) as an important information source when choosing a holiday destination.

Personal experiences also play a significant role (45.11%) for the surveyed respondents, highlighting Romanian Generation Z's value for authentic and personalized experiences. This aspect is also captured in the scientific literature. The bibliometric analysis conducted by Yahya and Mammadzada (2024) indicates a shift toward authenticity as a key strategy to effectively engage Generation Z.

Online influencers and bloggers, along with travel vlogs, received 30.83% and 27.07% of responses among the survey respondents, respectively, showcasing Generation Z's affinity for content that is visually captivating and interactive. As the ChatGPT answer presents, members of this generation extensively utilize these sources to obtain insights and inspiration for travel, emphasizing their preference for content that provides an intimate and engaging perspective on potential travel experiences (Roller, 2024; Brito, 2023). In contrast, traditional sources such as printed media, radio, and TV garnered a mere 3.01% of the responses, which confirms Generation Z's strong preference for digital platforms when sourcing travel information (Tsai et al., 2022). Additionally, the ChatGPT-generated analysis does not mention these traditional sources, highlighting a potential gap in covering the full spectrum of information sources utilized by Generation Z.

The studies by Lee and Lee (2024), Ch and Abouelgheit (2019), and Styvén and Foster (2018) highlight Generation Z's significant engagement with digital platforms, illustrat-

ing how this demographic integrates online environments into their daily activities and decision-making processes. This integration is further evidenced by our survey data showing that Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are the predominant social media platforms used by Generation Z for researching holiday destinations. The results, in which Instagram led with 77.44% of responses, followed by TikTok at 61.65%, and YouTube at 34.59%, confirm the ChatGPT analysis which identifies these platforms as pivotal in Generation Z's travel research (Roller, 2024). Their strong visual and video content aligns perfectly with Generation Z's preferences for dynamic, visually engaging, and authentic travel information, demonstrating how effectively these platforms meet the unique needs and behaviors of this digitally fluent generation.

The lesser engagement with platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, which gathered only 1.50%, 1.50%, and 6.20% of responses, respectively, indicates a much narrower influence in the travel decision-making process for Generation Z, likely due to the less visual nature of content typically shared on these platforms. Furthermore, the fact that 9.02% of respondents did not consult any social media platforms could suggest a segment of Generation Z still relies on other sources beyond digital media for travel research.

The survey results reveal Romanian Generation Z's strong preference for online platforms to book travel and tourism services, with a notable emphasis on platforms for professional accommodation services, which garnered the highest percent of responses at 57.89%. This preference is closely followed by the use of online listings of various private accommodations (47.37% of responses) and platforms that combine multiple travel services like accommodation, car rentals, and flights, which received 38.35% of responses. These results indicate that Generation Z heavily favors the convenience and efficiency provided by digital platforms, aligning with the analysis presented by ChatGPT. However, there seems to be a discrepancy in the primary methods highlighted by ChatGPT, which emphasizes the combined services platforms, and the actual top choice of professional accommodation services according to the survey data as noted in online statistics like the ones provided by Travelperk (2024) and Roller (2024).

Additionally, lesser-used methods such as direct bookings through the websites of hotels or transport companies (18.05%), and more traditional approaches like calling tourism service providers directly (13.53%) or using travel agencies (9.02%), indicate a broader spectrum of preferences within this demographic but still show a strong tilt towards digital solutions. The preference for managing bookings through digital platforms reflects Generation Z's digital-native characteristics, valuing ease of use, accessibility, and the ability to quickly compare prices and options.

Generation Z's heavy reliance on technology for travel planning (see green cluster in the literature review section) is highlighted in the survey data. A total of 66.17% of respondents favor the use of official websites to gather information about destinations. This trend underscores their trust in official and authoritative sources for accurate and reliable travel details. Additionally, the significant use of online review platforms like TripAdvisor and Google Reviews, chosen by 54.89% of respondents, aligns with observations that Generation Z frequently utilizes these sites to make well-informed travel decisions. This behavior aligns with the ChatGPT analysis, which emphasizes members of Generation Z's integration of digital resources for managing all facets of their travel arrangements efficiently.

