

The Impact of Social Media on Vietnamese Generation Z's Decision Making in Travelling

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Abstract

Nowadays, social media have become an essential part of our lives and it especially affects Generation Z because they are the generation born and raised in the digital era. Moreover, social networks have greatly changed Gen Z's thinking, behavior, and decision-making based on posts, reviews, and influencers. However, the majority of recent research is only equipped with general evidence to analyze how powerful the influence of social media is, not from Gen Z's perspective, especially on their travel behavior. This research paper aims to investigate the influence of social networks on Vietnamese Generation Z's decision-making process in traveling. A qualitative approach and case study are used in this research to support the aim. A semi-structured interview based on the travel experiences of 8 Vietnamese Gen Z was held. The discussed finding has shown that social media enables the freedom and creation of Generation Z by providing various useful information about travel. Moreover, being independent in decisions in their life is a good advantage for young people while working and in the future. Furthermore, thanks to the usefulness of influencers, Generation Z believes in their post, reviews, and recommendations, which is the marketing strategy of some businesses. Lastly, the diversity of information is updated every day, so stakeholders need to pay certain attention to this demographic group to be able to come up with the most suitable options. In conclusion, social media does have a positive impact on Vietnamese Generation Z's decision-making in traveling.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background Information

According to Gorbato and Chuvatkin (2020), young people are beginning to consider travel as a vital part of their lives rather than just a momentary escape from reality. Being a notable development in this decade, social media has greatly altered people's both personal and professional lives (Dreher, 2014), the expansion of them and web 2.0 is constantly shifting the way individuals perceive destinations, which affects how they decide which product or service to purchase (Lagrosen and Grunden, 2014).

All generations have been impacted by the digital era. Generation Z got used to engaging in a society connected by tapping since they were raised in an environment where the Internet, social media, and mobile technologies were all available from the earliest stages (Francis & Hoefel, 2018 and Turner, 2015). By 2025, Generation Z will reach 2 billion members globally including nearly 15 million people in Vietnam, making up 25% of the working force, representing 15 million potential purchasers. Although Gen Z already has a consumer experience on social media, when the pandemic broke out, that experience boosted it even further. 220 million young travellers—those

between the ages of 18 and 27—who travelled in 2014 see social media as a source of travel inspiration (eMarketer, 2013; World Tourism Organization, 2014). Expedia Media Solutions (2017) showed statistics and information about the inclination and routines of Generation Z in terms of travelling.

Before making a final choice, they check recommendations, ratings, and comments on travel destinations via TripAdvisor. They agreed not only advertisements but also reward programs play an essential role in deciding.

Statista (2022) indicated that social media has taken on a vital position in people's lives, for instance, it's estimated that 75% of people in Viet Nam use social media daily. Regarding Internet users, Vietnam has been considered one of the fastest-growing countries with a very high percentage of young users (Bui, 2016).

A decision was described as the result of the process of making a choice or the conclusion after consideration (Mayor, 2011). According to the conventional theory of Edwards (1954) and Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944), the decision-making process is that humans gather and analyse information before choosing an ideal action to take from a variety of options (the "chosen set"). The conventional conceptual framework of consumer decision-making has been significantly impacted by the growth of technology and digital resources (Bassiouni and Hackley, 2014). Consequently, acknowledging the importance of social media on the decision-making process of Vietnamese Gen Zers, the research will conduct thoroughly on the influence and how it works. Based on consumer behaviour and destination marketing theories, this research paper will analyse and describe the impact of social networks on Vietnamese Gen Zers' decision-making process when travelling.

1.2 Rationale of the study

There has been much research conducted to explore the influence of social networks on the tourism industry. For instance, Kaur (2017) has discovered a completely novel way for digital marketing to understand the psychology of customers. Based on that, many agencies have reached the customer they want and at the same time know how to attract more customers. Statistics on digital resources have shown all popularity, user interaction, and transformation. Another example is Gen Zers influence their parents' holiday booking decisions significantly (Globetrender, 2018).

To contribute to this topic the author will explore the factors that influence the decision-making process of young Vietnamese people in travelling and how they impact their parent's decisions, marketing strategies of tourism boards within this study. Furthermore, this study contributes by

taking the perspective from an Asian culture, the Vietnamese Gen Z are the study subjects since they are the generation that utilise a variety of social networking sites which could be called the current trends impacting on all facets of life. As the country's future generation, Vietnamese young people's decisions play an essential role in the country's overall development. Hence this is the holistic subject for the study.

