

INSTA-HOLIDAYS AND INSTAGRAM ABILITY THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTAGRAM AND ITS INFLUENCE ON GENERATION Y AND Z

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ABSTRACT

This research is dedicated to the investigation of underlying motivations to use the social media platform Instagram for travel planning purposes and to identify the possible impact of Insta-Spots with regards to the travel destination choice. Furthermore, possible generational differences between Generation Y and Z have been analyzed and justified by comparing their responses with existing literature and characteristics of deviating generational cohorts. To draw a meaningful conclusion, an online questionnaire served with the purpose to collect primary data and to answer the respective research questions.

As it has been identified, the social media platform Instagram plays a crucial role in the holiday planning process, especially for members of Generation Z. Furthermore, the existence of Insta-Spots has been acknowledged as an additional motivation for choosing a destination but not as a primary driving factor with regards to travel planning purposes. Additionally, it has been figured out that various types of Insta-Spots have a different extent of influence on Generation Y and Z, which can be underlined by the reason of having different priorities for activities during a holiday.

Consequently, various tourism players are urged to include the promotion of Insta-Spots in their marketing strategy and also add places like these to a destination in order to attract Generation Z's travellers.

Keywords: Generation Y, Generation Z, Insta-Spots, Instagram, Travel Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Less than a decade was needed for Instagram to grow with over 1 Billion users worldwide (Statista, 2018). Hence, this social media platform gained more and more importance in people's lives and has become inevitable in terms of marketing strategies (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). Concludingly, three main factors regarding the relevance of Instagram as a marketing tool can be clarified, including the likelihood of people owning a smartphone or tablet, the increase in users over the last years and company's growing awareness to use Instagram as a marketing channel (Faßmann & Moss, 2016).

Nevertheless, Instagram is not only an attractive tool for companies but also for individuals who aim for social interaction, self-expression, and escapism, amongst other things (Lee et al., 2015). Especially for members of Generation Y and Z, social media platforms like Instagram are very popular and a daily companion on their smartphones.

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Based on previously published research, it has been identified that the internet, computers, and cell phones faced a grave change in usage frequency, especially amongst Generation Z and younger representatives of Generation Y. In 2018, 45% of Generation Z stated that they are “almost constantly online,” whereas in 2014-15, only 24% agreed to this statement (Taylor, 2018). With the constantly rising importance of social media and the internet, it is therefore inevitable for tourism researchers to identify, what motivates members of the target group and which interests lie behind a holiday decision (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018).

Consequently, a lot of research has already been conducted and important researchers, including Sigmund Freud and Abraham Maslow, have published their theories regarding the roots behind people’s motivation and triggers behind the “Why” in an individual’s decision-making process (Kotler, 2016).

Regarding the motivation for using Instagram and including it in the holiday planning process, various studies (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018; Lee et al., 2015; Abrantes, Fonseca Amaro, Ribeiro & Seabra, 2014) targeting Generation Y and Z have already been conducted. Nevertheless, there is still a gap in research when it comes to Insta-Spots, which can be defined as public places like restaurants, museums, paintings, etc. aiming at visitors to share their experience via Instagram and opting to attract people who want to take a perfectly “instagrammable” photo (Eisenbrand, 2018).

Hence, the aim of this research is to investigate the connection between the motivations for using Instagram and to what extent this social media platform influences Generation Y and Z regarding their travel decision-making process. As the main focus, a special interest is centered on Insta-Spots, which are a relatively new field of investigation, and their possible influence when it comes to the holiday planning process. Moreover, it is intended to find out to what extent Instagram serves as an information source for the chosen generational cohorts and to what degree it is used for travel planning purposes.

To solve this gap in research, the following research questions were proposed and aimed to be answered during the investigation process in order to provide reasonable findings:

1. To what extent do Generation Y and Z use Instagram for travel planning purposes?
 - a. During this process, to what degree do Insta-Spots influence the destination choice and holiday planning process of Generation Y and Z?
2. Which generational differences amongst Generation Y and Z can be recognised regarding the extent of usage of Instagram when it comes to travel motivation and destination choice generated through Instagram, and the respective Insta-Spots?

Hence, travel motives and motivations are among the most revered factors in travel decisions (George, 2005; March & Woodside, 2005), likewise safety motivation which has so many implications for the travel industry since the dawn of the new millennium. Food safety issues, crimes, natural disasters, health hazards and terrorism, communicable diseases, among others, are the predominant safety concerns (Huang & Xiao, 2000; Breda & Costa, 2005; Popescu, 2011; Kim & Chalip, 2004; Nwankwo, 2017).

REVIEW

Within the course of the online questionnaire, which has been spread via mail and the author’s social media channels, 298 participants have completed the survey and have been considered for evaluation and interpretation. Therefore, n = 298 can be generalized for the entire analysis. To give a better understanding of the population of the survey, the demographics are displayed in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Demographics.