Furthermore, the survey indicates a robust usage of social networks (61.65% of responses) and digital maps and GPS navigation (37.59% responses), confirming Romanian Generation Z's inclination towards digital tools for discovering new places and seamless navigation, as noted in the ChatGPT analysis. The responses also highlight moderate use of YouTube travel vlogs for inspiration (24.06% of responses).

The usage of travel guides and offline maps (4.51% of responses), travel budget management apps (3.76% of responses), and participation in online travel groups and forums is notably lower (2.26% of responses), indicating that while these platforms are used, they are not the primary source of travel advice for this demographic.

The highest preference of the surveyed respondents is for commercial accommodation with board included, attracting 38.35% of responses, which contrasts with the ChatGPT analysis emphasizing Generation Z's stronger inclination towards private accommodation as mentioned in The Wandering RV (2023) and Telus International (2021) cited sources. This outcome highlighted that 36.84% of respondents prefer private accommodations such as holiday homes or apartments booked directly from the owner. This difference may be attributed to the affordability and availability of private accommodation in certain regions, which are more prevalent in countries where platforms like Airbnb are widely adopted. In Romania, commercial accommodations may be more accessible or familiar, especially for younger travelers with limited experience in navigating alternative lodging options. AI's global data sources may have overemphasized trends from regions where private accommodations are more dominant, failing to capture local market conditions and consumer habits. Smaller but meaningful preferences are evident for staying with friends/relatives (12.78% of responses) and holiday homes owned by themselves or by their family/friends (12.03% of responses), indicating the value placed on personal connections and economical travel options.

A diverse range of dining preferences among Generation Z when traveling was shown in the survey results. The most popular choice is multicuisine restaurants, with 45.86% of responses, indicating a preference for varied and inclusive dining options that are not restricted to a specific cultural or culinary style. This suggests that Generation Z values diversity in their food choices, aligning with a broader interest in global cuisines and flavors. Specialty restaurants also see significant interest with 26.32% of responses.

Fast food ranks highly too, with 23.31% of responses, reflecting the generation's desire for quick and convenient meals, potentially due to busy travel schedules or budget considerations as mentioned in İlhan et al.'s (2022) research. Interestingly, local markets and street food, which are often associated with authentic and immersive cultural experiences, received 15.04% and 17.29% of responses, respectively, somewhat aligning with the ChatGPT analysis that emphasizes Generation Z's inclination towards local and sustainable dining options (Travelperk, 2024; Trippursuit, 2023; TOAST, 2023).

The overall data about transport preferences suggest that while environmentally friendly options are important, convenience and personal comfort play a crucial role in transportation choices for Generation Z. The survey results demonstrate a varied preference for transportation modes among Generation Z while on holiday, with the most favored option being the use of their own car, selected by 39.10% of respondents. This preference somewhat contrasts with the ChatGPT analysis, which suggests a strong inclination towards environmentally friendly and technologically integrated transportation options (Travelperk, 2024; Roller, 2024). While public transportation is indeed popular, with 33.08% of respondents indicating a preference for buses and metros, it does not surpass the preference for personal cars. Interestingly, walking is another highly preferred mode, with 30.83% of responses, reflecting Generation Z's desire to explore destinations more intimately, aligning with the ChatGPT analysis's emphasis on a slower, more engaged travel pace.

The survey results reveal a strong inclination among members of Generation Z toward engaging in leisure activities that offer immersive and authentic experiences during their holidays. Notably, the top choices are "Exploring local tourist attractions independently" with 82.71% of responses, "Hiking and walks in nature" with 51.88% of responses, and

"Visiting local markets and shopping" with 51.13% of responses. These activities underscore Generation Z's preference for actively engaging with the local environment and culture, aligning closely with ChatGPT's provided analysis (Travelperk, 2024; Roller, 2024; Trippursuit, 2023) and other scientific studies (İlhan et al., 2022). The consistency between the survey results and the generative analysis provides a deep understanding of Generation Z's travel dynamics and their impact on leisure choices.