With the present study, businesses and companies especially marketing departments will understand and have an effective communication strategy to sell their travel products and services focusing on reaching Gen Zers - the potential customer, which develops the tourism industry. The academic stakeholders will have a better grasp of the various ways in which social networks impact the decision-making of Gen Z, particularly travelling. Consumer behaviours have evolved as a result of technological advancement, which makes society more convenient and smarter.

The study will be able to suggest to the travel industry a new way of discovering and experiencing travelling safely and correctly. Scholars of how Gen Z in Vietnam makes decisions regarding travel based on the effects of social networks will be broadened by this study. Individuals working in the Vietnam tourism industry should read this article to learn new strategies for approaching potential clients in tourism development. With many theories and models mentioned in this research, the study will go through the decision-making process of Gen Z and provide information about social media's influence on them, especially in terms of tourism.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research paper is to investigate the influence of social networks on Vietnamese Generation Z's decision-making process in travelling:

- To identify factors of how social media play an important role in life context for the Vietnamese Generation Z.
- To evaluate Vietnamese generation Z's perception on travel based on social media content.
- To analyse the process of decision-making on Vietnamese Generation Z in travel.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Generation Z

According to Armstrong and Kotler in 2017, Gen Zers are individuals who were born after 2000, while some describe them as being born between 1996 and 2010 (Monaco, 2018).

In comparison to previous generations, Generation Z, the newest generation, believes itself to be more welcoming and open-minded, the majority of them are in agreement with political movements including feminism, transgender rights, and Black Lives Matter. This generation is at the forefront of accessing and completely living with technology so they are well-versed in technology. By 2025, Generation Z will be the majority of the workforce so it is crucial for hospitality and tourism businesses to thoroughly analyse this growing market group to make sure they will be able to appropriately adapt to its attitudes and needs. To promote, entrepreneurs need to recognize the significant behavioural variations among traveller generations (Turen, 2015). Cobe (2016) stated that Gen Zers have less attention than previous generations so the best marketing campaign for them depends on short, attentive, and fastly imparting information from digital sources (Fuggle, 2017). McBride (2016) stated that Gen Zers pay high attention to the environment so that businesses could take advantage of that to market their product and services. Coming out of the war, Vietnam is entering a period of innovation, in which there is an intersection between the old and the new, there is international integration, there is the interference of foreign culture. Consequently, these young generations will become global citizens. As a result of the exposure to international values and ideologies, Vietnamese Generation Z have changed their mindset: they prioritise independence and financial stability, which is totally in contrast to those of the previous generation. Since 1995, when the internet was first available in Vietnam, Facebook was introduced in 2004, YouTube went live in 2005, and the Vietnamese Gen Zers have matured with these advanced technologies. According to Kemp (2024), there are more than 72 million social media users in Vietnam, representing 73.3 percent of its population. They have just integrated into the world community, a universal trend by interacting with new cultures on social networks, but they still keep their own national cultural identity to always follow (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020). According to Kuermayr and Le (2023), 13 million Gen Zers account for 19% of the population in Vietnam. Being one-third of the labour force by 2025, during the golden period, generation Z in Vietnam will contribute significantly to the development of the country. According to Nielsen's 2018 report in Vietnam, there is an overwhelming desire among Generation Z to become involved in issues related to society: environment protection, authenticity and gender equality. They are always eager and enthusiastic to participate in social movements such as protecting the country's sovereignty, cleaning up the trash, and expressing

national pride through gratitude for historical and present victories, which is ubiquitously advertised on the Internet to become a meaningful campaign. Gen Zers see themselves as more open-minded to other lifestyles, they believe that everyone has their place in the online world. Generation Z grasped new technology so it took them less time to update the newest trend and adopt it than other generations (Giarla, 2019). Williams (2015) supported that Gen Zers are soon hot, soon cold. They obtain the information instantly and also lose their interest promptly. Furthermore, Gen Z is very keen on the trend of using digital and personalised travel experiences, such as user-generated content, social network platforms, online software, and mobile applications. Travel mobile applications are increasingly popular and widely used in Vietnam, which is a growing trend for the tourist market. To be successful in this target customer, the hospitality and tourism industry needs to make sure that its policies and techniques are suitable (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2023)

