

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN TOURISM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Karolina Perčić*, Nada Spasić

Modern Business School, Belgrade, Serbia

Abstract

The subject of this paper is the behaviour of consumers in relation to travel planning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this paper is to examine and understand the behaviour of travellers during the pandemic. Theoretically, the paper relies on the results of previous research on the impact of health crises on tourism and consumer behaviour. The specificity of this work is reflected in the respondents, belonging to Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z, which took part in this empirical research. This paper examines the respondents' intentions in planning a vacation during the pandemic, as well as the degree to which fear affects travel planning abroad. The results of this empirical research, conducted in the Republic of Serbia in May 2021, prove that a significant percentage of Generation Y and Generation Z travelled during the pandemic, prior to May 2021 (25% abroad, 56% in Serbia), and that they plan to travel both in Serbia (64%) and abroad (74%) in the near future.

Key words: consumers, travel, pandemic, Generation Y, Generation Z

ПОНАШАЊЕ ПОТРОШАЧА У ТУРИЗМУ ТОКОМ COVID-19 ПАНДЕМИЈЕ

Апстракт

Предмет рада је понашање потрошача приликом планирања путовања током COVID-19 пандемије. Циљ рада је да се испита и разуме понашање путника током пандемије. Рад се теоријски ослања на резултате досадашњих истраживања утицаја здравствене кризе на туризам и на понашање потрошача. Специфичност рада огледа се у емпијском истраживању које се односи на испитанике генерације Y (миленијалце) и генерације Z. Испитане су њихове намере у планирању путовања током пандемије, као и колико страх утиче на планирање путовања у иностранство. Емпијско истраживање, спроведено у Републици Србији током маја 2021. године, доказује да је значајан проценат генерација Y и Z путовао током пандемије, све до маја 2021. године (25% у иностранство, 56% унутар Србије), те и да припадници обе

* Corresponding author: Karolina Perčić, Modern Business School, Terazije 27, 4th floor
11000 Belgrade, Serbia, karolina.percic@mbs.edu.rs

генерације у блиској будућности планирају путовања и унутар Србије (64%) и у иностранство (74%).

Кључне речи: потрошачи, путовање, пандемија, генерација Y, генерација Z

INTRODUCTION

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy have shown that non-economic and non-financial factors can have very significant economic and financial effects on a global level, and that they can appear as triggers for the onset of an economic recession (Praščević, 2020, p. 20). Perčić and Mamula Nikolić (2020) note:

In the midst of the health crisis, the economic crisis is inevitable, so the trends regarding savings and reduction of consumption are evident in the world, and in Serbia, to a significant extent.

(Perčić & Mamula Nikolić, 2020, p. 89)

When it comes to crises that affect tourism, we can define them as an unexpected event which can affect the traveller's confidence in the destination, and which interferes with the possibility of normal business operations (Milićević & Ervaćanin, 2016, p. 54). The conditions in which tourism takes place today impose the need to prepare adequate responses even to unexpected events, which requires solidarity, flexibility and expertise. Crises within the tourism and hospitality industry must be handled with particular care for a number of reasons. The majority of the industry relies on the consumers' discretionary expenditure (Gatsou, Gray & Niininen, 2005). This means that organisations within the industry are particularly sensitive to ill-will, since the purchase of the product, or service, is not fundamentally important to the consumers, and they can (relatively) easily go without (Gatsou et al., 2005).

The subject of this paper is consumer behaviour in relation to travel planning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The aim of this paper* is to examine and understand the behaviour of travellers during the pandemic. The conducted desk and field research contributes to our understanding of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer behaviour in the world and in Serbia. Special emphasis is placed on travel planning during the pandemic, which may provide useful information to organisations within the tourism and hospitality industry for formulating new marketing strategies. The specificity of this paper is reflected in the respondents, belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z, which took part in this empirical research.

