DOES THE GENERATION INFLUENCE DOMESTIC
LEISURE TOURISM PRACTICES? THE CASE OF BULGARIA

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Abstract: The main goal of the article is to study the generations that are actively participating in the tourism market at the moment and to examine their attitudes towards domestic tourism. The analyses of the generations' domestic leisure tourism practices in Bulgaria include two-dimensional frequency distributions and statistical pair-wise hypothesis testing in order to clarify the exact differences amongst the generations studied. The study reveals that the youngest generations travel more than the elders. The top 3 'factors' that burden the travelling intentions amongst the Bulgarians are: lack of financial resources, lack of enough free time and family reasons. The most significant reason for older generations not traveling is lack of enough money and for the younger is mix between lack of finance and lack of enough free time. The generations differ from each other in their travel preferences, behaviour, expectations. However, some similarities are observed between them. It is noteworthy that most respondents, regardless of the generation they belong to, have visited more summer seaside resorts than mountain winter resorts in the last five years.

Keywords: generational theory, domestic leisure tourism, Bulgaria, attitudes, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z, Alpha Generation, representative survey, hypothesis testing, statistical analysis

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INTRODUCTION

UNWTO states that according to their data domestic tourism generates higher revenue than international tourism in most destinations worldwide (UNWTO, 2020). Leisure travel generates 80% of the tourism expenditure globally (Statista, n.d.). Statista (n.d.) also estimates that the revenue of the holiday packages that form the leisure travel, in 2023 will surpass the pre-pandemic level. Leisure tourism includes holidays and trips for relaxation. To define the concept of domestic leisure tourism, we use for a basis the definition of UNWTO, since 1995, which states, that holidays are all journeys for pleasure including at least four consecutive nights away from home but at the country of residence of the tourist.

We can consider the importance of domestic leisure tourism in two directions: first, with respect to the increasing free time and second, the need for relaxation due to stress or overcoming prolonged crisis situations. Free/leisure time increased after World War I with the implementation of an 8-hour working day and practice of a 5-day working week at the end of 20th century. Leisure time very often is considered as time for entertainment and relax, whereas leisure activities are those who are practiced in the free time for pleasure. For the purposes of this article and in connection with the methodology of the conducted research, the results of which are presented we understand as domestic leisure tourism travel within the country of origin of the tourists for vacation and recreation for four or more consecutive nights in summer resorts or winter ski destinations. Domestic leisure tourism aims to avoid stress in everyday life and explore new destinations in the country.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the stress and tension of the unknown disease and the isolation of people generated the need for leisure tourism trips. The closure of many destinations and restrictions on travel abroad to limit the spread of the disease have become one of the main reasons for the development of domestic leisure tourism. From an economic point of view, it has become a stimulus not only for the development of the local economy, as it is outside of force majeure situations, but also an opportunity to restore the tourist business, as a result of the pandemic restrictions. Many countries have launched campaigns to stimulate domestic tourism, among them the programs Bonus Vacanze in Italy, for families with incomes of up to EUR 40,000, in France the program #CetÉtéJeVisiteLaFrance, promoting the diversity of local destinations in the country, Malaysia that created travel discount vouchers for expenditure related to domestic tourism, etc. (UNWTO, 2020). For the success of such campaigns, it is necessary to know the attitudes of domestic tourists towards the destination.

Considering the significance of domestic tourism for the countries' economies many governments promote it by creating marketing campaigns. Better targeting of focus groups requires knowledge of their habits, attitudes, preferences, influence of information sources, etc. One of the main indicators for classifying target groups is according to their age. The term generation is very popular when we try to assign individuals to a specific age group, especially when trying to find

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common characteristics, behaviour, or attitudes towards specific activity of a target audience. It is very useful in business and in tourism specifically. The Center for Generational Kinetics (2016) defines the generation as „a group of people born around the same time and raised around the same place". And the demographer Marc McCrindle defines the generations as a group of people who were shaped by events, trends, and innovations that occurred within a specific time frame (15 years at the top end), and who are similar in age and stage of life. People of a generation exhibit similar characteristics, values and preferences (Center for Generational Kinetics, Generational birth years, 2016) and can be considered as a separate target group. That is why the main goal of the present article is to study the generations that are actively participating in the tourism market at the moment and to examine their attitudes towards domestic tourism. The main research questions we ask ourselves are:

RQ1 Which generations most often practice domestic tourism?

RQ2 Which generations are most satisfied with their stay in Bulgarian resorts?

RQ3 What are the main information sources that influence different generations when choosing a destination for domestic holiday tourism?