As mentioned in ChatGPT's analysis, Generation Z travelers are showing a strong interest in exploring destinations outside of their home countries. This adventurous group is likely to consider traveling to exciting and culturally rich destinations around the globe (Travel+ Leisure, 2024; GQ, 2024). The survey results also indicate a clear inclination among Generation Z towards international travel for their main holiday in 2024, with a significant preference for destinations within Europe, as shown by 45.11% of responses. Additionally, 17.29% of respondents are considering countries outside of Europe. This contrasts with the 28.57% of respondents who prefer to stay within their own country, highlighting a trend towards seeking new experiences abroad.

The divergence between AI-generated insights and the survey data demonstrates that AI may not fully capture localized or culturally specific travel behaviors. For tourism professionals and marketers, this means that AI tools like ChatGPT should not be relied on exclusively for strategy development, especially in specific country settings. AI tools, which are trained on global content, may overemphasize international trends that are not yet dominant in certain countries. However, rather than viewing AI and traditional research methods (such as surveys) as competing approaches, the present study supports using them as complementary tools. This way, AI may identify emerging global trends or offer broader conceptual framing while the traditional research methods (such as surveys) provide a grounded, context-specific insight, which is critical for accurate decision-making in the tourism industry.

## 5. Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Research

This study provides a detailed examination of contemporary tourism experience within a specific demographic, Generation Z. The *first operational objective of the study*, aimed to analyze the tourism experiences of Romanian Generation Z, considering quantitative research on Romanian individuals, and provided a comprehensive overview of their tourism experiences. The methodological alignment with the Flash Eurobarometer surveys has enriched the analysis of Generation Z's tourism experiences by providing an almost standardized framework. This study delved into various dimensions such as travel patterns and preferences, reasons and motivations for travel, booking and information sources, and technology use. This allows the tourism industry to develop more personalized travel products, such as accommodation and transport options that align with Generation Z's digital fluency and preference for online platforms.

Consequently, the study's *second objective* was to utilize AI to broaden the understanding of Generation Z's tourism experiences in a Romanian context, based on worldwide publications. The findings show that AI effectively synthesized international insights, providing a broader context for understanding Generation Z's tourism experiences. By leveraging global data, AI was able to highlight trends such as the preference for eco-friendly travel, digital engagement, and an increasing reliance on social media for travel planning—patterns that are consistent with international studies on Generation Z. The integration of AI in research can provide a valuable global perspective, particularly for markets like Romania where local studies on Generation Z are limited. For tourism stakeholders, AI-driven analysis offers a scalable way to identify global trends that may influence local markets.

The study's *third objective*, which aimed to evaluate whether AI-generated results could serve as a viable alternative to traditional research methods, has been successfully addressed. The findings indicate that while AI cannot fully replace traditional methods, it offers considerable advantages in terms of efficiency and resource utilization. AI can complement traditional approaches by providing quicker, less resource-intensive insights that still maintain a sufficient level of reliability and validity for robust research outcomes. However, the discrepancies between AI-generated data and survey results highlight the necessity of combining AI-driven insights with localized, traditional research methods. While AI excels at offering a broad overview of global trends, it may miss critical regional, cultural, and economic factors that significantly influence consumer behavior.

For tourism professionals, the practical implication is clear: while AI can quickly identify emerging global trends and generate insights, local research remains important for tailoring tourism services to meet the specific needs and preferences of different demographic groups, such as Romanian Generation Z. A balanced approach, combining both AI and local research, will lead to more accurate, actionable, and contextually relevant strategies for tourism marketing and service design. To improve the relevance of AI-driven recommendations, tourism destination and businesses should invest in fine-tuning AI systems using localized data. For example, training models on Romanian travel preferences or domestic booking trends would yield more accurate and culturally relevant outputs.

