



Trends in the young generation travelling - the pilot research in the Czech Republic

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Abstract: Youth travel is an important part of global tourism and one of the fastest growing segments. Pilot research based on the questionnaire survey in the Czech Republic identified the trends in young generation travelling, found out some similarities with previous research, but also some changes in these trends in comparison with previous young generation. Key findings of this pilot research are factors influencing contemporary young generation travel decisions, its travel motivation, destinations preferences, planning and booking preferences as well as young generation travel spending, including some specifics that are typical of Czech young generation. These findings are important for tourism service providers, in order to adapt their products and services to the young generation demand.

Keywords: traveling; youth travel; tourism; young generation; Czech Republic

JEL classification: F00, Z31, J13

Potovalni trendi mlade generacije - pilotna raziskava na Češkem

Povzetek: Potovanja mladih (mladinska potovanja) predstavljajo pomemben del globalnega turizma in so eden najhitreje rastočih segmentov. Pilotna raziskava, ki je temeljila na anketnem vprašalniku, in je bila izvedena na Češkem, je identificirala potovalne trende mlade generacije, ugotovila nekatere podobnosti s prejšnjimi raziskavami, a tudi nekatere spremembe na področju teh trendov v primerjavi s prejšnjo mlado generacijo. Ključne ugotovitve te pilotne raziskave so dejavniki, ki vplivajo na današnje potovalne odločitve mlade generacije, njeno motivacijo za potovanje, izbiro destinacij, način načrtovanja in izbiro rezervacij ter njeno porabo sredstev na potovanjih, vključno z nekaterimi posebnostmi za češko mlado generacijo. Te ugotovitve so pomembne za ponudnike turističnih storitev pri prilagoditvi produktov in storitev povpraševanju mlade generacije.

Ključne besede: potovanja; mladinska potovanja; turizem; mlada generacija; Češka Republika

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism accounted for 10.3% of the world GDP in 2019, employing 330 million people, or 1 in 10 jobs worldwide sponsored tourism (WTTC, 2020). According to the UNWTO, international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) worldwide in 2019 reached 1.5 billion, based on data reported by destinations around the world (UNWTO, 2020). „ Youth travel has become one of the fastest growing segments of international tourism, representing more than 23 % of the over one billion tourists travelling internationally each year. The growth of youth travel represents tremendous sociometric opportunities for local communities as young travellers stimulate local tourism businesses, foster closer social interaction with host populations and champion environmental protection. Young people, recognized by the United Nations as a major force of development and social change, have the potential to drive sustainable development in the tourism sector“ (UNWTO, 2016). Considerable attention has been paid to the tourism of the young generation in recent years. According to a survey conducted by the WYSE Travel Confederation (2018), youth tourism in 2017 accounted for 23 % of total international arrivals, or 304 million trips. The total value of this market exceeded 250 billion euros (280 billion US dollars). According to current statistics from the WYSE Travel Confederation (2021), youth travel still accounts for about 23 % of total world tourism, or about 336 million passengers a year, with revenue of around US \$ 333 billion, with an average of young passengers spending of 2876 euros per trip. Young people will be the future leaders and they are also important stakeholders of the present and future of tourism. The travel of young generation is also one of the factors that affect tourism. This group (segment) of travelers has the ability to indicate trends and future travel styles. It is therefore very important to know the behavior of this segment when traveling and how it changes. The aim of this paper is to identify if the trends are changing from generation to generation and how much they are different in relation to the country, the young generation is coming from.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth tourism/youth travel is a specific form of tourism (Indrova, 2007; Petru, 2007). According to a number of publications and articles (Richards et al., 2003, 2005, and 2006), the youth travel is also mentioned as a trend, and thus is also taken as a separate segment of tourism. A number of international organizations such as UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation also deal with the issue of youth travel. Youth travel includes all young people who travel for a certain period outside their place of residence for various purposes: study exchange, volunteering, language courses, work and travel trips, sports and adventure travel, or leisure travel (Moisa, 2010). The tourism of the young generation differs from the other tourism types not only regarding the purposes for which they choose to travel, but also in the way how the travel itself takes place, as they are visitors who are looking for authentic experiences, and do not want to accept everyday consumer products offered to travellers. They travel as much as possible and for as long as possible (Moisa, 2010). WYSE Travel Confederation (2021) defines "youth travel" as international independent travel for less than one year by people aged 15 to 29 motivated in part or entirely by the desire to experience other cultures (including exchanges), build life experiences and / or benefit from formal and informal learning opportunities outside of their usual environment.