In this article, a literature review of the theory of generations and their importance for domestic holiday tourism is made. The research methodology is presented in five main steps. The presented results are based on a nationally representative study conducted in Bulgaria. In the Discussion, a comparison is made with other similar studies of the most active generations at the moment and their attitude towards domestic holiday tourism. In conclusion, some basic conclusions are made, which can have both theoretical value and practical contribution to the preparation of promotional, advertising and PR campaigns with the aim of optimizing the image of domestic holiday tourism at the national level.

This paper will expand knowledge on consumer behaviour and marketing and specifically on the relationship between destination image and generational differences within a domestic tourism context. The results might help marketers develop marketing and promotion campaigns that will prove useful when they plan actions focusing on this important segment.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Types of generations

The analysis of the generations is important not only for sociology, but also for marketing and other sciences (McCrindle, 2023). It's a focus on the academic world but also is important for business decision making (Mancheva-Ali and Kostadinova, 2023). Generations around the world have gone through various specific significant for their region political and economic events. But the basis of the generation theory is mostly the Western world. Because of this when the generations are defined the time limitations are based on globally significant events (Varadzhakova and Statev, 2017). A number of authors work on the classification of generations. Strauss and Howe (1991) make generations classification of the Americans born between 1584 and 2069. They are the first to identify, categorize, and name every generation in American history. The authors determine the duration of the generations between 17 and 33 years. Strauss and Howe (1991) define five generational cycles: Colonial (1584-1700), Revolutionary (1701-1791), Civil war cycle (1792 - 1859), Great power cycle (1860 - 1942) and Millennial cycle (1943-2003). For the people born in XX and XXI centuries they offer the following classification: G.I. Generation (born between 1901 - 1924) and Silent Generation (1925-1942) that belongs to the Great power cycle and the next generations form part of the Millennial cycle, the Boom generation (1943 - 1960), Thirteenth generation (1961-1981), Millennial generation (1982 - 2002), new adaptive (2003-2024), new idealist (2025-2046) and new reactive (2047-2069). Strauss and Howe (1991) also identified four generational types in every generational cycle: idealists, civic, reactive and adaptive. The idealists are always born immediately after a secular crisis.

They are dominant and inner-focused generation, mature into spiritual awakening-inspiring adults, cultivate principle as moralistic midlifers, and eventually emerges as visionary elders leading the next secular crisis. The reactive generation matures into risk-taking, alienated rising adults, mellows into pragmatic midlife leaders during a secular crisis. The civic generation is a dominant and outwardly focused, grows up as more and more shielded youths, matures through a secular crisis; unites into a heroic and achieving cadre of rising adults. Typical for the adaptive cycle is that the people from this generations having grown up at a time of crisis and experiencing both secular assurance and spiritual uneasiness.

Pew Research Center (Pew Research Cente, n.d.) defines different classifications of the generations as follows: Greatest (born before 1927), Silents (born 1928-1945), Baby boomers (1946-1964), Gen Xers (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), Post-Millennials or lately named Gen Z (1997-2012). According to the Center for Generational Kinetics (2016) the generations have similar but not the same age structure. Their theory divides them as follows: Traditionalists (born before 1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) Gen X (born 1965-1976), Millennials (born 1977 to 1995), and Gen Z (born 1996 to 2015). The reason that the age structure of generations differs between different research teams is that they consider specific social and political events to be significant and structure-determining.

The social analyst and demographer Marc McCrindle (McCrindle Research, 2006) defines the generations more like Pew research Center. According to him the oldest generations is the Federation (Greatest) generation (born before 1925), followed by the Builders (born 1925-1945), the Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1979), Generation Y (born 1980-1994), Generation Z (born 1995-2009). He also defines the next generation, named Alpha Generation (born in 2010). On the market now are mostly the generations of the Builders and afterwards.

McCrindle (2023) summarizes some characteristics of the generations in Australia. The Builders contributed to the building of society, and their lives were marked by the Second World War. This generation is characterized by the birth boom that occurred after the Second World War. The birth rate was 3.5 babies per woman. This increase in the birth rate also leads to a boom in economic development, construction, etc. Generation X is associated with Douglas Coupland's international bestseller "Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture" and also with this generation's mantra of anti-

establishment and pushback against authority figures. It is typical of this generation to take advantage of times of economic prosperity and small business development opportunities until the development of the COVID-19 pandemic (McCrindle, 2023). They are more susceptible to marketing and advertising campaigns (Roberts and Manolis, 2000). In Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, Generation X is influenced by the change in the economic and political system and the advancement of technology, which become the main factors influencing the point of view of this generation (Bielińska-Dusza, 2022).

The behavior of Generation Y, known also as Millennials, has been marked by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. In the field of tourism, this generation is also characterized by its trips abroad (McCrindle, 2023). In marketing aspect their attitudes, behavior and habits are studied but not fully comprehended yet (Naumovska, 2017). Generation Y very often uses the Internet as a resource for better-informed purchasing decisions (Dulay et al., 2022). This generation is more than the others before it looks for work-life balance (Smith, 2010).

