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Factors affecting travel decision: A study on urban Generation Z in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The motivation of travel decisions varies across generations indicating different demographic groups. The recent dominance of domestic tourism in Bangladesh is mainly evidenced by Generation Z population. However, factors affecting the travel decisions of this demographic group remain largely unnoticed. This study aims to explore the factors that affect the travel decisions of tourists (Generation Z) residing in urban areas in Bangladesh. In addressing the research aim, a quantitative research approach has been employed. Data were collected from 385 respondents using a questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. The collected data were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability, validity, regression analysis, and variance analysis. The findings reveal that the travel decision of urban generation Z in Bangladesh is greatly influenced by several factors, including the destination's natural beauty, safety and security, accommodation, transportation, and communication system, budget and time, local cuisine, attitude of local people, availability of touristic information, technology, guiding facilities, shopping facilities, climate, cultural, religious, and indoor activities, price of the products, cleanliness, parking facilities, medical and health care facilities, experience, word of mouth, quality of the supporting services, personal emotion, and expectation. This study is expected to help the tourism industry practitioners as well as policymakers in formulating strategies to attract Generation Z category tourists in Bangladesh by considering their decision-making factors.

Keywords: *Motivation, Travel Decisions, Generation Z, Tourism, Bangladesh.*

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry contributes significantly towards job creation as well as socioeconomic and cultural development around the world (McCabe & Qiao, 2020). For many developing countries, tourism is considered as a key driver of economic development. Representing the developing countries, Bangladesh has a lot of tourism capital to attract tourists, but unfortunately, the country fails to implement the advantage through proper exploration of its tourism potential (Muneem, Avi, & Haque, 2020); as a result, the contribution of this industry to the country's

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economy is very negligible. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2020) reported that the tourism industry in Bangladesh is mostly dependent on domestic tourists and thus the leading portion (97%) of tourism earnings comes from domestic tourism. Within this domestic tourist segment, young travelers (aged between 20 and 30) are the main contributors (Parvez & Kashem, 2018).

At present, in Bangladesh, the younger generation covers a fourth of the total population (Rahman, 2022). Therefore, it is evident that the present demographic structure of Bangladesh is likely to bring major changes in travel and tourism demand in the upcoming years. It is crucial for hospitality and tourism professionals to carefully examine this growing market to ensure that the industry is properly addressing to its preferences (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019). Hence, understanding the factors that influence Generation Z tourists and their travel decisions is important to determine how this will affect tourism in Bangladesh. A limited number of studies attempted to comprehend Gen Z travel preferences (Bradley, 2016; Fuggle, 2017; Jain, Vatsa, & Jagani, 2014), and research into the factors influencing the travel decisions of urban generation Z in Bangladesh remains unexplored. Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors that affect the travel decisions of tourists (Generation Z) residing in urban areas in Bangladesh. The principal objective of this research is to identify the factors affecting urban generation Z's travel decisions in Bangladesh. In addressing the principal objective, the study covers some specific objectives, including exploring the relationship between factors and overall urban Generation Z's travel decisions in Bangladesh and measuring the impact of each factor on their travel decisions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Travel decision

The process of thought and consideration leading to a conclusion is known as decision-making (Qlueck, 1977). It involves identifying and selecting from among potential solutions to a problem, following the needs of the situation (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). A travel decision in tourism is the process of purchasing all the components of a trip, from locating destination information to selecting the most appropriate products to preferences (Keeney, 1993). According to Schmoll (1977), "*travel decision consists of four phases e.g., tourism need, information gathering deliberation, decision and travel preparation; and each phase has its influences and consideration on travel decision making*". Hsu et al. (2009) argued that travel decision is swayed by both internal factors (e.g., desire for escape, rest, relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure, and social interaction) and external factors (e.g., the attractiveness of the destination including tangible resources, and tourist's perceptions and expectations). Similarly, Seyidov (2016) added that while travelling to different types of tourism destinations with numerous factors (e.g., attractions, available amenities, accessibility, image, price and human resources), the travel decision-making process is influenced by social, cultural, personal and psychological attributes.