The age definition of the youth segment is not entirely clear, especially as the age limit of "young people" is constantly shifting, for example due to the extension of studies or the postponement of family life, at least according to the present trends (UNWTO, 2008). In connection to the growing importance of this group of travelers, more and more research is being conducted, however, the age limit differs. According to Richards (2005), the World Tourism Organization (WTO) already defined the age limit of 15 to 29 years in 1991. Nonetheless, Richards (2005) further states that in 2002 the WTO moved the age limit of travellers under 25, that means age from 15 to 25. According to WYSE (World Youth Student & Educational) Travel Confederation statistics, young travellers are classified between the ages of 15 and 29, and this scale includes Generation Y, or "millennials", born between 1980 and 2000, and Generation Z, which includes travelers born after 2000 (WYSETC, 2021).

According to the latest survey from 2018, the average age of the respondents was 24 years, with most of them aged between 20 and 22, i.e. about 33 % of the total survey (WYSECT, 2018). Due to the age limit, a large part of young travellers is represented by the students. According to a WYSE Travel Confederation survey, in 2017 the share of students was about 60 %, of which about half of all respondents had a bachelor's degree and about 13% a higher education degree. The survey also shows that students often combine their studies with work. About 28 % were employed full-time and 26 % part-time (WYSECT, 2018).

Youth tourism is affected by several factors. The author Moisa (2010) divides them into those who support the development of their travel and then into those who, in turn, hinder it. The most important of these factors are the financial resources of young travelers. Their income plays a crucial role in the choice of destination, means of transport, it influences the length of stay and the distance of the destination from their homes, and also whether they cross the border at all when traveling (Moisa, 2010). Richards (2006) also mentions financial resources. The Internet is also an important factor. Using the Internet and social networks, young people plan their journeys and communicate with their surroundings while travelling, especially by sharing their experiences, which can inspire others to undertake similar expeditions (UNWTO, 2016). The fact that young people do not see themselves as typical travellers is also interesting. As early as 2003 (Richards et al, 2003) the analysts stated that about half of young travellers consider themselves as "travellers", while about a third as "backpackers" and less than one-fifth as "tourists". This designation of travellers is still used in international publications and the authors see it as crucial, as their way of traveling differs from group to group. "Backpackers" seek adventure and contact with local communities when traveling, often choosing their way independently and on a low budget. In addition, "travellers" have more social motives for traveling, such as visiting friends and relatives during their travels. "Tourists" again see relaxation as the main motive of their travel.

According to the UNWTO (2016), the travel of the young generation is important for continuous and sustainable development of tourism, as well as the socio-economic development of the destinations themselves. According to the report published by Euromonitor (Bremmer, 2019), there is even talk of the so-called "Greta effect", i.e. the influence of Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who mobilized mainly Z-generation members around the world and influenced their attitude to travel.

According to WYSE Travel Confederation surveys, young people spend around 60 % of their total budget directly at the destination, which brings opportunities for new jobs and creates a positive impact not only on local entrepreneurs but also on the entire destination (UNWTO, 2016). Many student travellers take advantage of the so-called "gap year", i.e. a one-year break between high school and university education, usually filled with travel (WYSETC, 2021). Young people often travel to study or work. Student travel has recently become a very important economic factor, and the mobility and flexibility of the young traveller workforce has become almost irreplaceable in some parts of the world, e.g. in Australia and New Zealand (UNWTO, 2016). About 50 % of young travellers travel for recreation, while the other half undertake more experimental trips for purposes such as language study, working abroad, other studies, or volunteering. Time periods with these purposes tend to last longer and travellers spend more money during them than on holiday travel (WYSETC, 2021). One of the most important institutions providing study visits is the Erasmus + program. The principle of this project is to provide opportunities for students to visit partner universities within the European Union, as well as financial support for the programme implementation. Students also have the opportunity to travel outside Europe, but in that case they must rely on a scholarship from their own university (European Commission, 2021). According to statistics, in 2017, 23 % of young people travelled to learn a foreign language and 13 % to study (WYSETC, 2018). Furthermore, according to WYSE Travel Confederation (2018), in 2017, 13 % of young travellers sought their destination to obtain some work experience. The latest survey from 2017 (WYSETC, 2018) revealed 6 key trends in the young generation's travel: spending preferences, growth of information sources and use of online travel agencies, most popular destinations, growth of digitization, 3 main reasons for happiness when travelling and that Generation Z will represent the future of travelling form(s).

3. METHODOLOGY

The main aim of the pilot research is to identify and analyse factors influencing contemporary travel decisions of young Czechs, their travel motivation, destination preferences, planning and booking preferences, as well as young generation travel spending. The secondary aim was to compare these results with the last international research and identify some specifics regarding young generation in the Czech Republic.

Two research questions were formulated:

Question 1: What is the attitude of Czech young generation towards travel and what are the main factors influencing the Czech youth travel?

Question 2: What are the specifics, if any, of Czech youth travel in comparison with the international trends?