Generation Z differs from previous generations (Chen, 2023). The mindset of Gen Z was mostly shaped during the COVID-19 pandemic. This generation is aware of economic uncertainty. They are focused on education and lifelong learning and realize that in a competitive environment they must work hard to achieve their goals in life. Another noteworthy aspect of Gen Z is that they are the first generation to have grown up completely dependent on the internet (McCrindle, 2023). Kang et al. (2020) call them "digital natives". This generation actively consumes online content, is creative, and likes to communicate online (Yadav and Rai, 2017). They are influenced by social media, vlogs and other types of Internet advertising (Zaib Abbasi et al., 2023). However, Generation Z do not have in-depth technological knowledge, but use the Internet mainly to access social networks or for other types of communication (Shtepura, 2022).

Generation Alpha is the first generation to be fully born in the 21st century and will be shaped into the new millennium. The name comes from the first letter of the Greek alphabet, as a symbol of something new. The beginning of this generation has been marked by technology, most notably the launch of Instagram and the iPad in 2010. Their daily routine is app-based games and increased time spent in front of the screen. They are characterized by less social formation (McCrindle and Fell, 2020). The representatives of generation Alpha are currently up to 14 years old, between their childhood and early adolescence. Their formation as individuals has been marked by increasing globalization and the COVID-19 pandemic. They have yet to be formed as attitudes and preferences and to be studied by the academic world and business.

Which generations are on the market?

The consumer behavior and attitudes of individual generations are a key factor in building a marketing strategy, which, in turn, contributes to the creation, promotion and sale of tourist products and services (Mancheva-Ali and Prodanova, 2021) or for the formation of the image of a tourist destination. Trends in tourist attitudes and behavior can be better interpreted in the context of the evolution of society as a whole (Monaco, 2018), which is reflected in the generational theory. Currently, there are five generations in the tourist market as tourists who can make decisions: in part the Builders, the Baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z. It is also necessary to know the characteristics of the Alpha generation, as future participants in the tourism market, although due to their fragile age they are not yet able to make independent decisions about their trips. The Builders generation is between 78-98 years right now. They hardly participate in the tourist market due to their advanced age. When traveling abroad, most of them cannot be insured due to their age and the policy of the insurance companies. They usually travel accompanied by younger relatives and for shorter distances due to their health condition.

The baby boomer generation is associated with the so-called 55+ or 65+ travel packages for senior citizens as they are currently between the ages of 59 and 77. Because for the moment they are the largest generational group, with a good income and one of the tourist categories with the quickest growth rates as tourist segment the business have long regarded Baby Boomers as the most attractive travel market. In Bulgaria most of them have good education, relatively good income (mostly the younger in this generation), as retired people they have enough free time to travel. They have diverse interests and mainly benefit from the tourist packages outside the active season in Southern Europe, intended for pensioners. The main problem for some of the travelers is their health. They often practice multigenerational travel, as travel packages for their age group allow them to travel with younger people. According to Lehto et al. (2008) the Baby boomers in their younger years preferred to spend their free time with their families away from home, secluding themselves and indulging in romance. The older subgroup of them is less likely to use the Internet when planning their tourist trips. However, the Baby boomers adopted the Internet earlier than commonly supposed (Beldona, 2005).

Generation X is currently between the ages of 44 and 58. They are active people who work. A large part of them is also well-educated. Usually, these are people with a lot of work experience, dedicated to their work, at the top of their careers, so they try to balance between their work duties and their free time to travel. The younger ones consider traveling with their children, and the older ones of this generation have the opportunity to independently choose the destinations to visit since their children are now grown and travel separately. They tend to visit distant, exotic destinations. In their younger years, Generation Xers trusted travel advisors, used travel packages, and sought discounts on prices (Huang and Petrick, 2010), preferred to travel in a family group (Benckendorff and Moscardo, 2010). Now, similar to the youngest generations, generation Y has high rate of adoption of Internet as travel planning tool (Kim et al., 2015) and they also are engaged in sharing travel information (Lin et al., 2022). According to Seabra et al. (2020) this generation is looking for simplicity and authenticity, relaxation and socialization. Generation X tourists are by far those who value the most domestic destinations, so they have to be a prime target for tourism organizations (Seabra et al., 2020).