Gender		Female	82%
		Male	18%
Age	Generation Y	Born between 1980-1989	10%
		Born between 1990-1994	11%
	Generation Z	Born between 1995-2010	79%
Origin		Austria	85%
		Rest of Europe	14%
		Rest of the world	1%

Although the survey is heavily female dominated, it does not influence the credibility of the study, as no predefined target regarding the gender was set. When comparing the number of participants of Generation Y and Z, an inequality in distribution within generational cohorts can be observed, as a total of 234 valid responses represent members of Generation Z. Unfortunately, the target of 100 participants of each generation could not be met. However, both generations were compared with regards to the percentual preferences within the age cohort.

Although Kasasa (2019) defines members of Generation Y born between 1980 and 1994, a distinction between early and younger representatives of this generational cohort was made to conduct the survey, as Javelin Research highlights that “not all Millennials are currently in the same stage of life”. As early representatives will probably turn 40 this year and have already settled down with their families, younger members might struggle with finding their rightful place in life and are, to an extent, not entirely financially stable. Moreover, the interest in technology and the frequency in the usage of social media platforms might differ as well, which is the reason why it was decided to differentiate between older representatives born between 1980 and 1989 and younger members of this generational cohort born between 1990 and 1994 in the course of this study.

INSTAGRAM HABITS

As a first goal of this research, the population’s Instagram habits and hence, its connection to a potential influence through Insta-Spots were tried to be identified.

With regards to the average time spent on Instagram, 80% of the participants of Generation Y have indicated to spend less than 30 minutes daily on this social media platform. A behavioral change can be recognized by increasing age of respondents as approximately half of the younger members of Generation Y do spend half an hour more on Instagram per day, compared to older members of this generational cohort. Comparing these results with the answers of Generation Z, a more significant shift regarding daily time spent on Instagram can be observed, and it has been identified that members of Generation Z dedicate a significantly longer time amount daily to explore the latest news on Instagram. Concerning the post frequency of the respondents, slightly but not significantly distinctive results between the two generations of investigation can be identified. Nevertheless, the

majority of participants, regardless of generational cohort, shows a tendency to monthly posts. When comparing both generations, a higher post frequency and involvement in interactivity can be attributed to the Millennials. With regards to the connection between the average time spent on Instagram and the post frequency of the sample, it has been identified that people who spend more time on Instagram are publishing content more frequently. However, as only 3% of the investigated people post one or several times a day, this cannot be generalized and applied to the whole study population.

When comparing the follower amount and post frequency, it has been proven that people with a larger number of followers post more frequently compared to those with fewer. However, this cannot be generalized and hence not concluded over the whole population as the majority (61%) of the study stated to have less than 500 followers.

INSTAGRAM MOTIVATIONS

As a next milestone, motivations for using Instagram were intended to be identified. With regards to the whole sample asked, approximately 2/3 of the entire sample would consider Instagram as a relevant source for gathering information about a particular destination, activities, hotspots, etc. with regards to the holiday planning process compared to 1/3 not using Instagram for these purposes. Comparing Generation Y and Z, significant differences can be observed, as it is displayed in the graph below (Figure 1).

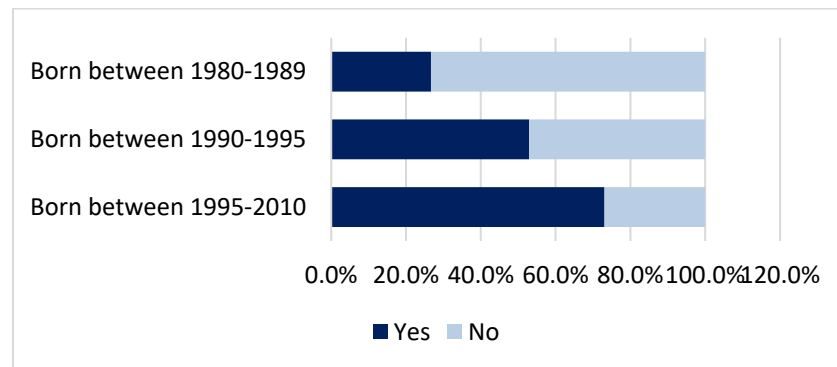


Figure 1. Instagram used as a relevant information source.

Whereas only 27% of older representatives of Generation Y use Instagram for travel planning, it is three times more likely to use it as a member of Generation Z, showing an enormous shift in the information gathering process and again proving, that generational cohorts have an impact on the usage and influence of technology in people’s lives.