2.2 Generation Z and factors influencing their travel decisions

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z, iGen, or centennials, is the demographic group born between 1997 and 2012 that succeeds Millennials and precedes Generation Alpha. This generation is perceived as the first to be digital natives having grown up with technology

(European Travel Commission, 2020; Hoque, 2018), and this tech-savvy generation cannot imagine life without the internet (Himi, 2021).

Growing up in an era of unprecedented awareness about human behavior, technology, personal health, and humanity's impact on the environment (European Travel Commission, 2020), this generation prefers to solicit feedback from others on social media while planning a trip (Altun, 2022). Dimitriou (2019) also added that they (Gen Z) seek good accommodation facilities, adequate parking facilities, medical & health care facilities, and support services through social and mobile applications when making new travel decisions. They also emphasize shopping facilities and local attitudes and also prefer experiencing different cultures (Altun, 2022). While travelling, this generation considers money and expects affordable and customized service, safety and security, upscale accommodation, good modes of transport, and locally produced food and drinks (European Travel Commission, 2020).

At this stage, based on the aforementioned works of literature, a conceptual framework has been developed which is presented in the following figure.

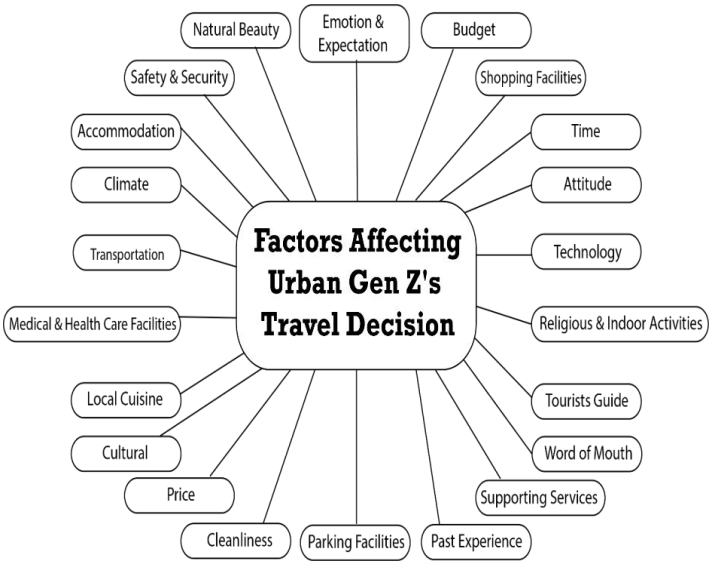

Figure 1. Factors affecting urban Gen Z's travel decision

The framework presents 21 variables (independent) which are natural beauty, safety and security, accommodation facility, transportation and communication system, local cuisine, budget, time, attitude of local people, availability of information and tourist guides, technology, shopping facilities, climate, cultural, religious and indoor activities, price of the products, cleanliness, parking facilities, medical and health care facilities, experience, word of mouth, quality of the supporting services, and personal emotion and expectation etc. that influences the travel decisions (dependent variable) of Gen Z. Using roman numerals, these variables are presented in the following tables (2 and 5).

2.3 Research hypothesis

Relying on the abovementioned factors, the following hypotheses are developed in conducting this study.

H_0: There is no significant relationship between the factors that have been identified and the overall travel decision of urban generation Z of Bangladesh.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between the factors that have been identified and the overall travel decision of urban generation Z of Bangladesh.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research method

In conducting this study, a quantitative research approach has been employed. The data collection method comprises both primary and secondary techniques. The primary data were collected utilizing an online questionnaire survey method; and several relevant articles, newspaper clippings, books, website materials, etc. were reviewed as a part of the secondary data collection technique. The target population of this study is Gen Z in urban areas in Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022), the total population of Bangladesh is 16,51,58,616; and 39% of this total population (6,44,11,860) live in urban areas amongst 35% constitutes Gen Z. Therefore, the target population is around 22,5,44,151. Utilizing a sample size calculator (N=22544151; Z=95% confidence level, P=0.5, and e=5%), the sample size was determined. The convenience sampling method was adopted in this study and respondents were asked through social media and email to fill up the questionnaire. The respondents of the sample frame were chosen irrespective of gender and education. Respondents below 18 years were excluded.