As research methods the qualitative method of structured-questionnaire and comparative analysis has been applied. The questionnaire survey consisted of 30 questions, most of which were closed type questions with one or more options for choosing answers. Questions with scales of answers were also included. Their purpose was to evaluate the issue according to the preferences of the respondent. The pilot questionnaire survey took place from 22 February to 19 March 2021 with a final number of respondents reaching up to 207. The questionnaire was disseminated via the social network Facebook, in the university student group and in travel groups, from which about 50 % of responses were collected. Questions in the questionnaire were corresponding with those used in international survey, so that it was possible to make a comparison. Respondents were asked to evaluate the period of last 3 years to avoid the influence of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, continuing into 2021 when the research was made.

Interesting conclusions were drawn from the WYSE Travel Confederation survey (2018) and the two authors cited above (Richards and Moisa). They have been researching the issue of youth travel for a long time, and their findings were accepted as a basis for comparison with the results of pilot survey in the Czech Republic.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The aim of the pilot questionnaire survey was to present the travel of the Czech young generation and to find out how it differs from other segments. Furthermore, we wanted to define the profile of young traveler and find out whether the Czech representatives of the young generation travel within the framework of world trends. Finally, we were curious to see whether their motives for travel are the same as in the rest of world.

4.1. Characteristics of the respondents' sample in the questionnaire survey.

Out of total of 207 participants, there were 80.2 % of women and 19.8 % of men. Regarding the age of the respondents, the age was limited from 15 to 29 years. The largest percentage consisted of people aged 22, which equals 30 %, the second most numerous age was 21, i.e. about 25.6 %, followed by respondents aged 23, who accounted for 14 % of the respondents. The other age groups were around 3 %, and none of them stood out significantly, the age group of 15-year-old travellers was not represented at all. The majority, ie 72.5 %, were students, about a third of whom worked while studying. Of the other respondents, 15.9 % were full-time employees, 5.8 % part-time, 4.3 % were self-employed and a small percentage, i.e. 1.5 % were temporarily unemployed. In terms of respondents' education, the group with the highest representation were university students at the bachelor's degree level - 44.9 %, then secondary school studies with some kind of high school diploma - 40.6 %, university master's degree and higher - 7.7 %, secondary vocational school - 3.9 % and the smallest group were participants with higher professional studies, together with basic education group - both with the representation of 1.4 %.

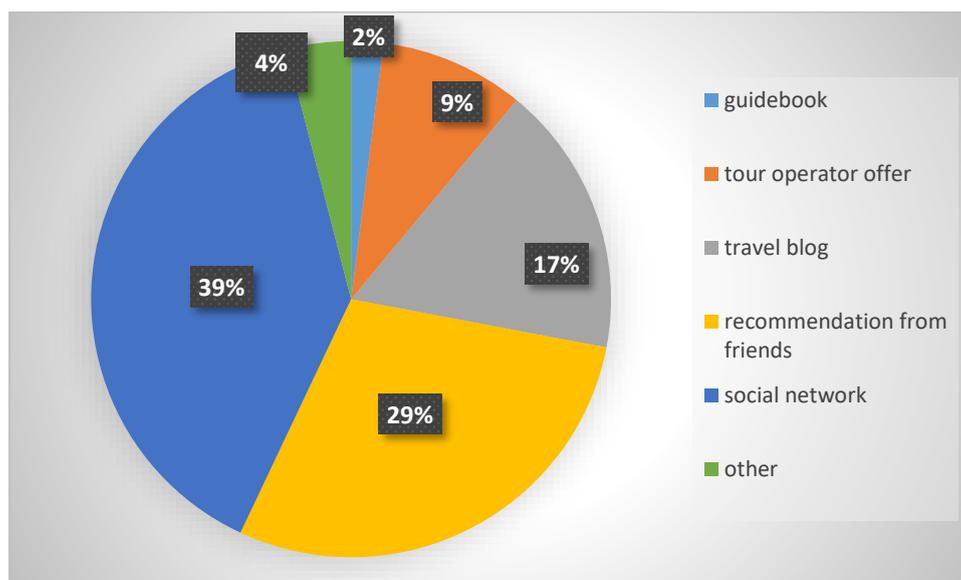
4.2. Young people's relationship to travel

In general, respondents perceived travel as important. 76.3 % described traveling as very or moderately important part of their lives, but on the other hand, only a small percentage, about 1.9 %, described traveling as unnecessary or unimportant. It was also identified who they travel with most often. Here, the results were relatively balanced, with 35 % of respondents traveling most often with a partner, 34 % with friends, and 26 % with family. Only 5 % of respondents said that they travel most often alone.