Regarding the main influential and motivational factors to use Instagram as an information source, a broad accordance between both generations of investigation can be observed. Overall, the main motivational factor is to share pictures and experiences with other users (70%), directly followed by getting inspiration and information from other accounts (68%) and staying in touch with friends and family (58%). Only 28% of all respondents stated that they would use Instagram out of boredom, followed by 4% stating other reasons why they are using Instagram. As 70% of the respondents use Instagram to get inspiration from other accounts, it is also assumed to be likely for them to use Instagram for travel planning purposes. With the shift from an offline to a rather online society and with the constant development of the World Wide Web and the changing behavior of its users, it has

been proven that this has also influenced tourism, especially the behavior of tourists and their information seeking process (Minazzi, 2015).

When considering above mentioned motivational factors, the conducted online survey intended to furthermore identify the point in time where customers would seek for and need sufficient information that may or may not convince them to visit a destination. The majority (58%) of all participants stated that the point in time where they look for inspiration and an idea on a travel destination would be the phase in their travel planning process where they would most consider Instagram as a relevant source to gather information. Directly followed, 55% of the participants are convinced to use Instagram if they are already on holiday and are seeking for inspiration on things to do and visit. Only a fifth of participants would use Instagram in the consideration stage, so to say if the choice of destinations wants to be narrowed down, followed by 34% of respondents who would use Instagram to seek for specific information about a destination.

INSTA-SPOTS

The final part of the survey intended to investigate the influence of Insta-Spots and how their existence would or would not have an impact on an individual's booking behavior. As these are a rather new trend, the first question proposed tried to find out if participants are already aware of this trend. Outcomes have been identified similar and closely related to those displayed in **Figure 1**. Potentially justified by the different technological influences on different generational cohorts, younger age groups are in a higher awareness stage compared to older representatives of Generation Y. The majority (52%), regardless of any generational cohort, has in common that they have never visited an Insta-Spot before. Moreover, the participants tend to not visit an Insta-Spot intentionally and also not choosing the destination according to the existence of Insta-Spots but were motivated to integrate a visit in their holidays. With regards to the members of the older Generation Y, none of the investigated people would intentionally visit a destination only because of the existence of Insta-Spots. However, approximately one third would consider visiting them to take a picture. Looking at the younger Generation Y, still 80% would not plan their holidays according to the existence of Insta-Spots. However, the remaining 20% see Insta-Spots as an additional motivation to visit a specific destination.

Coming to Generation Z as a whole, some outliers (0.85%) indicate that Insta-Spots have a crucial influence when it comes to their holiday planning process and that they would only want to visit a destination because of them. However, the majority states that they would not intentionally visit a destination only because of the existence of Insta-Spots.

To elaborate these findings in more detail and to figure out, whether or not various categories of Insta-Spots would have a different impact on the respondents of the survey, a focus was set on four different types of Insta-Spots—Angel-Wings-Spots, Instagram Museums, restaurants and natural selfie spots.

Angel-Wings-Spots became popular in the United States of America and can be found at nearly every hotspot. More and more purposely painted artworks on walls can be found, including all kinds of different angel wings, which serve with the purpose to give visitors the possibility to take a selfie for their Instagram profile. Like the Angel-Wings-Spots, also Instagram Museums have their original roots in the United States, as the first Instagram museum—The Museum of Ice Cream—opened in New York in 2016 (Pardes, 2017). Since then, these new types of museums are on the rise with more and more facilities opening up all around the world. This kind of

innovative museum differs enormously from the traditional form, allowing its visitors to touch everything they see and to make use of the equipment for taking a perfectly “instagrammable” photo (Barringer, 2018). Within these facilities, visitors are provided with colorfully painted rooms, quotes on the wall, requisites to make pictures livelier and many more accessories to give a great variety of possible selfie outcomes.

Regarding restaurants being seen as Insta-Spots, it needs to be highlighted that it is now a days not enough anymore to only have delicious food but also good-looking dishes and facilities which encourage its visitors to share their memories on social media.

As a last type, natural Insta-Spots were investigated by the example of the Indonesian holiday destination Bali and its selfie paradise Wanagiri Hidden Hills, allowing its visitors to take a shot of a perfectly “instagrammable” memory by offering settings such as swings, a wooden boat, a bamboo bird nest, and many more to the public (Figure 2).