Generation Y or Millennials are the most active travel segment on the market. They are currently between the ages of 29 and 43. They have enough income to travel but do not have time to do it, because they are in their more active working age. Like Generation X, they seek a balance between work and leisure. They lived in times of rapid changes, including in

Bulgaria they are popular as the "children of transition", regarding the political changes in the country. In the USA they are the largest generation in the country's history (Goldman Sachs, n.d.). They pay attention to a healthy lifestyle. When they travel, they are looking to know more about the local culture and traditions. Like the next Generation Z, Millennials love to travel. They use online travel agents, specialized platforms, apps and social media to share their travel experiences (Kifworo and Dube, 2023). Sometimes the social media content has impact on the choice of domestic viral destinations and is related to the Fear-of-Missing-Out (Harahap et al., 2024). Generation Z encompasses people who are currently between the ages of 14 and 28. This makes this group extremely heterogeneous, as some of them are already of working age and can make their own travel decisions, while others are still teenagers whose travel depends on their parents. They will be the largest group of travellers (Liu et al., 2023; Pinho and Gomes, 2023). According to Aina and Ezeuduji (2021) lack of funds is one of the main factors that hinder the participation of older individuals of this generation in domestic tourism. Another characteristic of this generation is that they are attracted of the green destinations (Nowacki et al., 2023).

In the scientific literature, generations are mostly considered through the prism of tourism in general (Haddouche and Salomone, 2018; Băltescu, 2019; Kim and Park, 2020; Pendergast and Wilks, 2021; Loan and Hoang, 2023) or their participation in specific types of tourism (Cavagnaro et al., 2018; Marino et al., 2021; Görpe and Öksüz, 2022; Pinho and Gomes, 2023). However, research on the participation of different generations in domestic tourism is relatively weak. In the last ten years, generational analyses of domestic tourism have been done for the domestic tourism market in Australia (Gardiner et al., 2014), China (Ding et al., 2022), Malaysia (Adnan and Omar, 2022), Portugal (Seabra et al., 2020), Slovakia and Czechia (Pompurová et al., 2023). The presented studies are not representative of the respective countries and this fact highlights a research gap that, although only for one country, the present study tries to fill. For the first time, the results of a nationally representative study are presented, which covers all generations currently participating in the domestic tourist market in one country, in this case - Bulgaria.

METHODOLOGY

Making a meaningful comparison between different age groups is important not only from a scientific point of view but also from business and demographic perspectives. In order to produce analytical results comparable to other similar studies we have used the classification of the generations defined by Mark McCrindle (McCrindle Research, 2006) summarized in the following Table1. Due to the limitations of some representative survey characteristics, concerning the matter that only persons aged 18+ are interviewed and the oldest person selected in the sample is 85 years old, for the following analyses we were able to use the generations: Builders, Baby boomers, X, Y and Z.

Table 1. Classification of the generations by Mark McCrindle (McCrindle Research, 2006)

Name of the generation	Year of birth	Age in 2023
Federation /Greatest/ generation	Before 1925	99 and over
Builders	1925-1945	78-98
Baby boomers	1946-1964	59-77
Generation X	1965-1979	44-58
Generation Y	1980-1994	29-43
Generation Z	1995-2009	14-28
Alpha Generation	From 2010	13 and less

As it was already mentioned above all of the following analyses, concerning the generations' domestic leisure tourism practices in Bulgaria, are based on a national representative survey with a sample size of 1003 adults (i.e. persons aged 18+). The random sample specification can be summarized using the following Figure1.
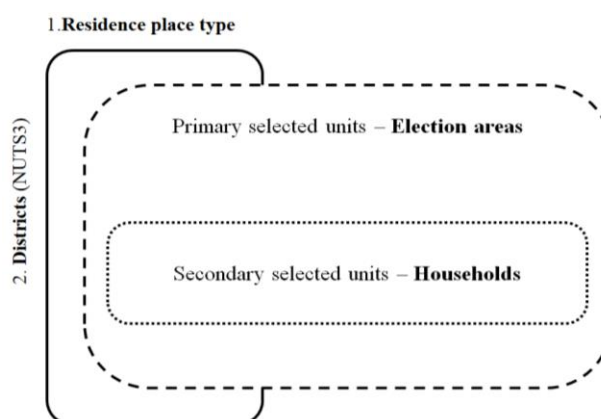

Figure 1. Sampling details

As Figure 1 shows, the survey is based on a two-staged clustered sample stratified by the residence place type[1] and the 28 Bulgarian districts (NUTS3 level classification). For the first cluster selection stage the primary sampling units (PSU)

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[1] Residence place type includes 3 categories: district administrative center city, other town and rural places

are the election areas[2] and for the second cluster selection stage the secondary sampling units (SSU) are households[3]. The PSUs at the first stage were stratified proportionally to the size measured by the population in each of the 84 strata. The SSUs were randomly selected within each PSUs. All adults from the SSUs sampled were interviewed by a face-to-face TAPI[4] approach using an online LimeSurvey questionnaire during the period April-May 2023. The data processing and data analytics were executed by the usage of IBM SPSS version 29 software. The specifics of the generation groups domestic leisure tourism practices were studied using the following survey questions (part of the whole survey questionnaire):