3.2 Reliability & Validity of Data

To check the internal consistency and stability of the scales used in this survey, Cronbach's alpha was used. According to Churchill (1979), Cronbach's alpha value of 0.60 or above is interpreted as acceptable. In this study, it is found that all the variables are reliable as the range is 0.863 which indicates a very good internal consistency among the variables (Nunnally, 1978). Besides, for measuring the validity of the data set, the Pearson R method has been followed in this study. In the table 2, the correlation which is significant at 0.01 level is flagged as (**) double star and the correlation which is significant at the level of 0.05 is flagged as (*) single star. The value of correlation ranges from +1 to -1. The correlation at +1 is positively perfect and the correlation at -1 is negatively perfect. In the correlation table 2, all the variables are interconnected and significant as they are flagged as double star (**) or single star (*). So, all the variables should be included while working with the population. The following tables (table 1 and 2) justifies the reliability and validity of the data used in this study.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
.863	21

Table 2: Correlation

	TD	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.	XII.	XIII.	XIV.	XV.	XVI.	XVII.	XVIII.	XIX.	XX.	XXI.
TD	1																					
I.	.532**																					
II.	.626**	.411**																				
III.	.630**	.493**	.543**																			
IV.	.452**	.179*	.265**	.328**																		
V.	.471**	.147	.356**	.258**	.220**																	
VI.	.383**	.255**	.163*	.308**	.277**	.204*																
VII.	.603**	.431**	.367**	.258**	.249**	.213*	.373**															
VIII.	.536**	.321**	.219**	.227**	.197*	.305**	.273**	.368**														
IX.	.413**	.193*	.295**	.393**	.211**	.135	.260**	.182*	.124													
X.	.309**	.089	.194*	.210**	.358**	.208*	.222**	.175**	.326**	.560**												
XI.	.065	.213**	.055	.289**	.039	.021	.175*	.254**	.186*	.238**	.211**											
XII.	.340**	.475**	.297**	.415**	.243**	.105	.345**	.339**	.428**	.367**	.329**	.312**										
XIII.	.702**	.335**	.536**	.504**	.377**	.315**	.283**	.262**	.120	.328**	.268**	.076	.282**									
XIV.	.191*	.003	.308**	.230**	.396**	.105	.118	.327**	.316**	.289**	.467**	0.037	.260**	.203*								
XV.	.192*	.067	.152	.198*	.234**	.026	.242**	.269**	.186*	.158	.095	.061	.262**	.183*	.217**							
XVI.	.343**	.237**	.215**	.431**	.266**	.190*	.293**	.149	.127	.290**	.089	.431**	.305**	.216**	.183*	.214**						
XVII.	.524**	.288**	.302**	.422**	.470**	.340**	.309**	.379**	.294**	.267**	.303**	.144	.231**	.535**	.212**	.097	.308**					
XVIII.	.442**	.400**	.439**	.340**	.304**	.302**	.142	.379**	.306**	.131	.152	.237**	.267**	.340**	.201*	.102	.259**	.335**				
XIX.	.312**	.312**	.136	.276**	.179*	.159	.165*	.204**	.311**	0.047	.044	.142	.222**	.248**	0.086	.051	.041	.122	.249**			
XX.	.415**	.268**	.387**	.313**	.270**	.222**	.260**	.353**	.271**	.239**	.269**	.254**	.335**	.319**	.264**	0.108	.184*	.313**	.395**	.102		
XXI.	.292**	.282**	.104	.252**	.257**	.112	.184*	.243**	.194*	.049	.107	.045	.306**	.204*	.098	.240**	.117	.043	.116	.205*	.123	1

4. Results and discussions

The following table 3 reveals that there exist strong relationships between the actual and predicted values of the outcome variable (R =. 817). The value of R square is .668 which shows that around 67% of the dependent variable is explained by the independent

variables. Adjusted R square indicates that 60.3% variance in travel decisions was explained by the model. According to Cohen (1988), this is a large effect and indicates a strong relationship.

Table 3: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.817a	.668	.603	.830

The ANOVA table (table 4) shows whether there is a statistically significant difference between means, and compares the p-value to the significance level to assess the null hypothesis. Here, the significance level (0.00) is lower than the p-value which reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between means and not all of the population means are equal and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	172.503	24	7.188	10.431	.000b
	Residual	86.137	125	.689		
	Total	258.640	149			

a=Dependent Variable (Travel Decision); **b=Predictors** (Constants)

Table 5 is presenting the coefficient value. The significance level determines whether the variables are important or not and whether there is a change in the dependent variables due to the independent variables. If the significance level is below 0.05 ($p<0.05$), then it is considered an important variable, and if the significance level is greater than 0.05 ($p>0.05$), then it is considered less important.