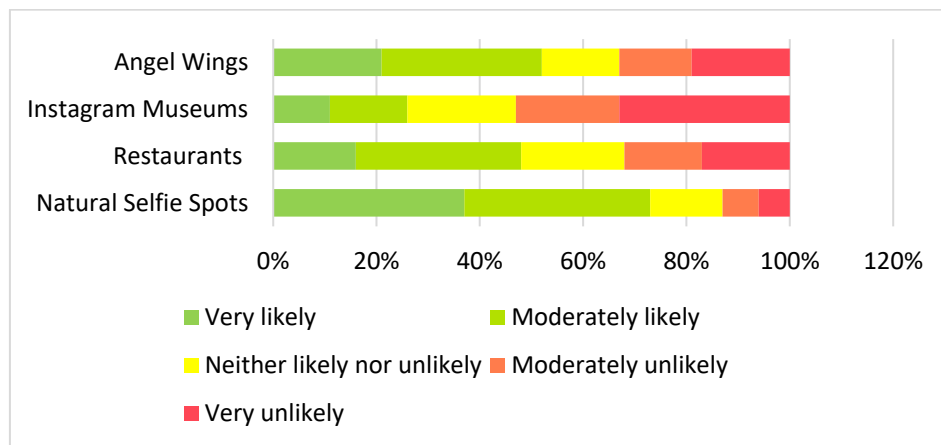


Figure 2. Participant's Preferences Regarding Different Types of Insta-Spots.

The main findings can be extracted from **Error! Reference source not found.**, showing that natural selfie spots are seen as the most popular amongst the respondents, followed by Angel-Wings-Spots, restaurants and Instagram Museums.

CONCLUSION

As a main finding, it has been figured out that the intensity to what extent Instagram is used for travel planning purposes differs enormously when comparing both generational cohorts. Moreover, it is essential to mention that it was highly beneficial to separate the older from the younger members of Generation Y, as the interests diverge within this generational cohort.

Generally, it can be said that it is two times more likely for an individual to use Instagram for travel planning purposes if being a member of Generation Z, compared to the previous generation. When it comes to the main motivational factors for using Instagram, it can be claimed that these do not significantly differ when comparing both generations. Overall, it can be said that the main motivations for using Instagram are sharing experiences with others and in addition, getting inspiration from other accounts back. Regarding the types of accounts which are seen as most influential, it can be expected that friend's and destination's accounts are seen as most likely to be the main inspirational source amongst members of Generation Y and Z, directly followed by the influential content posted by family and bloggers as well as influencers.

With regards to the influence of Insta-Spots on the investigated people of Generation Y and Z, it can be generalized that overall, Generation Z attaches a lot more importance to the existence of Insta-Spots compared to the prior generation. This has been identified as a result of Generation Y's lacking awareness of their existence and might be due to the fact that Generation Y shows a lower involvement in social media and technology, compared to their name successors—Generation Z (Berkup, 2014).

Regarding the different categories of Insta-Spots as such, no generational comparisons have been conducted as no significant differences between the two investigated generations could be observed. Overall, natural landscapes and therefore connected Insta-Spots have been identified as the most popular sights to visit, which can be concluded in people's higher interest in the authenticity of a destination and naturally kept sights instead of completely purposely built attractions. As the second most likely Insta-Spot to visit, Angel-Wings-Spots have been identified, followed by restaurants which focus on their "instagrammability" and Instagram Museums, which attendees of the survey have rated for feeling rather unlikely to visit them.

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

Due to the limited resources and reach of the questionnaire, the study was heavily Austrian orientated (85%). Furthermore, 14% stated to have their origin in another European country. As Instagram is an internationally spread online application, it would be highly beneficial for further research to conduct a similar study in different countries in order to make different nationalities comparable. Continuing with the demographics of the conducted online survey, a limitation regarding the age distribution had to be dealt with as only 21% of the participants represent Generation Y and therefore the generational comparisons that have been conducted may be seen as inconclusive. However, it has been tried to compare the percentual proportion within the generational cohort.

As already mentioned, above stated limitations might also be due to the lacking reach of the author and the limited time of one month in which the survey staid available to access online. As it only has been shared amongst the author's social media channels and via email, potential respondents who would have been essential for the research outcome have been left out. Therefore, a repetition of the survey would be beneficial to find out if the outcomes can be seen as meaningful and relevant.

Lastly, it needs to be mentioned that the reached sample size of considered surveys of 298 served with the purpose to give an insight into the topic of interest. However, a larger sample size would be recommendable in case of a repetition of the survey.

As it has been derived from the online questionnaire, especially members of Generation Z use Instagram amongst others for travel planning purposes. Therefore, it needs to be highlighted that various tourism players are advised to focus on their online presence and the "instagrammability" of certain sights or destinations. The majority of investigated people would not purposely visit a destination just because of the existence of Insta-Spots. However, these would be an additional motivation to visit a destination. Especially in the awareness stage, people tend to use Instagram as an information source. Therefore, it is recommended for destination management companies to focus on these points of attention and adapt their marketing strategies on social media platforms such as Instagram.

Regarding future research, a qualitative research approach examining the professional opinions of influencers could be carried out. As the online survey reached mostly people with Instagram accounts up to 999 followers, the whole study could be conducted with a different angle of perspective and with a focus on experts in social media marketing and advertising.

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