Given both AI and survey results indicate a shift toward digital platforms for trip planning, tourism providers should optimize their presence across mobile apps, social media, and intelligent chatbots, ensuring accessibility and real-time responsiveness. Moreover, tourism professionals should develop skills to understand and critically evaluate AI-generated content, recognizing its limitations and contextual relevance before applying it in strategic decision-making.

AI tools like ChatGPT could play a significant role in the development of smart tourism systems, making destinations more efficient, sustainable, and responsive to visitor needs. In such systems, AI can support data collection, predictive modeling, and resource management by analyzing large volumes of information in real time. By integrating AI insights into smart destination management, cities and regions can enhance tourist experiences. For Generation Z, AI-powered tools could enable personalized travel experiences, offering tailored recommendations based on preferences and behaviors. Additionally, AI can contribute to the sustainability of tourism by identifying visitor behavior trends that align with the goals of tourism destinations, helping to ensure that development is both efficient and environmentally responsible.

This study is distinguished by several ***innovative aspects***. Primarily, it employs a bibliometric analysis to explore the relationship between Generation Z and tourism experience, utilizing the VOSviewer software—a tool that, while previously applied to tourism research (Szpilko, 2017; Estevão et al., 2017), has not been used in this particular context before. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first instance where the VOSviewer software has been used to conduct a bibliometric analysis specifically focusing on the tourism experiences of Generation Z.

Second, the novelty of this academic study lies in its complex and integrated approach to the Generation Z tourism experience within the tourism industry. The novel aspect is the holistic approach of the study, which does not limit itself to analyzing a single aspect of tourist experience. By examining the experiences of Generation Z individuals on a wide range of activities, including bookings, information seeking, transportation, accommodation, dining, and entertainment, the research enables a deep and nuanced understanding of the specific tourist behaviors of this cohort.

A third innovative dimension of the study is the direct comparison of the experience dimensions of the surveyed Generation Z individuals with the outcomes generated by AI. Integrating AI to anticipate the preferences of this generation represents significant progress, which not only tests the efficiency of artificial intelligence in understanding the needs of young consumers but also provides a solid foundation for assessing the limits and expanding the potential of AI in the tourism sector.

The research encounters several ***limitations***, chiefly tied to the scope and methodology employed. A significant constraint is the reliance on a solely Romanian Generation Z demographic, which may not provide a comprehensive view of global Generation Z tourism behaviors and could limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the comparison between AI-generated data and traditional survey results, while innovative, may not fully capture the nuanced understanding that face-to-face or qualitative research methods offer. Also, a limitation of the study is that discrepancies may emerge due to the fact that our interviews were conducted with young Romanians, whereas the AI analysis was based on global online sources related to Generation Z. Furthermore, the fast-paced evolution of AI technologies means that findings could quickly become outdated.

One of the primary challenges in using AI tools like ChatGPT in tourism research is their reliance on existing online content, which can introduce significant biases. The inner workings of AI models are often opaque, making their insights hard to trace, unlike traditional, transparent research methods. Tourism is experiential, involving emotions and senses that AI cannot access, and its outputs are approximations based on patterns, not genuine understanding of traveler motivations or satisfaction.

Furthermore, AI models trained on internet data often favor content from high-status sources such as influencers, luxury travel blogs, and mainstream media outlets, which tend to cater to a high-income audience. This results in AI-generated insights that may over-represent the preferences and behaviors of higher socioeconomic groups, while underrepresenting those of lower-income or less-traveled individuals. This bias affects the generalizability of AI-generated insights. For tourism professionals and researchers, understanding these biases is important to avoid relying on skewed data when making decisions about tourism policies, smart destination designs, or sustainable tourism strategies. As highlighted in P. Li et al. (2024), while AI tools can provide valuable insights, their results must be taken with caution, especially when used in fields like tourism, where there is significant cultural and regional variation. In this study, AI emphasized international travel and eco-tourism trends that did not align with the actual preferences of Romanian Generation Z. This suggests AI may lack the cultural sensitivity needed for localized tourism research.