Table 2. Survey questions used for further analyses

Variable	Question	Measurement scale
Q1	In the last 5 years, have you travelled to Bulgaria for the purpose of leisure tourism?	Nominal
Q2	What is the main reason why you have not travelled on leisure tourism in the last 5 years in Bulgaria?	Nominal
Q3	To what extent do the following sources of information influence your opinion when choosing a leisure place in Bulgaria on the scale: 1 – to a very small extent to 7 – to a very large extent?	Ordinal
Q4	How often do you travel for leisure tourism in Bulgaria?	Ordinal
Q5	Usually, what is the average length of your stay (in number of nights) in a Bulgarian mountain resort (in winter)?	Ratio
Q13	To what extent are you satisfied with your holiday in the Bulgarian winter resorts in the last 5 years on the scale: 1 – I am not satisfied at all to 7 – I am completely satisfied?	Ordinal
Q14	Usually, what is the average length of your stay (in number of nights) in a Bulgarian seaside resort (in summer)?	Ratio
Q22	To what extent are you satisfied with your holiday in the Bulgarian summer resorts in the last 5 years on the scale: 1 – I am not satisfied at all to 7 – I am completely satisfied?	Ordinal

Due to the features of the climate of the Republic of Bulgaria – hot summer and cold winter, and also because of the prevailing tourist-flow – more crowds at the seaside during the summer and more tourists at the mountain resorts during the winter season, the present study emphasizes on the specifics of the mountain tourism during the winter and the seaside tourism during the summer. In order to transform the answers of question Q4, concerning the travel frequency, from ordinal to ratio scale the following rule is applied: Each month → 12 times per year, Several times a year → 4 times per year, Once a year → 1 time per year, Once in a few years → 0,3 times per year, Less often → 0,1 times per year, Haven't travelled in Bulgaria → 0 times per year. The thorough analyses of the generations' domestic leisure tourism practices in Bulgaria include a number of statistical analyses such as: two-dimensional frequency distributions and statistical pair-wise hypothesis testing in order to clarify the exact differences amongst the generations studied. We have executed a descriptive analysis for the frequency distributions and the hypothesis testing that implicitly includes the following stages:

Stage 1: Stating the initial research hypothesis – null and alternative.

In all testing procedures concerning the abovementioned topics, the null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between two (or more) generations and the alternate hypothesis states the opposite – there is a significant difference between two (or more) generations.

Stage 2: Choosing a suitable significance level for the hypothesis testing.

During all hypothesis testing procedures, the 5% (0,05) significance level is used.

Stage 3: Selection of the suitable test statistic according to the data and procedure specifics.

In order to investigate all potential differences amongst the generations, we have used non-parametric statistical tests due to the nature of the variables used – non-normally distributed.

Stage 4: Performing computations using the sample data and the chosen test statistic.

Based on the data from the national representative survey and the non-parametric tests a number of calculations have been done using the IBM SPSS ver. 29 software.

Stage 5: Decision-making process based on the p-value and the significance level comparison

In the cases where the p-value is less than the significance level the null hypothesis is rejected while in the cases where p-value is greater or equal than the significance level the null hypothesis is retained.

RESULTS

Travel is perceived as social experience (McKercher, 2023) necessary for all generations. Every human generation has its own characteristics and features usually formed by the specifics of the 'era' that it had been born and lived in. Although the life of each generation 'member' is a different 'story', there are always some similarities and tendencies that they share which could be generalized and summarized. In the next few paragraphs, we will try to uncover some 'hidden' specifics of the generations' domestic leisure tourism practices in Bulgaria using the data from a national representative survey, details about which were discussed in the Methodology section of this article. When there is a need for the general examination of the domestic leisure tourism practices, we usually investigate the facts concerning the real travel experience of the sampled target population during the last 5 years' period. The results of this investigation are presented in the following Table 3. As it can be seen from the Table 3, there is an obvious difference in the domestic leisure tourism practices amongst the generations. Although only the half of the Generations Z and Y and a little more than 1/3 of the Generation X visit the winter (mountain) resorts in Bulgaria, the latter are significantly more visited by the younger generations (Z, Y and X) than the elder ones (Baby bomers - 18,4% and Builders – only 4,3%).

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[2] Election area is a subdivision of the Bulgarian territory created to provide its population with an easier access to the location where they can vote.
[3] Private households of Bulgarian citizens.
[4] TAPI - tablet assisted personal interview.

The seaside rsorts in Bulgaria are definitely more preferred by the locals than the mountain ones. Almost all (90,2%) representatives of the Gen. Y and great share of the other 'younger' generations (Gen. Z – 88,7% and Gen. X – 80,1%) have visited a summer resort during the last 5-year period. A statistically significant lower leisure tourism practice rates are typical for the Baby boomers (61,2%) and especially for the Builders (26,1%).