4.3. Young people making decisions before the trip

The majority of respondents, i.e. 77 %, arrange their trips completely on their own without the help of other (re)sources. They take care of transport, accommodation and other services independently, and in advance. Roughly 16 % of respondents were those who use the services of travel agencies and simply order package tour, which is offered to them by the tour guide. Smaller percentage, of 6 %, was represented by more adventurous travelers who travel blindly, so they often do not even plan a destination, and they deal with accommodation or other matters on the spot only. Travel planning depends on the place visited, those respondents stated that it is worth to use the services of a travel agency for trips to certain destinations. Their decision is also influenced by the distance to the destination.

The sources from which they draw inspiration for travelling, and where they look for information about destinations, are shown in Graph 1.



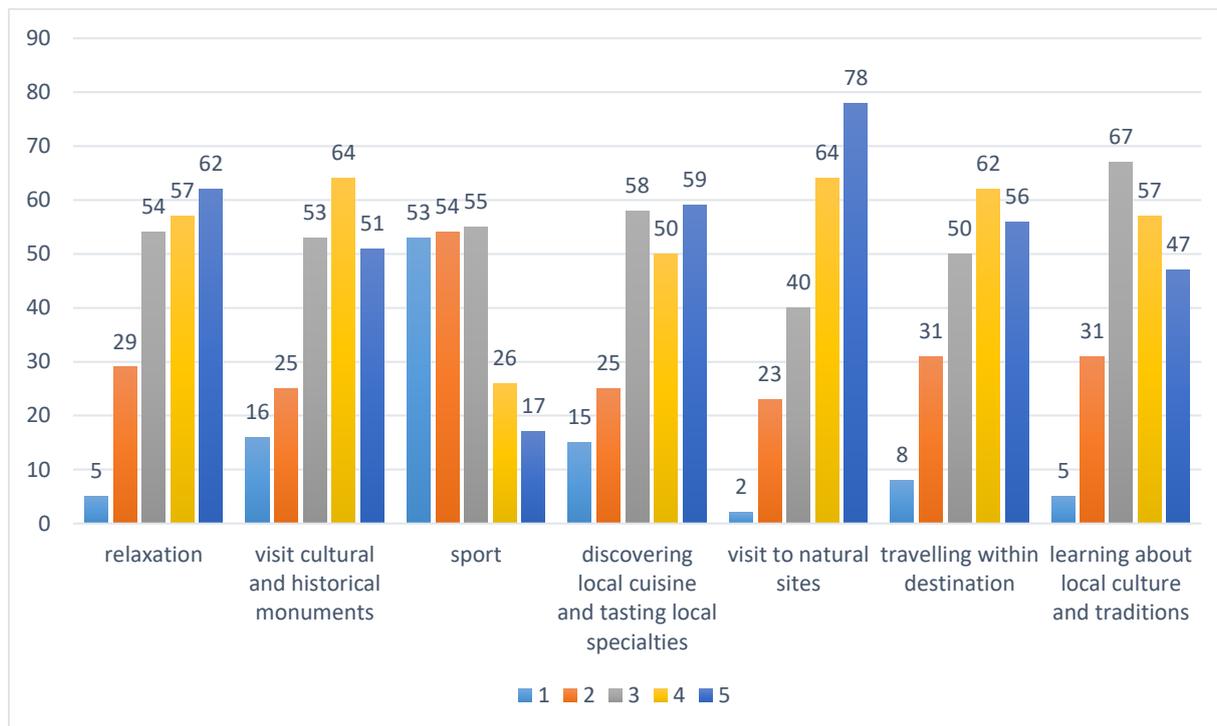
Graph 1. Where do you get your travel inspiration?
Source: Own research

Young respondents draw inspiration from social networks (39 %). The second most frequent answer was that they also quite often consult with their acquaintances or relatives (29 %). The third most frequent answer was the choice of travel blogs (17 %), followed by an offer of tour operators/guides (9 %). The smallest percentage was represented by the guidebook.