2.2 Social media

The globe is currently experiencing a social media paradigm, a special chapter in media and communications history driven by digital technology predominance (Burgess et al, 2017). Social media has become more and more ubiquitous in internet users' daily lives. According to the most recent statistics in 2022, shown in Figure 1, 4.59 billion people making up 59 percent which is more than half of the world's population will be using social media globally in 2022, a rise of 7.8% from the previous year (Statista, 2022) Wi-Fi availability, economical cell phones, and developing networking all contribute significantly to the global rise in social media activity. Young people are avid consumers of social media.

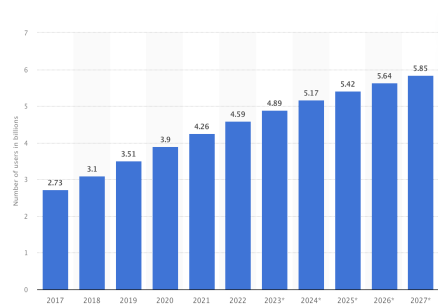


Figure 1: Global Social Media Users from 2017 to 2027 (Statista, 2022)

According to Accenture (2017), compared to Gen Y, Gen Zers were greatly impacted by social media. Three main reasons for them to make purchases are deals, reviews, and images. Nearly

40% of Gen Z from 18 to 23 agree that social media has the biggest impact on their purchase behaviour (Bhargava et al., 2020). Especially in the wake of the COVID-19 disease, digital platforms are becoming useful tools for communication, accessing, and imparting information (Cinelli et al., 2020). A daily average of 5 digital platforms, namely TikTok, X, Facebook, Instagram, and WeChat, are frequently used by young people, avid consumers of social media, who are also more likely than members of any other group to interact.

At the end of 1997, the Internet appeared and was commercialised in Vietnam. Over the next 15 years, the number of Vietnamese users increased explosively, especially young people (Bui, 2016). Social media, which always has two sides, may be very helpful when used as a tool for marketing that benefits both users and businesses, but it can also become a negative factor for competition when consumers make negative comments and reviews about competitors. Another example is in the virtual world, where travel companies have published pictures that are wildly off from the truth, leaving people very disappointed and misinformed, losing the trustworthiness of clients, leading to a lot of consequences that negatively impact the company, the nation's society, and economics. The frequent application that Generation Z uses is Instagram, Snapchat, and Youtube. According to Young (2018), their screen time per day (about 3 hours) is longer than other generations. Mitus (2021) showed that the average time for social media of Generation Z in the US is approximately 9 hours per day. Gen Z individuals using social media 16 to 20 hours a day or gaming can have a severe impact on physical and mental health. According to Perrin and Atske (2021) almost three-in-ten Americans are quite addicted to the Internet. Most 85% U.S citizens utilise the Internet everyday though this differs significantly by age. It is reported that college-educated individuals, higher-income and urban dwellers have more Internet usage than others. Gen Zers feel attracted the most to Youtube, and less engaged with Facebook and X. Hence antisocial tendencies are becoming more prevalent in Generation Z, and they have a severe memory retention issue. The linear design of social media applications forces their user to scroll endlessly, at which they have to reload the home page and scroll vertically all over again. They have to process too much information at the same time, hence Generation Z's attention span is shorter than the prior generation. Eight seconds was the average attention span of generation Z, which was four seconds less than that of the previous generation (Roberto, 2023). This outcome also resulted from rapid technological and social changes where everything is changing every minute and the younger generation has to adapt to them. Short-

term memory and concentration are dangerous consequences of social media addiction, obsession, and dependence among today's youth. Excessive use of social networks can cause self-delusion, cyberbullying, and antisocial behaviour (Mitus, 2021). On the other hand, interaction and relationships are always essential to healthy social development such as physical touch, and face-to-face conversation when it comes to the digital era. Generation Z may lose their precious time to experience the real world if they are immersed in virtual space. Besides the negative aspects, social media also contributes to changing the lives of Gen Z in an extremely positive and completely innovative direction. Thanks to social networks, young people can be completely independent and freely explore and discover the things they want to grow stronger. They learn how to develop themselves, build essential life skills, and build relationships and social networks.

