



# Rethinking millennials: how are they shaping the tourism industry?

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EDITORIAL



## Rethinking millennials: how are they shaping the tourism industry?

Generational cohorts that form shared values, preferences, and beliefs throughout their lifetime are likely to represent longstanding behaviors including consumption and travel patterns (Bernini & Cracolici, 2015). These different shared experiences that imply differences of educational attainment, social norms, and socio-economic environment make a cohort dissimilar from another. Recognizing the homogenous features within its own generational cohorts, previous literature in tourism has suggested the generations as a useful method to segment markets. At present, millennials are rapidly becoming the most important generational group for the global economy in general and tourism fields in particular (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010). According to the study conducted by Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (2000), generation can be categorized into four cohorts including (1) veteran generation (born between 1922 and 1943); (2) baby boomers (born between 1943 and 1960); (3) Generation X (born between 1960 and 1980); and (4) millennials (born between 1980 and 2000). Compared to other generations, millennials are familiar to smart technology (e.g. social media and mobile technology), facilitating for them to search information any time and any place, and make decisions as well as receptive to different cultures including languages (Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2010). Indeed, millennials are described as tech-savvy, optimistic, assertive, goal-oriented, and confident (Chen & Choi, 2008). Accordingly, those millennials are willing to understand and admit diversity comprising ethnicity, lifestyle, and cultures in a society and easily take the dissimilarity compared to other generation cohorts.

The evidence to demonstrate different values, attitudes, and behaviors of millennials in tourism is limited, as there does not exist substantial empirical support for managerial implications and suggestions. In contrast with other age-related market segments (e.g. baby boomers), little research has been conducted on how millennials are shaping tourism. With this realization, the purpose of this special issue in *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research (APJTR)* is to explore millennials about a variety of issues – such

as their travel behavior, career aspirations, generational characteristics, and market demands. Essentially, seven papers published in this special issue can be categorized into two focuses: (1) understanding the travel experiences of millennial travelers by collecting their response data and (2) comparing different travel behaviors/experiences between millennial and other generational travelers.

The paper entitled “Analysis of Korean millennials’ travel expenditure patterns: An almost ideal demand system approach” demonstrated different travel expenditure patterns across different generational cohorts, in terms of food, lodging, shopping, recreation, and transportation. More specifically, they analyzed Korean travelers’ behaviors by applying almost ideal demand system in order to estimate the joint effects of travel characteristics. The millennial generation allocates a smaller share of their travel budget to transportation, leaving more for lodging and shopping relative to the baby boomer generation. Generation Xers, however, assign a smaller share of their travel budget to transportation and spend more budgets on lodging, food, and recreation than the baby boomer generation does.

The paper entitled “Millennial ride-share passengers’ pro-sustainable behaviors: Norm activation perspective” examined how ride-sharing allows millennials to experience a destination. Employing norm activation theory, the study reveals that ride-sharing facilitates the activation of American college student travelers’ personal norms and pro-sustainable behaviors such as choosing locally produced products, experiencing local cultures, and supporting a destination’s environment. In addition, the findings indicate the mediating role of ride-sharing between travelers’ personal norms and pro-sustainable behaviors revealing that college students are more likely to behave sustainably when they interact with ride-sharing local drivers.

The paper entitled “Food tourists’ connectivity through the 5A journey and advocacy: Comparison between generations Y and X” investigated consumer decision-making process of food between generations

X and Y. Interestingly, this research applied 5A model of Marketing 4.0 comprising aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate. It is found that both generations showed the strongest social connectivity in the ask stage. Generation Y (millennial consumers) presented stronger social connectivity than Generation X, whereas there was no significant difference in channel connectivity. Within both generation X and Y, active netizens were more strongly engaged in sharing and positive/negative advocacy.

The paper entitled “A study on the hot spring leisure experience and happiness of generation X and generation Y in Taiwan” emphasized the meaning of leisure experiences comprising happiness and quality of friendship. Based on different beliefs and desires inducing different experiences between generation X and Y, this paper demonstrated dissimilar structures describing the relationships among leisure experiences, friendship, and happiness between different generation cohorts. More specifically, millennial travelers present a stronger relationship between leisure experiences and friendship than baby boomer travelers (generation X).

The paper entitled “The way of generation Y enjoying Jazz festival: A case of the Korea (Jarasum) music festival” analyzed event, in particular for music festival industry. Given the fact that festival covers significant proportion of the tourism industry, this paper identifies festive experiences of millennial travelers in terms of festival attributes including music quality, operation, and atmosphere. Millennial travelers presented that high qualities of music and operation and good atmosphere generate satisfaction with festival experiences and services.

The paper entitled “The influence of cultural familiarity on Tanzanian millennials’ perceptions of Korea: The mediating roles of involvement” estimated the influence of cultural familiarity on Korean cultural involvement and involvement with Korean celebrities, which ultimately travel behaviors such as attitude toward a country and word of mouth. This research investigated Tanzanian college students (potential millennial travelers) and asked their perceptions on Korea culture. The results reveal that Tanzanian millennials who have cultural familiarity are likely to have higher levels of Korean cultural involvement and involvement with Korean celebrities as well as positive attitude toward Korea.

The paper entitled “Enhancing visitor return rate of national museums: Application of data envelopment analysis to Korean millennials” investigated visitors’

return behaviors to national museums. It is argued that millennials are the most frequent visitors to cultural attractions including museums and concert halls and regarded as valuable loyal customers with a high lifetime value. Recognizing that a museum is one of the key travel attractions in contributing local income, this paper attempted to estimate the relationships between museum features (e.g. building area, curators, special exhibition, and operation costs) and millennials’ visiting behaviors.

In all, the seven articles presented in this special issue confirm that millennials are the most active component of the tourism and hospitality industry. The findings of each study also provide unique characteristics of millennials such as being more independent, traveling more environmentally friendly, seeking something new, and being more closely connected to their peers. We believe this special issue extends the frontier of the tourism literature on millennial travelers by providing meaningful managerial and theoretical implications.

The guest editors appreciate *all* of the authors who submitted papers to this special issue for their valuable works. We also appreciate the reviewers for the detailed, constructive comments and suggestions that have contributed to this special issue.

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