4.4. The way young people travel

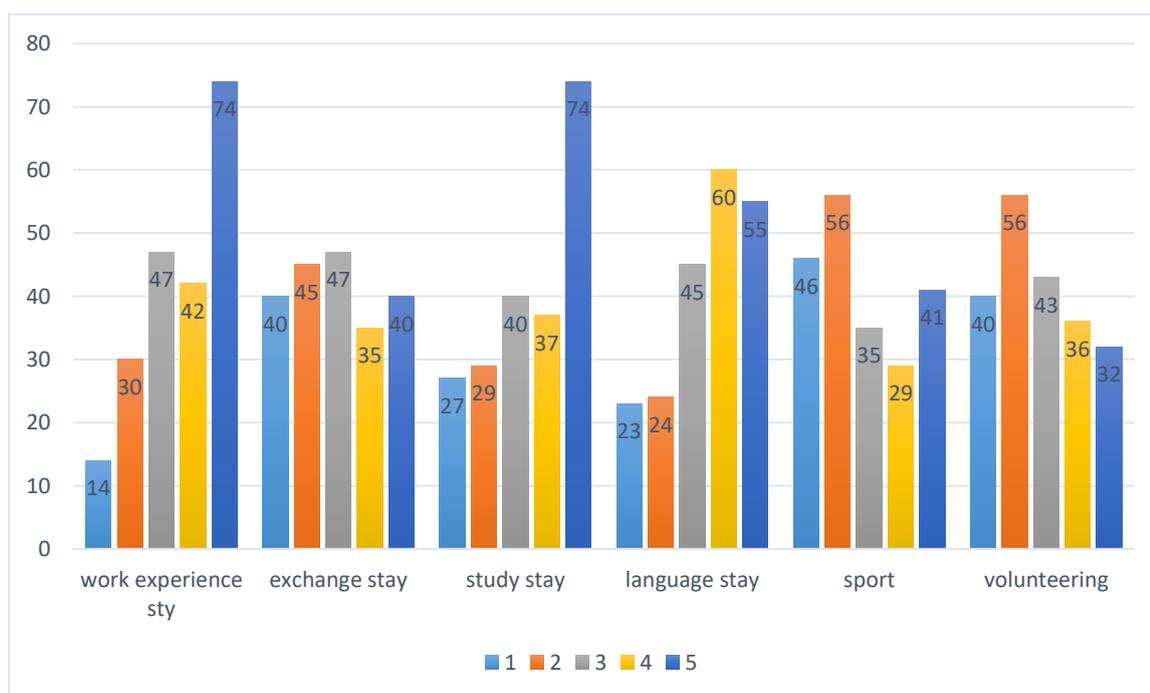
The authors wanted to identify the source of motivation for travel. Respondents had to evaluate individual activities on a scale from 1 to 5, where rating of 1 meant the lowest and 5 the greatest interest in the activity. All activities were evenly balanced, the most popular were visits to natural heritage sites, such as national parks or reservations, followed by places of relaxation. Discovering local cuisine and tasting local specialities was also popular, and respondents gave great weight to traveling around the chosen destination. Over 50 points of the highest rating was attributed to visiting

cultural and historical monuments. 58 % of all respondents agreed with the current trend of "live like local".



Graph 2. Activities that respondents most often perform when traveling
Source: Own research

Regarding the specific motives for young people's travel (study exchange, language study etc.), the research showed that 53 % of respondents acted according to them in the last 3 years. Graph 3 shows travel theme preferences.



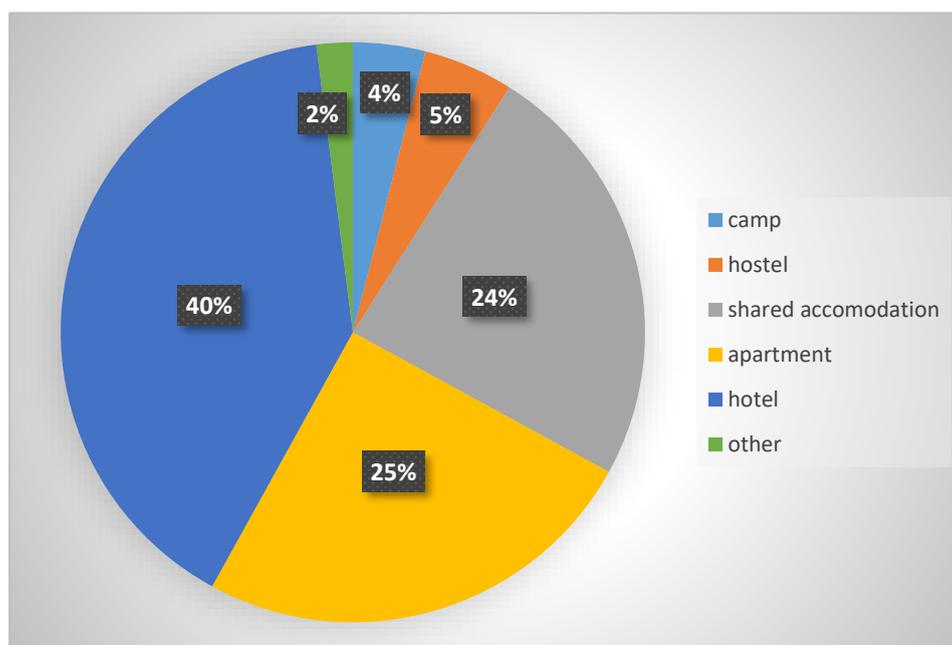
Graph 3. Travel theme preferences

Source: Own research

The greatest interest of the respondents was related to the travel that involved either study or work. The journeys with work experience proved to be the most attractive. The highest number of points in the evaluation was represented by the language study. Among the least attractive, respondents ranked study exchange, sports and volunteering. Only 4 % of respondents had some experience related to the "gap year". Regarding the eco-travel, the results were not very satisfactory. Ecological travel is not considered (15.9 %) or, at least, not seriously (44.9 %).