2.3 The process of decision making

Making decisions is a vital skill (Mather, 2006). Consumers generally undergo a standard psychological state in deciding whether to purchase a service or a product. However, not every customer goes through each of these decision-making steps, some of them could be mental shortcuts (Heuristics decisions). According to Hoyer et al. (2012), decision-making is making a selection among options and activities, which includes the estimation of likelihood and judgement of goodness or badness.

The study of decision-making involves defining and selecting options by the decision-values maker's preferences. Making a decision means that there are other options to take into account. In this situation, people prefer to not only identify as many of these options as possible, but also to select the one that best matches our goals, wishes, values, and other criteria (Steuer and Harris, 1980). According to Baker et al. (2001), the decision-making process should commence with the clarification of the decision maker and stakeholder, lowering the possibility of disagreement on the problem, concern, and objectives. After travelling to a specific location, a traveller could then select what kind of experiences they would like to have while there.

A general concept of the destination decision process was created by Woodside and Lysonski in 1989, which acknowledged the key importance of perceptions and preferences. The concept, shown in Figure 2, contends that the vacation location is the result of a sequence of conscious and unconscious choices that develop from a state of destination perception, from which specific destination preference and trip intention are generated.

Figure 2: Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) consumer decision-making model (Engel et al., 1978).

When consumers need to buy something they seek information, for instance, by looking up on the Internet, asking family members, their friends, and travel agencies. After gathering enough information, they will start to assess each choice and choose among products and services. For instance, Armstrong and Kotler (2017) showed that some may ask advice from people around or review on the Internet, while others believe in themselves and independently make a decision. Next, they will give their final choice, which could be also relevant to the price, income, and quality of products. Finally, they have an evaluation and reflection after buying. From expectation to reality, they may be joyful or regretful. Wei (2016) agreed that before, during, and after making a decision, consumers always stick to an individual's preference and affection. According to Hoyer et al. (2012), the model of consumer behaviour includes 4 steps: problem recognition, research (internal and external), high or low-effort judgement, and outcome. The first step is problem recognition, which is the ideal state (where individuals want to be) and the actual state (where individuals are now). The actual state helps the customer demonstrate the problem and the ideal state solves the problem in research. As a part of the decision-making model, from problem and need recognition, purchasers will come to research about product or service. Coming to the next step, internal research, which is searching for information from memory, could be affected by confirmation bias, inhibition, and mood. External research relates to retailers, providers, social media, the Internet, and others. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2017), over 50% of Gen Zers in the US do research before purchasing or having their parents purchase. 82% of Generation Z research destinations they desire to go on websites, 76% of them ask the previous visitor, and 62% find that advertising is attractive to them to make decisions (Expedia Media Solutions, 2017). After doing research, users will be divided into two groups: high-effort judgement processes and low-effort judgement processes. High-effort judgement process results in the decision, the outcome. There are also two models: cognitive and affective decision-making. The cognitive decision-making model is based on the brain, when consumers combine information to reach a decision. The affective decision-making model is based on feelings and emotions, which results from consumers not doing so much research, sometimes rational based on personalities. Vietnamese Gen Z also go through stages in deciding when to travel, but there will also be differences in each person's personality and gender. After going through the decision process, depending on their personality, they will

review on social networks or share with people around them.

2.4 Conclusion

Currently, the tourism industry has become a rapidly growing industry bringing a lot of profits to help develop the country and society in all aspects. Therefore, research to develop this service industry has become more necessary than ever. Social media over the years has evolved and it is more and more ubiquitous in all facets of life. Meanwhile, it was known that many authors conducted research on the influence of social media on perception, especially among young people. Generation Z, shaped by new digital eras and trends, possesses distinctive characteristics that will significantly alter the tourism industry. New initiatives and campaigns in the tourism industry are greatly influenced by technological improvements. If digital sources are used wisely, the business may be very advantageous for marketing and promotion. As social media has become globally spread and the majority uses it, the privacy of personal information is a quite big issue to be concerned about (Okazaki and Taylor, 2013).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research design

According to MacDonald and Headlam (2014), following two approaches to conducting research are essential in social science research: quantitative and qualitative. Induction (the collection of qualitative data) and deduction (the collection of quantitative data) are the two crucial approaches used in research.