THE IMPACT OF HEALTH CRISES ON TOURISM

The impact of health crises on domestic and international tourism attracts the attention of researchers from various scientific fields. Several serious crises, such as the H1N1 epidemic, the SARS epidemic, the Ebola virus epidemic which affected the African continent (Milićević & Ervaćanin, 2016, p. 52), and the COVID-19 pandemic, have affected the development of tourism in the world. Epidemics and pandemics have negative effects on the tourism and hospitality industry (Abrantes, Abrantes, Silva, Reis & Seabra, 2021; Güliz Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020; Kovačević, Pindžo & Zečević, 2020; Mulder, 2020; Shapoval et al., 2021), because they reduce international travel and air traffic, and cause the cancellation of accommodation reservations and sports, entertainment and cultural events. These events are often accompanied by huge losses and a general decline in activity.

COVID-19 landed numerous airline fleets and closed hotels around the world. The sharp decline in global travel led to a decline in the aviation industry's financial performances. The year 2020 ended with commercial airlines' passenger revenue amounting to 189 billion USD. This reflected a significant decrease in comparison with the 581 billion USD reported before the pandemic (Mazareanu, 2021b). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in 2020, the number of scheduled passengers boarded by the global airline industry dropped to just over 1.7 billion people, which represents a 61% decline in global air passenger traffic (Mazareanu, 2021a). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotel industry suffered great losses in 2020. In May 2020, hotels in Europe reported an occupancy rate of 13%, which reflected a dramatic 82% decrease in comparison with the occupancy rate reported the previous year (Lock, 2021a).

According to a report by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2021), the global tourism sector lost 1,300 billion USD in 2020 as a result of the restrictions placed on movement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This figure represents a loss more than 11 times greater than the loss recorded during the World Economic Crisis in 2009. Also, compared to the turnover in 2019, the turnover of tourists in the world fell by 74% in 2020. In contrast with the same period in 2020, the number of international tourist arrivals decreased, on average, by 85% in the period between January and May 2021. Asia and the Pacific (-95%), Europe (-85%), the Middle East (-83%), Africa (-81%) and the Americas (-72%) suffered the most from the decrease in the number of international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2021). The region predicted to suffer the highest decline in revenue from travel and tourism was Europe, which was to report a revenue of roughly 124 billion USD in 2020, compared to the 211.97 billion USD reported in 2019 to (Lock, 2021d).

*THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR*

Research on the impact of the pandemic on consumer behaviour in the world and in Serbia shows how much consumer behaviour has changed under the influence of COVID-19, and the uncertainty, fear of infection and the various restrictions related to the pandemic. These changes in consumer behaviour likewise refer to consumer travel plans. Shamshiripour, Rahimi, Shabanpour and Mohammadian (2020) noted the consumers' tendency to avoid further travelling, especially by plane, and Turnšek, Brumen, Rangus, Gorenak, Mekinc and Štuhec (2020) noted that consumers who travelled more often before the pandemic showed the least tendency towards avoiding travel during the pandemic. The number of global air passengers decreased drastically in 2020 – over 4.5 billion passengers travelled globally before the pandemic, and roughly 1.76 billion people opted to travel after the virus began to spread. Individuals also reported that price and the declared aircraft cleaning policies were the factors wielding the most influence on their decision (not) to travel in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Mazareanu, 2021b).

Travellers became more aware of the need to avoid health risks when travelling. According to a global survey from July 2020 (Lock, 2021c), 81% of respondents from India and 65% of respondents from the USA stated that they believe accommodations should use advanced technologies to make them feel safer. Additionally, over half of the guests staying in hotels stated that they would prefer to check in/out via a hotel app, rather than risk doing so in person. Meanwhile, 30% preferred to use a website, and only 8% of the respondents preferred using a public kiosk (Lock, 2021b).

With global travel restrictions still in effect, many travellers are looking for getaway destinations closer to home, and that is unlikely to change anytime soon. The intent to travel domestically continues to rise, especially in Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, and the UK (Abdelkawi & Giorgini, 2021). In general, during the summer of 2020, many tourist facilities depended on domestic tourists, and the tourists, on the other hand, were more or less 'forced' to discover or rediscover the beauties of their country. One of the ways to encourage domestic tourism during a pandemic is to promote the increasingly sought-after camping tourism (especially luxury camping) (Sommer, 2020).