4.5. Choice of accommodation and transport of young people

The preference for the choice of transport means differed between trips abroad and domestic trips. On trips abroad, the majority selected aircraft (55 %), followed by their own car (32 %), then the bus (8 %) and finally the train (5 %). For domestic journeys, the transport dominated by car (66 %), followed by bus (24 %) and train travel increase of 10 % compared to travel abroad. The choice of transport for travelling abroad is influenced by the distance and price of transport, especially air tickets. When asked whether they would rather choose a low-cost airline because of the price of the ticket, 71 % of respondents answered affirmatively. Thus, the remaining 29 % either do not use the services of low-cost companies at all, or use them for reasons other than price.



Graph 4. Accommodation preferences

Source: Own research

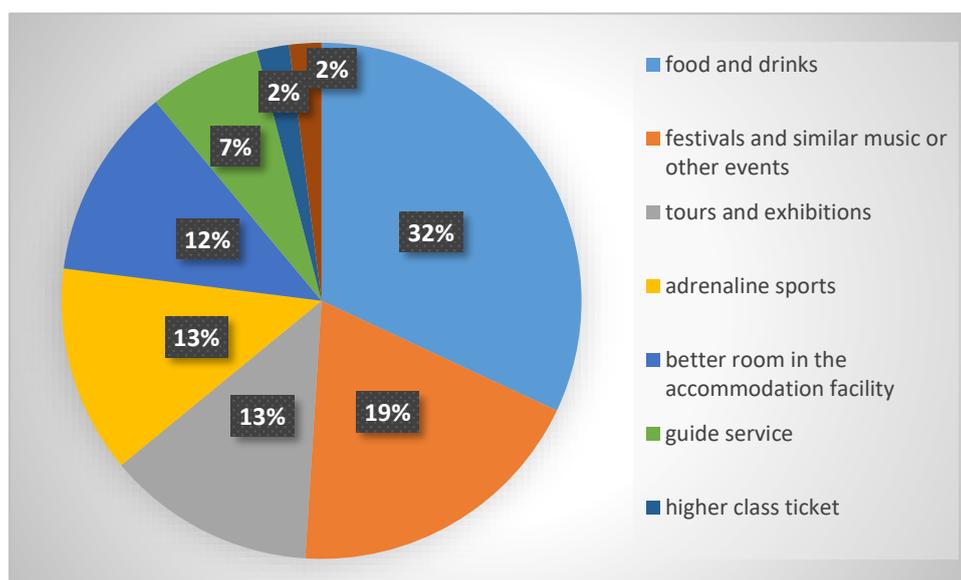
In terms of accommodation, presented in the Graph 4, the largest percentage was represented by hotels - 40 %, followed by accommodation in apartments - 25 %, almost the same number of respondents identified as the most common choice of accommodation shared form, such as Airbnb or other - 24 %, hostel accommodation - 5 %, and then the camping - 4 %. Among the answers "other", which accounted for 2 %, was accommodation in a cottage or car. In addition to shared accommodation, an additional question was asked - whether respondents had used this type of accommodation in the last three years. Of all respondents, 60.4 % answered positively, and the remaining 39.6 % did not use this type accommodation. The most common answer in the group that answered 'yes' was an affordable price, a large selection of accommodation, more privacy and the opportunity to live among local residents.

4.6. The role of funds when traveling

The majority of respondents (71 %) answered they were saving for their travels by themselves. About 18 % of respondents were financially supported by their parents, and the remaining 11 % answered that they had partly used their own savings, and partly received support from their family.

For annual travel expenses for trips around the Czech Republic and abroad, the largest percentage of respondents (31%) spent an average of CZK 20,000-3,000 annually, only a small percentage invested in travel (8 %) for than CZK 10,000, slightly more respondents (15%) were willing to spend more than CZK 50,000 a year on travel. Note: exchange rate 1 EUR = 25,50 CZK (CNB, 2021).

Graph 5 represents the list of reasons for which the respondents would be willing to spend more money.