Given the aims and objectives of this paper, the researcher has decided to use the interpretivist paradigm and the inductive (or qualitative) approach. The justification for these decisions are best documented by the nature of the data needed for the aim of this study and the description of data offered by Creswell (2014) and Pathak et al. (2013), as they elaborate by saying that it is holistic to choose qualitative research, a technique of perceiving societal or human phenomena.

There are four typical qualitative designs: case study, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative inquiry, which is connected to particular kinds of data gathering and analysis. The researcher has decided to use case study as an approach to reach the aim of the study. Case studies thoroughly investigate the context and facts relevant to the case using a variety of data sources. The case study approach gives the researcher total control over the surrounding circumstances, allowing them to focus on the issue at hand (Yin, 2003).

3.2 Sampling

In contrast to statistical generalisations, which are used in quantitative samples and are applied to wider populations based on statistical samples, qualitative samples are intended to enable analytic generalisations (applied to wider theory on the basis of selected cases with general constructs) (Curtis et al., 2000). In terms of case study, Stake (1995) showed that sampling applied to selecting case and data sources will help readers have full insight into the case. According to Patton (2014), purposive sampling is especially suitable for qualitative research. The definition of purposeful sampling from Yin (2011) is selecting participants and sources of data based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information used in research questions. Setting persons or data are selected on purpose in order to have access to essential information, which is called purposive (judgmental) sampling by Maxwell (1996). The study is based on the experiences of Vietnamese Generation Z, hence 8 young people will be interviewed. They are Gen Z who consider social media as a part of their lives and travel to many places domestically and internationally. Duong (2019) claims that Vietnamese consumers have spent \$3.491 billion on travel and leisure thanks to social media and e-commerce. It is obvious that social media and travelling have a remarkable influence on people in Vietnam. Vietnamese people who were born from 1995 to 2007, using at least 3 social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Youtube, etc and having passion about travelling will be included in the interview. Through interviews, they will offer different perspectives to help the researcher achieve the aim of the study.

3.3 Data Collection

Utilising qualitative methods in the form of in-depth interviews is advised in order to examine how social media influences visitors' perceptions (Hennink et al., 2020). Additionally, in-depth interviews conducted independently are believed to be the best method for qualitative research when seeking for sensitive information that might not be brought up during group discussions (Longhurst, 2009). The participant will be informed that the information they provide will be recorded and utilised for the purpose of this research before they agree to the interview. Based on the study's intent, the current research will be arranged as in-depth interviews that will be conducted face-to-face. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher will lead them through each question and have some control over the interview participants. Although semi-structured interviews resemble conversational discussions, they are intended to achieve a certain objective and require a particular methodology and style. It

is carried out in accordance with an interview guideline that emphasises particular subjects and could have examples of inquiries (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is driven by the evaluation goals, which specify the areas and subjects to be explored. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed word-for-word. To protect participants' confidentiality, any personal information will be anonymized. The transcripts will then be coded based on categories aligned with the research objectives. The researcher proposes to utilise the following three coding techniques according to Saldana (2013).

Following the coding phase, the author will perform a thematic analysis. As per DeSantis and Noel Ugarriza (2000), thematic analysis is a process designed to identify specific patterns within conducted interviews, which provides an objective view and allows for in-depth exploration of data, often through semi-structured interviews. By identifying common themes or consensus among participants, researchers can obtain accurate data based on shared talking points, opinions, and statements. In summary, the author will conduct a report that aligns with the research question and fulfils the objectives.

3.5 Trustworthiness

The level of confidence in data, interpretation, and practices employed to ensure research quality is denoted as a study's trustworthiness or rigour (Carter et al., 2014). Consequently, three strategies will be utilised to fulfil the trustworthiness requirement: audit trails, member checking, and triangulation. Audit trails, as per Lynne (2016), involve a comprehensive method to validate that results are grounded in participants' narratives, transparently documenting data acquisition and evaluation processes. Audit trail could be seen as a diary which has all decisions researcher has made such as changing coding technique, changing number of interviewee and questions. Member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a method to assess result trustworthiness (Lynne, 2016). Participants review data or outcomes for accuracy and relevance to their own experiences. Overall, the author contends that adopting these three techniques can address multiple aspects, thereby enhancing the article's coherence and ethical standing.