During July 2020 (Donovan, 2021), Booking.com conducted a survey in 28 countries. The results of the survey show that travellers around the world (53%) expressed a desire to explore the world in a more sustainable way, and to become more environmentally oriented. According to this research, 63% of tourists intended to avoid crowded tourist attractions, 51% intended to avoid travelling during the season, and 48% intended to visit alternative destinations so as to prevent overcrowding. Ac-

According to the survey conducted by Booking.com in March 2021, which spanned 30 countries, 68% of travellers wanted the money they spend on travel to go to the local community, and 84% planned to reduce their waste and recycle plastic products during travelling (Donovan, 2021).

Millennials and Generation Z are the most important generations for the economy. The number of Millennials in the total population ranges from 20% in Europe to 24% in Asia (MSCI, 2020). According to View from ILTM, Millennials are more likely “to be conflated with their younger Gen Z counterparts, with the assumption being that their financial power is limited“ (View from ILTM, 2020).

According to Expedia Group (2021), Gasdia and Jackson (2020), GlobalData (2020), and View from ILTM (2020), young travellers are vital to the recovery of the tourism sector. Generation Y and Generation Z travellers are the most likely to go on international trips once the restrictions are lifted. Millennials are willing to take more risks, and plan to travel sooner than other generations (Kavanagh, 2020). The respondents of a study about the behaviour of young generations in the COVID-19 context (Seabra, AlAshry, Çınar, Raja, Reis & Sadiq, 2021) agreed that the pandemic has had a strong impact on their daily lives, and a majority of them revealed that they are afraid they might catch the virus as tourists (85%). Half of the respondents agreed that many aspects of their lives would undergo a number of modifications, all of which would affect their lives and routines, and their travel and vacation plans, due to their fear of the virus.

According to the research of Stojanović and Vukov (2020), young people in Serbia, aged 15 through 30, felt threatened during the state of emergency. Curiously, this feeling was expressed more frequently by people with a higher level of education. More than half of the young people who participated in the research (52%) expressed concerns about uncertainty. One third of them were afraid that they would lose their jobs during the state of emergency. The income of 42% of young people declined during the state of emergency, and the income of 32% of the respondents declined after the state of emergency. When it comes to tourism, the respondents of another research in Serbia, conducted by Lazarević and Marinković (2021), reported a significant change in their habits in relation to the use of public transport and travel abroad. In other words, as opposed to their tendencies during the period leading up to the pandemic, the respondents showed a tendency to avoid public transport, and a tendency to spend vacations in their country during the pandemic.

The study “Index of changes in consumer habits”, conducted by the EY in Serbia in December 2020 (EY, 2021), showed that 41% of respondents believe that their fear of COVID-19 will cease to affect their lives in approximately two years. However, there are those who claim that the fear of the pandemic will disappear in three to five years. According to the same EY survey, out of the 1,000 respondents from Serbia,

64% agreed that their lifestyle had changed significantly compared to the period before the pandemic, and 60% expressed the belief that they are coping well with the pandemic and are not overly optimistic about returning to normal. Additionally, 69% of the respondents expressed care about the Serbian economy, and 59% claimed that they were trying to save more. As 34% of respondents from Serbia believe that the way they travel will change in the future, almost half of the people in this group (46%) agreed they should take precautions, such as wearing masks, during travelling. A slightly higher percentage of global respondents expressed the same attitude (50%). Furthermore, 44% of respondents who believe that their travels will change in the long run expect to spend less on travel than they did before. With pessimistic views on future travel, 41% of respondents who predict changes in travel habits think that they will spend less time in other countries, and 31% plan to permanently replace international plans with local ones, and to drive to their destinations rather than use airplanes. According to the comparison of the results of the EY surveys conducted in Serbia and globally, consumer expectations, essentially, do not differ much around the world. In February 2021, EY conducted another global survey on the same topic. This survey showed that the level of optimism expressed by the respondents has decreased, so that only 27% of global respondents expressed the opinion that their fear of the virus will stop affecting their lives after a year or two (EY, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Survey research was conducted in written form, via questionnaire. The online questionnaire was designed specifically for the purpose of this research and was distributed to respondents aged 20 through 40 (to members of Generation Z and Generation Y), in the period between 9 May and 21 May 2021. Respondents from all regions of Serbia were included. Consumer intentions in relation to travel plans during the pandemic were examined.