Table 5: Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.304	.603		.504	. 615
I.	.247	.101	.179	2.453	.016
II.	.158	.061	.191	2.603	.010
III.	.201	.078	.239	2.825	.006
IV.	.142	.071	.157	2.221	.038
V.	.089	.39	.096	2.282	.024
VI.	.236	.157	.163	2.507	.023
VII.	.193	.087	.129	2.258	.034
VIII.	.112	.084	.141	1.883	.044
IX.	.118	.050	.171	2.346	.021
X.	.221	.022	.146	1.787	.029
XI.	.139	.056	.144	2.473	.015
XII.	.182	.080	.168	2.453	.027
XIII.	.119	.046	.129	2.568	.011
XIV.	.133	.046	.146	2.902	.004
XV.	.108	.059	.145	1.824	.047
XVI.	.133	.063	.149	2.129	.035
XVII.	.079	.040	.081	1.984	.049
XVIII.	.163	.070	.157	2.322	.022
XIX.	.156	.064	.136	1.966	.049
XX.	.130	.057	.146	2.282	.024
XXI.	.131	.057	.154	2.299	.023

a. Dependent Variable: Travel Decision

From the table 5, it is well evident that all the predictors included in the study i.e., natural beauty (p=.016), safety and security (p=.010), accommodation facility (p=.006), transportation and communication system (p=.038), local cuisine (p=.024), budget (p=.023), time (p=.034), attitude of local people (p=.044), availability of information and tourist guides (p=.021), technology (p=.029), shopping facilities (p=.015), climate (p=.027), cultural, religious and indoor activities (p=.011), price of the products (p=.004), cleanliness (p=.047), parking facilities (p=.035), medical and health care facilities (p=.049), past experience (p=.022), word of mouth (p=.049), quality of the supporting services (p=.024), and personal emotion and expectation (p=.023) significantly and positively influence the travel decision of the Gen Z. The beta weight value indicates that the accommodation facility of the destination is the highest contributor followed by destinations' safety and security, and natural beauty. Therefore, this research rejects the null hypothesis.

The findings confirm that the development and assurance of the aforementioned variables at any tourism destination in Bangladesh can easily attract the Gen Z category tourists in particular those who live in the urban areas. As Gen Z shares the maximum portion of domestic tourists in Bangladesh, so it is very crucial to consider the preferences they seek for making a travel decision. The key policymakers of the tourism industry in Bangladesh i.e., the tourism ministry, tourism corporation, and tourism board etc. may emphasize these variables while policymaking and planning. Besides, destination owners or managers may focus on these variables to attract more tourists from this category.

5. Conclusion

Urban generation Z constitutes the largest portion of domestic tourists in Bangladesh, as a result, this generation contributes the most to the tourism industry as well as to the economy of Bangladesh. Therefore, it is significant to know which factors influence their travel decisions. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the factors that influence travel decision or destination selection of Gen Z tourists from the urban areas in Bangladesh. Based on the existing literature relevant to this study, a framework was developed comprising 21 variables which were statistically tested later. The variables are natural beauty, safety and security, accommodation facility, transportation and communication system, local cuisine, budget, time, attitude of the locals, availability of tourist guides, technology, shopping facilities, climate, cultural, religious and indoor activities, price of the products, cleanliness, parking facilities, adequacy of medical and health care facilities, experience, word of mouth, quality of the supporting services, personal emotion and expectation.

The study findings reveal that all these variables significantly influence Gen Z tourists in making their travel decisions. In particular, this category of tourist is very concerned about the accommodation facility of the destination, the destination's safety and security, and natural beauty. This paper endorses that the aforementioned variables should be emphasized and considered by the industry practitioners (e.g., tour operators, travel

agents, accommodation provider, etc.) and key policymakers of the tourism industry. Inclusion of these factors will help to shape the tourism product and service offerings in such a way that eventually provides a leverage to destination owners or managers in attracting and satisfying tourists from this promising demographic segment.

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