3.6 Ethical Issues

In a research paper, there are essential ethical principles, which are related to moral and virtuous decisions from people. According to Newton (2010) semi-structured interviews let interviewees express their personal thoughts and feelings. In this case, trust and respect are essential due to the uniqueness perspective of each person. Participants have to sign up the consent form and become aware that the interviews are recorded.

However, bias still exists and shows itself at every level of the research process, impacting the validity and reliability of the study. In order to achieve this study's aims and reduce author bias, the author continuously asks the right questions during interviews and backs up with additional comments. The researcher has to prevent gathering harmful information by adhering to the interview protocol's set of questions, which is safe for both participants and author (Creswell, 2014). In reality, the interviewer may be at risk of dangerous information from participants, but the author must maintain and comply with the planned question list to ensure the protection of both of them. Inference may be not correct but the researcher must be loyal to coding, transcribing, and text have done word by word. It's also important to make sure that participants fully comprehend the study's items and read examples of extracts of the transcription as well as the researcher data coding procedure in a way that takes into account participant contribution.

3.7 Limitations

According to Connelly (2013), it is crucial to emphasise limitations in any research study, as they represent shortcomings such as insufficient resources, a restricted sample size, or flawed methodology. Consequently, authors should explicitly acknowledge research limitations, elucidate their importance, describe how they were addressed, and suggest potential avenues for future resolution (Price and Murnan, 2004). To begin with, the author's focus of study is the influence of social media, especially the ones that keep popping up when scrolling, however it is very hard to differentiate between the frequency since there is a possibility of people using social media in different ways. Limitation that a qualitative study may bring is the narrow frame of results because of limited number of responses (small sample size) or the lack of generalizability cannot transport the findings to other similar contexts.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will mainly be a social media has significantly become a powerful tool helping generation Z to be proactive, independent in making decisions in their life. Since the exposure of social media has been growing and expanding in all aspect of life, it has brought many advantages for Generation Z to look up the information and have their own decision. However, there were not many researches done from the perspective of Gen Zers or negative side of social media. Therefore, the author will be discussing the assumed outcomes of each objective created in this paper thought critically investigating and evaluating the existing findings gathered in the literature review and the empirical research.

4.2 To identify factors of how social media play an important role in life context for the Vietnamese Generation Z.

Due to the fact that more than half of the world's dwellers use social media (Statista, 2022), it is inevitable that social networks will affect every aspect of human life. About 73 percent of the Vietnamese population use social media, especially Generation Z (Kemp, 2024). The interaction among people is essential. People may connect with each other irrespective of geography to maintain relationships, forge new connections, engage in communities and broaden their world view. They may share and discuss where they go, what they do, who they meet on all platforms. According to Bui (2016), the Internet was brought out 30 years ago to Vietnam. Before that time, people did not have full access to the endless source of knowledge. For now, they can take advantage of social media by learning from that. These arguments suggest that Vietnamese Gen Z may share all information, tricks and consumption about their life on social media and apply these into their life. Social media is an enormous informational resource that provides access to news, trends, and expertise on a wide range of subjects from entertainment and lifestyle content to educational resources and current events. Meola in 2023 stated that people who were raised in the novel technology era and social media may result in some stereotypes such as tech-addicted, anti-social and social justice warriors. Gen Z in Vietnam may demand authenticity and freedom, which influences more sophisticated and informed travel decisions or behaviour of them. Social media sites offer a space for young individuals to creatively and genuinely share their thoughts, which is called user-generated content. By using posts, pictures, videos, and stories, they can highlight their hobbies, skills, and life events, developing their online presence and crafting virtual personas. Therefore, the contemporary younger generation exhibits remarkable creativity and self-reliance.

They innovate and introduce ideas that have never been seen in prior generations. Gen Z creates a sense of community and connection by sharing information, and promotes a culture of shared experiences. They may decide by themselves where they go, what activities they do when they travel. These individuals demonstrate independence and a pioneering spirit in their pursuit of discovering and establishing novel directions for their personal development: pathing career or making life choices. Vietnamese Generation Z cultivates valuable skills by independently seeking information about travel destinations, including routes, activities, and preparation, which build Moreover, Gen Z being able to freely share information is also a way to help hospitality businesses proactively collect information, feedback and take care of customers more thoroughly. Social media enables hospitality businesses to directly engage with guests, responding to their inquiries and resolving issues promptly, which builds a community feeling and fosters loyalty among guests.