Table 3. Domestic leisure tourism practices in Bulgaria in the last 5 years by generation – share of respondents that have visited a resort (percent)

Leisure tourism practiced	Generation				
	Generation Z	Generation Y	Generation X	Baby boomers	Builders
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Winter (mountain) resorts	51,3%	50,6%	34,6%	18,4%	4,3%
	C D E	C D E	D E		
Summer (seaside) resorts	88,7%	90,2%	80,1%	61,2%	26,1%
	D E	C D E	D E	E	

Note: Total sample size is 1003 persons. Results are based on 2-sided significance tests. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column proportion appears in the category with the larger column proportion. Significance level for each column comparison (A, B, C, D, E) is 5%.

Usually there are specific reasons that hinder the Bulgaria citizens to enjoy even a short vacation at the domestic resorts. The top 3 'factors' that burden the travelling intentions amongst the Bulgarians are: lack of financial resources, lack of enough free time and family reasons (incl. taking care for young children, elder relatives, etc.). The comparison between the main reasons for not travelling amongst the generations considered are presented in following Table 4

Table 4. Main reasons for not travelling on domestic leisure tourism in the last 5 years by generation (percent)

Main reason for not travelling		Generation				
		Generation Z	Generation Y	Generation X	Baby boomers	Builders
		(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Winter (mountain) resorts	Lack of financial resources	37.5%	37.2%	39.9%	55.3%	36.4%
					A B C E	
	Lack of enough free time	26.8%	28.9%	32.0%	9.9%	x
		D	D	D		
	Family reasons	10.7%	19.8%	10.1%	16.5%	22.7%
		-	-	-	-	-
Summer (seaside) resorts	Lack of financial resources	30.8%	37.5%	46.3%	65.2%	58.8%
					A B	
	Lack of enough free time	23.1%	37.5%	18.5%	8.9%	x
			C D			
	Family reasons	7.7%	8.3%	13.0%	9.6%	5.9%
		-	-	-	-	-

Note: Total sample size for winter resorts is 661 persons and for the summer resorts is 243 persons. Results are based on 2-sided significance tests. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column proportion appears in the category with the larger column proportion. Significance level for each column comparison (A, B, C, D, E) is 5%. "x" - this category is not used in comparisons because its column proportion is equal to zero or one.

The most important factor for not travelling to domestic winter destinations for a slightly more than a third the generations Z, Y, X and the Builders is the lack of financial resources. This even more applies to the 'Baby boomers' because more than a half of them share this problem, which is significantly more than the other generations. The 'situation' is similar about the visiting of the seaside resorts, although in this case the Baby boomers are significantly more burdened by the money only comparing to the youngest generations – Z and Y. The second most 'influential' factor for not travelling is the lack of free time especially for the busier youngsters. Less than a third of generations X, Y and Z share the lack of enough time to visit a winter resort and significantly lower is the rate for the elder Baby boomers (9,9%). Usually, the Gen. Y is in the 'whirlwind of life' and that is why more than a third of them (37,5%) do not have enough time to visit a seaside resort which is significantly more than Gen. X (18,5%) and the Baby boomers (8,9%). The family reasons for not practicing domestic tourism are 'ranked' at the third place as a 'travelling stopper' ranging from 10,1% to 22,7% for the winter resorts and from 5,9% to 13,0% for the summer resort 'non-visitors'. The statistical tests showed no significant differences between the generations concerning that particular reason. Next table represents a comparison amongst generations concerning the information sources influence degree on domestic leisure tourism destination choice by the Bulgarian citizens.

Table 5 draws a very clear 'picture' of the information sources influence on the destination choice. As a 'master influencer' in Bulgarian can be defined the opinion given by the relatives and friends of the respondents and this is confirmed by each and every generation (no significant difference between the generations considered). On the opposite side, the print media such as: the 'old-fashion' newspapers, magazines, etc. almost lost its power of influence on all generations, ranking at last place on the 'scale of influence'. No significant difference on this topic has been found amongst the generations too. The 'modern' generations Z, Y and X prefer significantly more to use specialized online tourism platforms to choose travel destinations than the 'non-internet' generations – Baby boomers and Builders. The same 'pattern' can be found amongst the generations studied also when we focus on the internet sites (incl. YouTube). Generations Z, Y and X prefer significantly more those information sources than the elder two generations. Gen. Z and Y are more influenced by the websites even more than the Gen. X.

