

American college of Thessaloniki

Research 299

Midterm proposal:

How does Instagram and TripAdvisor

affect Generation Z:

The context of tourism and holiday

travel

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How does Instagram and TripAdvisor affect Generation Z: The context of tourism and holiday travel

Introduction

The constant transformation of our society and the drastic evolution of technology has led to the development of new ways of communication. All this chain reaction (society-technology-communication) directly affects the consumers behavior. This paper's main focus falls on a specific group of the consumers and that is Generation Z and how Instagram and TripAdvisor affect their holiday planning choices and taste. All of the individuals born between 1995-2010 fall in the category of Generation Z. According to Francis and Hoefel (2018), Gen Z people are considered to be the true digital natives, as they have all been exposed to technology, social media and the internet from a very young age. This indicates that their choices as consumers might be highly or mildly affected by social media. Although there is not much information about Gen Z characteristics, what we know for sure is the environment they are brought in, which is characterized by high technology levels and highly sophisticated computer and media status. (Singh, 2014)

Social media is the contemporary and most modern way of communication between people all over the world. Furthermore, social media has become a beneficial factor for gathering information about consumers taste, knowledge, preferences and so on. Regarding tourism and holidays, the influence social media has in this sector is interpreted as exceptional. It is not hard to believe it, as we can see in everyday life how social media has affected people in many aspects of their lives.

Tourism is an intensive information and knowledge-based industry which is profoundly affected by developments in technology, information and communication. In recent times, the tourism promotion and marketing in the travel industry have been changed greatly by social network websites, which are making a major contribution to the travel industry worldwide as well. (Nezakati et al., 2015)

It is evident that social media has affected and affects people in many aspects of their lives (clothes, style, hair, self care, etc), as well as people's choices regarding where they want to spend their holidays or in some other cases where they plan to book for their next trip. According to Fotis (2015), social media has significant importance because even those who are not experts can easily use the interfaces to connect and share with others. Additionally, it supplies online tools that give us the ability to share multimedia contents and most importantly it has eliminated geographical and time constraints like never before.

Gen Z people age range is 10-25 and most of the people in this category are graduating from college or universities and they are gradually becoming part of the workforce. (Francis and Hoefel, 2018) According to Singh's study (2014), studying Generation Z is necessary for the advertisers and marketers to analyze

the user habits of the future leading generation. Logically, this information is valuable for the tourism sector and local businesses of a country.

Review of Key Literature

All the studies and reports that relate to the topic of this research agree to the fact that in today's society social media is an incredible influencer in consumers choices and life in general.

The literature reviewed assents some common uses of social media throughout the holiday planning process which are pre-trip phase, during trip phase and after trip phase.

Social media is becoming more and more involved in the planning process of people's holidays and trips. Since there is an increasing popularity of Instagram and TripAdvisor and other social media platforms as well, a number of academics came across the outstanding importance of these platforms in the travel planning process. (Munar and Jacobsen, 2013)

Moreover, Nezakati et al. (2015) pre-trip travel planning is a crucial part of the trip experience because in this phase travellers gather all the information needed in order to establish their travel/holiday/trip plan. Fotis 'study (2015) additionally results that online platforms, particularly TripAdvisor plays a major role in the early stage of one's travel plan.

Second step of the travelling process is the sharing experience of one's holiday or trip. Electronic word of mouth is brought closer to traditional word of mouth because of the enhanced social media usage, which is a critical information source for travel planning and decision making as well. (Nezakati et al., 2015)

The aftermath of travel consists of not only information sharing (pictures, videos, conversations, etc) but also regarding the experience of tourists, they feel the need to share their level of satisfaction through reviews and ratings on TripAdvisor. Self expression takes place in social media platforms especially in the after-trip phase, which consists of comments and ratings, photos and even videos. (Fotis, 2015)

According to Fotis (2015), conducted an empirical study on 150 people on how social media is a great and informative tool for the tourism business; and additionally the result of his study brings four identifications of consumers behaviour: development of wants, generation of feelings, inspiration, actions. Pictures and videos online have a great impact on social media users as people share their everyday life, travelling and reviews and advice that is interesting and relatable to one's social network. Sema's (2013) key findings are positive influences on travel experiences shared behaviour within people are linked with travelling shared experiences on social media. Likewise, community group members who share the same experiences, beliefs and taste have the tendency to influence people engaging on social media. Hyan Yoo and Purifoy (2007) examined the influence and impact of TripAdvisor on the trip planning process and their findings show how users of their platform analyze and evaluate reviews and how these reviews affect their travel choices and decisions. Shyle and Hysi (2015) found in their study that the majority of people who are the most active on

social media are those who belong in the Generation Z and that people more and more are turning to social media and see it as a beneficial information platform for their future trips and holidays. Graphs are also provided and useful for this study. Munar and Jacobsen (2013) revealed in their studies the level of trustworthiness and safety of social media platforms, resulting in TripAdvisor being the most reliable and credible source of information. Commonly, younger tourists invest more time on social media by sharing and monitoring for the best alternatives as in where to spend their holidays, best prices, most visited locations and so on. Regarding the tourism sector, hotels, airlines corporations and travel agencies can highly benefit from this study, since they use the internet as a tracking means of their marketing and communications approaches. Moreover, there might be a way to improve the tourism services in social media from these travel organizations. (Sahin and Sengun, 2015) In continuation, TripAdvisor is seen as a strong influencer for the economy overall, as its' reviews have the power to boost the countries' economies. Barrie (2015)

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to depict and analyze how TripAdvisor and Instagram affect consumers behaviour and choices, particularly the consumers of Generation Z. This study will be conducted electronically, and it focuses on the perception of the specific target group towards these two very successful online platforms.

The indicated question of this research is how Instagram and TripAdvisor affect consumers of generation Z regarding the tourism sector.

Research objective

1. To establish the impact of Instagram and TripAdvisor on Generation Z consumers
2. To detect the influence of these two platforms in the tourism sector and in Generation Z

Methodology

The study which is going to be conducted is of a qualitative method nature. For this purpose, online questionnaires are going to be conducted in order to understand the effects of social media platforms (Instagram and TripAdvisor specifically) on consumers regarding their holiday choices. Additionally, the question regarding the influence of social media will be spread in various subquestions. As mentioned above, there will be a number of people interviewed through an online questionnaire. The answers are going to be collected and analysed later on in this study. The answers provided in this questionnaire are going to serve for evaluation and interpretation, in order to give an answer to the chosen research question. This will be done later in this study, accompanied with tables and graphs.