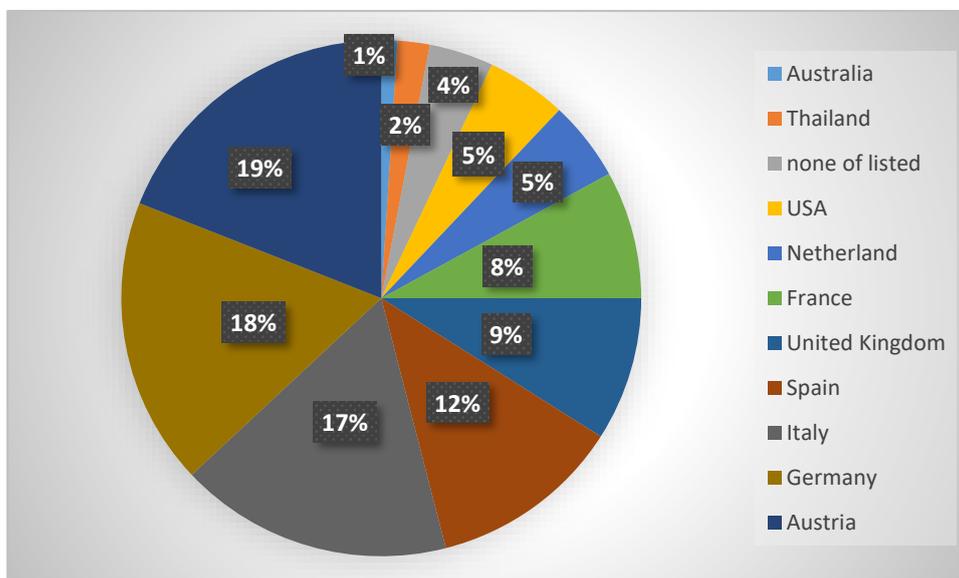
Graph 5. Reasons for which respondents would be willing to pay extra money
Source: Own research

It can be seen from the graph that the cost of food and drinks were the most important reason (32 %). Furthermore, the finances were focused on experiences. 19 % of respondents would go to festivals and similar music or other events. The same percentage was represented regarding the expenses for tours and exhibitions, as well as adrenaline sports - 13 %. That was followed by expenses for a better room in the accommodation facility (12 %). 7 % of respondents were interested in tourist guide services. The last two categories concerned the improvement of travel conditions, i.e. higher class tickets, or more comfort in aircrafts, both of which were represented by 2% of responses. The choice of answers was also intended for later comparison with the trends in the world. These attributes were mentioned in the world survey New Horizons IV (WYSETC, 2018) in relation to the analysis of spending of the young generation.

4.7. Destinations for young people

Only a small percentage of respondents prefer to travel only across the Czech Republic, about 8 %. Over 30 % prefer to travel abroad, but most of them combine both ways of travel, around 59 %. The supplementary question was, how many times a year the participants travel abroad. The most common answer was 1 - 3 times, i.e. 72.9 %. More often, 16.4 %, travel abroad 3-5 times, only 10.6 %

do it more than 5 times.



Graph 6. Destinations visited by respondents
Source: research

In the Graph 6 above we can see which countries the respondents visited during the last 3 years. This question was asked for later comparison with the preferences of young travelers from the Czech Republic and the world. The given countries were determined in advance, according to the results of the world survey (WYSETC, 2018) - 10 most popular countries according to young travelers from all over the world. The neighboring countries of the Czech Republic, Austria (19 %) and Germany (18 %) had the largest proportion of travellers. On the contrary, the smallest percentage was represented by Australia, which could be expected due to financial costs and distance from the Czech Republic.

4.8. Comparison with the world trends

A comparison was made with the results of the most recent survey "New Horizons IV." with data retrieved from 2017 (WYSETC, 2018). A total of 57,324 respondents from 188 countries took part in the survey.

5. Comparison results

1. In the questionnaire survey, the age limit was from 15 to 29 years, as in the international. The age of the majority was between 20 and 22 years, whereas in the authors' questionnaire survey it was 21 and 22 years. It is generally stated that the generation of young travelers has significantly higher level of education, and is often made up of students. 72.5 % of the participants in survey were students, of which about a third combined work and study.

2. Overall, travel expenses were valued as well-spent money. Travel as such was rated as an important part of their lives by more than three-quarters of respondents. Therefore, it was considered as good investment of savings. Spending preferences were the same in both surveys (food and drink, experiences).

3. The most frequently chosen means of transport for foreign travel was airplane. However, the choice is influenced by the price of air tickets, especially low-cost airlines (70 %), which confirms the remaining influence of their usage that have a positive effect on the travel of the young generation

according to their capabilities (Richards, 2006). Some respondents mentioned that they are already inspired by special tickets offer when deciding about the trip and, according to their price, they subsequently choose the destination they want to visit.

4. The most frequently chosen accommodation facility were hotel facilities, after choosing an apartment, followed by shared accommodation, which can be, for example, Airbnb or Couchsurfing and others. Regarding this form of accommodation, although it was not the most frequently chosen as the preferred accommodation facility, in the supplementary question whether they used this type of accommodation in the last 3 years, over 60 % of the answers were positive. The reason for choosing this type of accommodation was getting to know the local people and good destinations. Yet, the most common reason was the price.