Table 5. Information sources influence degree on domestic leisure tourism destination choice in Bulgaria by generation (average)

Information sources	Generation				
	Generation Z	*Generation Y*	*Generation X*	*Baby boomers*	*Builders*
	(A)	*(B)*	*(C)*	*(D)*	*(E)*
Print media (incl. newspapers, magazines, etc.)	2.28	2.34	2.52	2.65	3.56
	-	-	-	-	-
Electronic media (incl. radio, television, etc.)	3.75	3.57	3.54	3.12	3.75
	-	-	-	-	-
Internet sites (incl. YouTube videos, etc.)	4.87	4.57	4.06	2.91	2.31
	C D E	C D E	D E		
Specialized online tourism platforms (incl. Airbnb, Booking, Google maps, etc.)	5.02	4.78	4.41	3.01	1.94
	D E	D E	D E		
Opinions of relatives/friends	5.67	5.83	5.60	5.57	5.59
	-	-	-	-	-
Note: Total sample size is 1003 persons. Results are based on 2-sided significance tests. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column value appears in the category with the larger column value. Significance level for each column comparison (A, B, C, D, E) is 5%. Non-significant differences are marked with "-".					

Although the electronic media (incl. radio, television, etc.) has lost its influential 'glory' it still has some influence on the domestic leisure tourism destination choice in Bulgaria which is equally shared amongst the different generations.

When considering the domestic leisure tourism practices specifics, it is important to provide a comparison of the travel frequency amongst the generations as it is presented in Table 6. As it can be seen from Table 6, the travel frequency becomes more intense with the younger generations and more 'relaxed' as the age progresses. The youngest Gen. Z (2.54 times a year) and Y (2.47 times a year) travel significantly more often the Baby Boomers (1.20 times a year) and the Builders (0.37 times a year). The 'middle' Gen. X (1.99 times a year) is closer to the younger generations from the travel frequency perspective but significantly different from the elder 2 generations in terms of a more frequent travelling.

Table 6. Travel frequency for domestic leisure tourism in Bulgaria by generation (average times per year)

Travel frequency	Generation				
	Generation Z	Generation Y	Generation X	Baby boomers	Builders
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Times per year	2.54	2.47	1.99	1.20	0.37
	C D E	C D E	D E		
Note: Total sample size is 1003 persons. Results are based on 2-sided significance tests. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column value appears in the category with the larger column value. Significance level for each column comparison (A, B, C, D, E) is 5%. Non-significant differences are marked with "-".					

Table 7. Duration of the domestic leisure tourism stay by resort type and generations (average days per stay)

Resort type	Generation				
	Generation Z	Generation Y	Generation X	Baby boomers	Builders
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Winter (mountain) resorts	4.14	4.30	4.59	4.39	7.00
					A B C D
Summer (seaside) resorts	7.65	6.63	7.09	6.54	4.17
	E	E	E	E	
Note: Total sample size for winter resorts is 342 persons and for the summer resorts is 760 persons. Results are based on 2-sided significance tests. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column value appears in the category with the larger column value. Significance level for each column comparison (A, B, C, D, E) is 5%.					

Table 8. Degree of satisfaction with the domestic leisure holiday by resort type and generations (average)

Resort type	Generation				
	Generation Z	*Generation Y*	*Generation X*	*Baby boomers*	*Builders*
	(A)	*(B)*	*(C)*	*(D)*	*(E)*
Winter (mountain) resorts	5.14	5.27	5.29	5.52	5.00
	-	-	-	-	-
Summer (seaside) resorts	4.90	4.79	4.90	4.94	5.50
	-	-	-	-	-
Note: Total sample size for winter resorts is 342 persons and for the summer resorts is 760 persons. Results are based on 2-sided significance tests. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column value appears in the category with the larger column value. Significance level for each column comparison (A, B, C, D, E) is 5%. Non-significant differences are marked with "-".					

There is an obvious and a statistically significant difference between the generations considering the duration of the domestic leisure tourism stay too (Table 7). The winter resorts typically are visited approx. 4-5 days by all generations except for the Builders who usually spent a week there. On the opposite, a 'typical' vacation for the locals at the Bulgarian seaside usually lasts around 7 days for all generations except for the Builders who usually can afford to spend slightly more than 4 days there. Summarizing the whole vacation experience of the visitors at the Bulgarian resorts using the question: "To what extent are you satisfied with your holiday in the Bulgarian resorts in the last 5 years on the scale:

1 - I am not satisfied at all to 7 - I am completely satisfied?" outlined mostly positive feedback (Table 8). Overall, the Bulgarian mountain resorts obtain a little more 'thumb-ups' than the seaside ones, except for the Builders who liked more their summer vacation experience, there are no significant differences between the generations concerning the degrees of domestic leisure holiday satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study are focused on several main topics: the preferences for domestic leisure tourism in winter and summer resorts, the length of stay of individual generations in them, the possible reasons for not visiting them and the information sources that influence decision-making from tourists to practice domestic leisure tourism, as a way to improve the advertising and PR policy of the state. The comparison of these data with other similar ones is relatively difficult, since there are no previous nationally representative studies on the subject in Bulgaria, and on the other hand, the relationship between generations and domestic tourism in various foreign studies has not been realized in countries with the same natural tourism resources. However, we will try to discuss the present results through the lens of similar studies existing in the scientific literature. Leisure trips are most practiced by all generations according to research of Expedia Group (2017). The Baby boomers mark the lowest share of relaxing trips that is similar to the results of both domestic leisure tourism practices in winter and in summer at the present study. In most countries with attractive beaches and a suitable climate, seaside tourism is highly developed. About the leisure tourism, research of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank (2022) shows that the top motivation of about 75% of the Germans and UK travellers is to relax, rejuvenate and go to the beach. Our results confirm that also for all generations of Bulgarian tourists, summer seaside tourism is much more often practiced than winter mountain tourism.

Expedia Group (2017) survey reveals that Baby boomers are the generation that makes the longest trips. This fact differs with the results from Bulgarian domestic leisure tourism survey. For the winter mountain tourism, the Builders generation stay is the longest and for summer seaside tourism the Generation Z representatives stay longer than other generations.

The main priority of the Millennials and the representatives of Generation Z is to travel through the world (Deloitte Global Millennial Survey, 2020). They look for unique travel experience and the business has to understand this specific characteristic of the newest generations (Potjanajaruwit et al., 2024). According to our survey, the youngest generations (Y and Z) in Bulgaria, and also in Slovakia and Czechia (Pompurová et al., 2023) travel in their country much more frequently than the oldest. In Bulgaria they visit more winter resorts than the older generations. But also, almost all (more than 90%) interviewed Millennials have visited summer seaside resorts in the last five years.

The reasons that prevent participation in domestic leisure tourism among different generations are also investigated. We have identified three main reasons for all generations, namely lack of financial resources, lack of enough free time and family reasons. Similar to other studies of older tourists (Przybysz and Stanimir, 2022), lack of financial resources is the main reason the Baby boomers to not practice neither winter nor summer domestic leisure tourism.

When research of the information sources of culture and heritage based experiential tourism in Bulgaria is made by Culinary Arts and Hospitality Association (2021) only 80 respondents gave their opinion. The results show that like in our research the most influential information resources are Internet sites and platforms (85%) and recommendations from friends and relatives (63,7%). This survey doesn't analyze the opinion of the representatives of different generations because it is very limited as participants but shows significant differences considering the opinion of friends and relatives as motivating factors that is the top information source for all participants in our study never mind the generation they belong. The reasons could be the different types of tourism (culture and heritage based experiential tourism vs. leisure tourism), but also the socio demographic profile of the respondents, because the younger the generation is the smaller the difference between the influence of the top information sources is.

CONCLUSION

The generations differ from each other in their travel preferences, behaviour, expectations. However, some similarities are observed between them. It is noteworthy that most respondents, regardless of the generation they belong to, have visited more summer seaside resorts than mountain winter resorts in the last five years. Some common characteristics are also observed in terms of reasons not to travel. The most popular are lack of financial resources, lack of enough free time and family reasons. As expected, the older generations, who rely primarily on their pension income, identify the lack of financial resources as the main obstacle to realizing domestic leisure tourism. Among the younger generations (X, Y and Z) there is a mixture of not enough free time and not enough funds. When select a domestic leisure tourism destination all generations trust most the opinion of friends and relatives, but the younger generations take in mind specialized online platforms and Internet sites and the oldest look for advertisement in electronic media. About the travel frequency for domestic leisure tourism in Bulgaria the generational analysis shows that the youngest generations (Y and Z) travel much more that the Builders. Regarding the winter resort stays, the generations don't show big differences. Only the stay of the Builders is much longer than the stay of the others. Regarding the summer seaside resort visits the Builders have the shortest stay. All generations show a similar degree of satisfaction with their stays in domestic leisure resorts. The satisfaction of the winter mountain resort is higher than this of the summer seaside visits.

There are several limitations and opportunities for future research. The advantage of the obtained results is based on the conducted nationally representative survey. A major limitation is, however, that no other large-scale studies were found to make an adequate comparison. On the other hand, research on this subject is being done for the first time in Bulgaria, and it is impossible to track and analyze trends in the preferences of different generations. There are also relatively few international

studies found in both business publications and academic literature that focus the audience's attention on domestic holiday tourism and look in detail at generational differences in winter and summer resorts. To a large extent, this is also due to the specifics of the available natural tourist resources in different countries. Moreover, the results of the present study, obtained by the use of a representative (random) sample, are in the form of statistical estimates. The latter are characterized by the fact that they are burdened with stochastic errors and could be "guaranteed" with certain confidence level, typically 95%.

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