4.3 To evaluate Vietnamese generation Z's perception on travel based on social media content.

Whereas earlier generations depended on travel agencies, brochures, word-of-mouth, Vietnamese Generation Z is influenced by captivating imagery and narratives spread by friends, celebrities, and influencers. Choosing tourist destinations based on social networks, more specifically, visually appealing images of landscapes, people and culture, has also become very ubiquitous nowadays. Thanks to social networks, travelling has also become easier for tourists and easier for travel businesses in the field. Information about destinations, cultures, landscapes and people are provided fully and in detail through social networks, where many users can easily access anytime, anywhere. From that useful information, they will easily make decisions and choose to plan their trip. Due to excessive exposure to social media, they may experience FOMO (fear of missing out). These arguments show that they want to immerse themselves in the latest trending event or location, which lead to some impulsive decisions. Generation Z have tension to go to the destination where influencers just checkin. While the social media content can drive the highest expectation, they can still perceive if there is a difference between the virtual world and reality. According to Nielsen's 2018 report in Vietnam, environmental friendliness and authenticity are two issues concerned by Generation Z nowadays. It is expected that it may bring a sustainable tourism trend which could have a positive socio-cultural impact. Moreover, after collecting helpful travel information, Vietnamese Generation Z will create a bucket list or a plan about their trip. Each destination they researched has clear details about

its location, prices, people, culture and how to get great photos there.

The above elaborations lead to a number of challenges that are worth observing as a recommendation for attentiveness in the social media content policies and projection of expectations through social media. The audience looks at the influencer's photos and they feel like they are in that scene, enjoying everything. It can be a majestic and comfortable natural setting or it can be a crowded but extremely bustling city. Influencers who do not sell the product or service indirectly show the usefulness and enjoyment of that destination. They may change the image of the destination. Additionally, some people feel deceived when the actual photos and those on the internet do not match. Hence, generation Z generally trusts those who have credibility. While Gen Z share the information on social media, they may lose their inherent privacy, have pressure to contribute worthy content and make travelling no longer comfortable. Furthermore, social media makes them feel their experience is inadequate compared to those seen online, which result in the satisfaction and decreased enjoyment of travelling. Social media can also make a destination become overcrowded, losing its original beauty, leading to disappointment for travellers who have high expectations and excitement. Gen Z will perceive travelling as a fatigue.

4.4 To analyse the process of decision-making on Vietnamese Generation Z in travel.

Given the EKB model from Engel et al., (1978) there are five steps in the consumer decision-making model such as: needs identifying, information gathering, options assessing, final choice and decision reflecting. Recently, the model may be greatly impacted by social media, influencers, etc. From a alluring landscape photo, a compelling narrative shared on social media platforms, Generation Z are conscious about their desire of travelling to getaway or explore new places. They may gather inspiration, excitement, enthusiasm which lead to the faster decision-making process. Additionally, the latest trend and posted review induce the urgency to make decisions. Vietnamese young people tend to search for information about destinations from various platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram (visual search engines offer potential activities, accommodation) or Youtube (videos have in-depth reviews of the place). Social media is a powerful tool to assess all options by collecting comprehensive information. Armstrong and Kotler (2017) stated that young people may ask others around them. It is assumed that influencer posts, peer reviews, community discussion has been forming Gen Z perception and preferences. They may know what is suitable for them the

most: what is cheaper, what fits their vibes, where they want to go, how they enjoy themselves. Generation Z feel free when they can make decisions by themselves. While delve deeper into planning and assessing their choices, Gen Z may feel anxious and overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and options. Planning to have perfect choice can intensify this stress. In some cases, it is assumed that due to the convenience of social media and influencers' posts, Gen Z may skip the step in the decision-making process. They may believe in the effectiveness of social media and influencers so they directly choose what influencers did. After booking, they may feel a sense of satisfaction, think about the trip all day and have motivation to do their work. However, this can quickly turn to disappointment if the reality does not meet the expectations set by highly curated social media content. Lastly, having finished the trip, Generation Z may tend to have post-depression vacation. They may feel sad or empty, self-evaluate and draw lessons for their next trip. Therefore, establishments in the hospitality and tourism industry may take advantage of social media to tailor the marketing strategy for Gen Z. The management team can support user-generated content by providing them with useful services, product so they can promote it to even more people. Studying engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and the overall interaction rates with travel-related posts can provide insights into the preferences and interests of this demographic group.