5. According to an international survey in 2017, family and friends of travelers were still the most widespread source of travel information, but digitization and social networks also played a major role. Their influence definitely has expanded very much since previous surveys. In this new questionnaire research, where acquaintances and friends or family play a major role in choosing destination, the largest percentage was represented by social networks. As digitization increases, so does the number of resources young travelers have at their disposal. In the international survey, the average number of information sources was more than 10. In the questionnaire survey, respondents also mentioned more information sources, but in most cases their number was only 2.

6. Travel planning as such is also greatly influenced by digitization. Especially for the young generation, printed guides or catalogs of travel agencies are no longer attractive. A simpler form that obviously suits them better is either an online travel agency or online booking portals. The results are thus confirmed by both studies. According to the questionnaire survey, almost 80 % of respondents arrange their trips completely without the help of a tour guide and 56 % of respondents have not used a tour operator in the last 3 years.

7. In addition to traditional leisure tourism, travel for a specific purpose is also typical of young people's travel (Moisa, 2010). According to an international survey, 50 % of all young participants travel for purposes other than relax or holiday. The results of the questionnaire survey were very similar. Slightly more than half of the respondents have experience with this way of traveling. Other questions showed that the respondents were most interested in a study exchange and obtaining some work experience.

8. Generally, the representatives of the young generation rated themselves as travelers who are looking for authentic experience and like to meet local cultures and traditions. They thus identify with the idea of "live like a local", which has become a big trend in the travel of the young generation. According to an international survey, in 2017, over 50 % of survey participants traveled this way. Among the respondents to the questionnaire survey, their percentage was as high as 58 %.

9. The questionnaire survey also showed that the largest percentage of respondents travel abroad 1-3 times. According to their preferences, about 30 % preferred to travel abroad, but most prefer some combination of both, domestic and foreign tourism. For comparison with the international survey, it was also consequently defined which countries the representatives of the young generation from Czech Republic prefer as destinations of their travels. In that particular case, the results differed considerably. While in the world survey the USA, Spain and France were among the 3 most popular countries, among the Czech respondents they were Austria, Germany and Italy. Such result can be explained by the fact that the Czech Republic is located in Central Europe and the population largely visits neighboring countries and other European countries, which are accessible because of their (shorter) distance.

6. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The research's aim was to identify the changes of trends in travelling regarding young generation, and depending on the country of origin of young travellers, as well as the changes in time. Both of these factors confirm certain changes. For this reason, further research could be aimed at comparing trends concerning the travel of the young generation between countries, or comparing trends between the generations of young travelers (generation Y and generation Z), which are represented in the current age group of 15-29 years. Changes in the travel of the young generation will certainly be affected by the situation after the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this research was conducted during the pandemic, its impact was not taken into account. However, it can be assumed that the tourism

of the young generation will be least affected by this situation. This can be also the topic for further research.

7. CONCLUSION

Youth travel plays a very important role in sustainable development of tourism worldwide as confirmed by different international organizations (UNWTO, WYSETC) and it also increases as confirmed by the statistical data and surveys. Travelers of the young generation, i.e. representatives of generation Y and slightly younger generation Z together form a dynamically developing segment of tourism. They have the ability to set the trends, so it is important to pay them due attention. The travel of the young generation differs from other segments in many ways, and they are combined in its economic value. This paper based on the research (2021) among young people in Czech Republic confirms the overall trends. The paper based on the questionnaire surveys and comparison with the former international surveys answered both research questions. In most questions, the answers coincided with already established foreign research. In particular, it has been confirmed that today's young travelers are highly influenced by technology and social networks. Also, the financial resources they can spend on travel play a big role. The current phenomenon is also the use of shared economy, especially in accommodation. It turned out that Czech representatives of the young generation are interested in this type of accommodation. But what they do not seem too interested in are the services of travel agencies, as these travelers very often arrange all their trips themselves. Czech representatives of the young generation are also unfamiliar with the use of low cost airlines, which are currently still on the rise (till 2019), mainly due to the price of air tickets. In some questions, the Czechs' answers did not agree with the general trends. Respondents who traveled for purposes other than holidays together accounted for a very similar percentage as it was generally reported for this segment. However, the ways of this travel were not so diverse. Only a very small percentage was represented by exchanges or volunteering. Travel for study dominated the most. Great interest was shown in traveling for the reasons of study or work. Compared to world surveys, young Czech travelers do not seem to be very interested in the issues of ecology and the sustainability of their travel. However, it is very likely that technological progress, shared economy and other factors will further change youth travel in the future, and what can be considered a trend today could be seen regarded as history in future few years.

The findings concerning young generation, its attitude to destinations, its reasons and motives for travel, its ways of travel arrangements, its spending ability and preferences concerning the used transport, type of accommodation, give us important information, both for destinations and tourism services providers to adapt their offer, their products and services to the future needs.

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