The sample is stratified and consists of 300 respondents – 150 respondents belonging to Generation Z (aged 20 through 26), and 150 respondents belonging to Generation Y, or the Millennial generation (aged 27 through 40). The responses of older members of Generation Z, who can make travel decisions and travel independently, were taken into account. The respondents comprising the sample differed in gender (50% of respondents are male, 50% are female), employment status (36% of respondents are students, 51% are employed and 13% are unemployed), and level of monthly income during the pandemic (20% of respondents reported a below average income, 69% reported an average income and 11% reported their income to be above average). The statistical error of the sample is 5.6%.

SPSS was used for data processing and analysis, and for the interpretation of the obtained research results. The following quantitative statistical methods were used: descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) and comparative statistics (Pearson's χ^2 -test, t-test, ANOVA test, regression and correlation). Some questions in the questionnaire were formulated in the form of a five-point Likert scale.

Based on the review of the existing literature on this topic (Abdelkawi & Giorgini, 2021; Donovan, 2021; EY, 2021; Lazarević & Marinković, 2021; Seabra, AlAshry, Çınar, Raja, Reis & Sadiq, 2021; Sommer, 2020) and the authors' assumptions, the following research hypotheses were defined:

Research hypothesis H₁ – There is a statistically significant difference in the responses of the respondents from Serbia in relation to vacation planning during the pandemic, caused by the differences in the respondents' gender, age, and level of income;

Research hypothesis H₂ – There is a statistically significant difference in the respondents' answers in relation to vacation planning abroad during the pandemic, caused by the differences in the respondents' gender, age, and level of income;

Research hypothesis H₃ – Fear of uncertainty impacts travel planning abroad during the pandemic, and there is a statistically significant negative correlation between these two variables;

Research hypothesis H₄ – Negative motivation of consumer behaviour in travel planning during the pandemic is revealed by the respondents' answers.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As much as 70% of the respondents belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z like to plan trips in advance (Table 1), which is in opposition with the changes brought about by the pandemic. During the pandemic, prior to May 2021, 25% of respondents travelled outside Serbia, 56% travelled within Serbia, and 19% did not travel anywhere. A higher percentage of female respondents travelled within Serbia during the pandemic (59%) compared to male respondents (52%), while a higher percentage of male respondents travelled abroad (31%) compared to female respondents (19%). There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents' responses about travelling during the pandemic in relation to gender (χ^2 -test, Value = 5.847^a, df = 2, p = 0.054 > 0.05). During the pandemic, 23% of Generation Z and 28% of Generation Y travelled abroad, and 61% of Generation Z and 51% of Generation Y travelled within Serbia. On the other hand, 17% of Generation Z and 21% of Millennials did not travel anywhere during the pandemic. There is no statistically significant difference in the answers of the respondents in relation to their age (χ^2 -test, Value = 3.049^a, df = 2, p = 0.218 > 0.05). When the level of income is taken into consideration, 6% of below

average income respondents, 28% of average income respondents and 64% of above average income respondents travelled abroad during the pandemic. Additionally, 34% of below average income respondents, 65% of average income respondents and 21% of above average income respondents travelled within Serbia. According to the χ^2 -test (Value = 94.729a, df = 4, p = 0.00 < 0.05), there is a statistically significant difference in the respondents' responses in relation to their level of income as concerns travelling during the pandemic (abroad or in Serbia).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents (N = 300) according to the degree of agreement with the statements in the questionnaire

Questions	I totally agree	I partially agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I partially disagree	I do not agree at all	Mean	Std. Deviation
I like to plan trips in advance.	48%	22%	23%	5%	2%	4.09	1.048
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation to a place in Serbia in the near future.	42%	22%	15%	10%	11%	3.72	1.393
During the pandemic, I am afraid to go on a trip to another country.	13%	19%	21%	15%	32%	2.67	1.426
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation abroad in the near future.	59%	15%	10%	9%	7%	4.12	1.276

* The questions listed in the table are in the form of a five-point Likert scale, where the answer *I totally agree* is assigned a value of 5; *I partially agree* - 4; *I neither agree nor disagree* - 3; *I partially disagree* - 2; *I do not agree at all* - 1.