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, through analyzing each objectives, there are various assumed outcomes that was concluded according to the existing research collected. Firstly, it can be assumed that social media enhance the quality of life for Generation Z by improving the independency and creation through various helpful information. Secondly, when looking at the travel experience, it was assumed that generation Z could meet the challenge of being FOMO (fear of missing out) or dissapointed when the actual image is not the same as online. Lastly, when assessing the effect of social media in the decision-making process model applied for Generation Z , it was assumed that Gen Z may skip some steps when they realize the usefulness and trustworthyness of review or recommendation from docial media.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Generation Z, who are formed by technology, adapted to the Internet and used it from birth (Buckingham and Willett, 2013). Gen Z will also

become people who play key roles in society, affecting the economy and development of the whole country, so their life decisions will be very important. Knowing the imperative of the influence of young people's decisions on each area of society will help individuals understand more about Gen Z, businesses will have specific target customers, and researchers will have a more comprehensive view of the society. The decision-making process is based on many factors, but for Gen Z, social media is a key factor influencing that process.

Through the discussion of literature review and empirical research mentioned in the paper, the author showed potential findings when applied to Vietnamese generation Z. Firstly, it was assumed that Generation Z may have freedom and improve their creativity when they design travel plans for themselves through social media. They understand themselves better through arranging and making decisions for their own lives because they know what they like and what suits them. Next, it is assumed that Gen Z may perceive the difference between online image and reality. Therefore, users in social media may respect the authenticity of images and content. Because of social media and influencers' posts, Gen Z may skip the step in their decision-making, place their trust in online reviews and immediately make booking decisions. Hence influencer or user-generated-content has played a crucial role in shaping travel intention. It is obviously seen that there has been a shift from traditional marketing to curated inspiration. From now on, it is important for people to keep updated with the latest trend to understand better the behaviour of Gen Z. The diversity of content on social media makes Gen Z understand themselves better by discovering the hidden gem within them.

The findings from this investigation will add to the increasing knowledge of research on how social media affects travel behaviour, specifically focusing on Generation Z in Vietnam, a developing country in Southeast Asia with a significant rate of social media penetration. The results will provide insightful guidance on navigating social media-driven trip planning for both tourists and the tourism industry not only in Vietnam but also other region . The results of the research will clearly show the thoughts and behaviours of Gen Z - an important group in society in Vietnam. Many scholars will be able to have a general and detailed view to understand this subjective better and then apply it to other aspects of life. Through an examination of Gen Z's travel planning behaviors in Vietnam, this research sets the stage for additional inquiries into the changing dynamics of travel in the digital era. Comprehending the social media behaviours of Generation Z may help the tourism industry in creating innovative approaches to improve the travel experience.

As this paper mostly focuses on the impact of social media on decision-making of Vietnamese Gen Z in travel, future research can have a deeper insight into the concept of truthfulness. This concept has changed the awareness and perspective of Generation Z. Moreover, the author would suggest analysing each platform: understanding how each platform operates in order to use it properly, and also helps readers and researchers in the marketing field have a strategy for attracting customers. Each platform as well as each individual has a different way of performing, leading to the author's next suggestion about expanding sample size. In this case study, 8 Vietnamese Generation Z were interviewed. Hence, selecting a bigger sample size may provide a comprehensive source of data from different individuals with distinct personalities. This could further provide an extensive view of society from the perspective of a young person today. Furthermore, Influencers have a certain position in the subconscious of Gen Z, future research articles can focus on how micro-influencers or celebrities have an impact on generation Z. Influencers may become respected people who give usefulness to gen Z or they can meet the challenge of being trustworthy and reliable. Thus, officials in government need to be careful about content policies or have laws about social media content, which avoid disappointment due to the difference between online and real life.

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