Although AI presents innovative opportunities for tourism research, its limitations highlight the importance of integrating it thoughtfully alongside traditional methods (Skavronskaya et al., 2023). A balanced approach—combining empirical data with AI-generated insights—offers a more comprehensive and ethically sound foundation for understanding modern tourism behaviors.

Building on the findings and limitations identified in this study, several avenues for future research emerge that can further enhance the understanding of Generation Z's tourism behavior and the role of AI in tourism research. Experimental studies can assess how AI-generated tourism recommendations perform, such as testing traveler response to AI-suggested itineraries. Longitudinal studies could track how AI integration in tools like travel assistants impacts decision-making and travel habits across generations. Future research should focus on combining AI analysis with traditional methods to enhance the scope and depth of tourism insights.

Building on the research by D'Arco et al. (2023), which explores Generation Z's pro-environmental intentions within the tourism sector, and the recent survey data that emphasize Generation Z's preference for natural environments in their travel choices, a promising direction for future research could focus on the impact of environmental awareness campaigns on Generation Z's travel behaviors. Future studies could explore how effective various communication strategies are in enhancing Generation Z's commitment to eco-friendly travel practices, such as choosing destinations based on sustainability ratings or supporting local conservation efforts. Additionally, researchers could examine the role of social media and digital content in shaping Generation Z's perceptions and decisions related to eco-conscious travel.

Based on the insights gathered from the survey indicating a strong preference among Generation Z for traveling with partners or spouses, and significant preferences for family travel, a productive direction for future research could involve examining the social dynamics and interpersonal relationships that influence travel decisions within this demographic. Researchers could explore how relationship status or family structures impact travel preferences and decision-making processes. Moreover, a comparative analysis between Generation Z and other age groups regarding travel preferences and funding sources could provide a broader perspective on evolving travel trends and economic factors across different generations.

The results indicating Generation Z's strong preference for personal recommendations from friends, colleagues, and relatives, with a remarkable 69.17% of responses, suggest a foundational trust in direct social connections when choosing holiday destinations. It would be insightful to study how personal recommendations complement or compete with digital sources in influencing travel decisions within this demographic.

Future studies could also focus on the interplay between online content and real-world experiences, given that only 39.85% of respondents view social media pages of accommodation, transportation, and dining as important, compared to a higher preference for personal experiences (45.11%). Investigating how Generation Z integrates online reviews and social media content with personal experiences could offer deeper insights into their decision-making processes.

The significant role of online influencers and bloggers, observed through the preferences for visually engaging and interactive content, reflects an opportunity to examine the credibility and influence of these sources more closely. Research could assess the trustworthiness of digital influencers compared to traditional sources, which continue to decline in influence among this demographic, as seen with the low response rate (3.01%) for traditional media.

A future research direction could explore the specific attributes of content on these platforms that most effectively influence travel decisions, given the clear preference of Generation Z for visually driven social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube in selecting holiday destinations. This study could analyze aspects such as the impact of visual esthetics, narrative style, the authenticity of content, and the credibility of content creators on the travel planning process. Another promising area for research could involve a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of travel marketing strategies across different social media platforms.

Conducting a comparative analysis of accommodation preferences across different generations, including Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers, to identify changing trends and predict future shifts in the tourism industry is another future direction of research.

Exploring how sustainability concerns influence Generation Z's choice of dining establishments offers a promising direction for future research. Future studies could focus

on their preferences for locally sourced ingredients and plant-based options to determine how these preferences impact their dining selections.

Another valuable research direction involves exploring the impact of urban design and walkability on destination choices among Generation Z travelers. Investigating how features of urban environments, such as walkability and accessibility, influence their preferences for certain destinations could provide insights into urban planning and tourism strategies.

Finally, a future research direction could examine how digital tools and platforms facilitate Generation Z's discovery and planning of immersive activities, such as hiking and local exploration. Understanding the role of these digital resources in enhancing their travel experiences could help in developing more effective and engaging travel planning tools tailored to this tech-savvy generation.

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