Source: Authors' research

According to Table 1, a larger percentage of Generation Y and Generation Z respondents plan to vacation abroad (74%), compared to those planning to vacation in Serbia (64%). One of the questions in the questionnaire referred to the feeling of fear of going on a trip to another country during the pandemic, and 32% of the respondents stated that they are afraid to go abroad. If fear is viewed as an independent variable in this context, it determines 15% of the variability of *going abroad during the pandemic* (as a dependent variable) ($R^2 = 0.150$, B coefficient = -0.346, Beta coefficient = -0.387, $t = -7.238$, $p = 0.00$). Therefore, the independ-

ent variable exerts a certain influence on the dependent variable. A statistically significant negative correlation, moderate by strength, exists between these two variables (Spearman's rho coefficient = -0.338, $p = 0.00$). In other words, the increasing fear of going on a trip to another country, to some extent, results in fewer plans to vacation abroad.

Table 2. Testing for statistically significant differences in the answers of the respondents in relation to gender, as concerns the stated questions

Questions in the questionnaire	t	df	p
I like to plan trips in advance.	-0.495	298	0.621
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation to a place in Serbia in the near future.	4.625	298	0.000*
During the pandemic, I am afraid to go on a trip to another country.	-3.248	298	0.001*
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation abroad in the near future.	2.791	298	0.006*

* An asterisk indicates the existence of a statistically significant difference (where $p < 0.05$).

Source: Authors' research

According to the results of the t-test (Table 2), there is a statistically significant difference in the responses of Generation Y and Generation Z respondents in relation to gender as concerns vacation planning in Serbia during the pandemic. A higher percentage of male respondents stated that they would travel to a place in Serbia (Mean = 4.08) compared to female respondents (Mean = 3.36). In other words, 71% of male respondents and 56% of female respondents said that they plan on vacationing in Serbia during the pandemic. According to the results of the t-test, there is a statistically significant difference in the responses of the respondents in relation to gender, as concerns the feeling of fear of travelling to another country during the pandemic. Female respondents feel greater fear (Mean = 2.93) compared to male respondents (Mean = 2.41). In other words, 38% of female respondents and 26% of male respondents said that they are afraid to travel abroad during the pandemic. There is also a statistically significant difference in the respondents' responses in relation to gender, as concerns vacation planning abroad, according to the results of the t-test shown in Table 2. A higher number of male respondents stated that they plan to travel abroad (Mean = 4.32) compared to female respondents (Mean = 3.91). In other words, 82% of male respondents and 67% of female respondents stated that they plan on travelling abroad.

Table 3. Testing for statistically significant difference in the answers of the respondents in relation to their age group (generation), as concerns the stated questions

Questions	t	df	p
I like to plan trips in advance.	-2.957	298	0.003*
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation to a place in Serbia in the near future.	0.911	298	0.363
During the pandemic, I am afraid to go on a trip to another country.	-1.993	298	0.047
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation abroad in the near future.	-1.679	298	0.094

* An asterisk indicates the existence of a statistically significant difference (where $p < 0.05$).

Source: Authors' research

According to the results of the t-test (Table 3), there is a statistically significant difference in the answers of the respondents in relation to their age group as concerns the tendency to plan trips in advance. More respondents in the Millennial age group (Mean = 4.27) than respondents in the Generation Z age group (Mean = 3.91) prefer to plan trips in advance. In other words, 77% of Millennials and 63% of Gen Z respondents like to plan their trips in advance. According to the results of the t-test, there is no statistically significant difference in the responses of different generations as concerns vacation planning in Serbia during the pandemic – 65% of Gen Z and 63% of Millennials plan to vacation in Serbia. A higher percentage of members belonging to Generation Y (34%) feel afraid to go abroad, compared to members belonging to Generation Z (30%). There is also no statistically significant difference in the answers of different generations as concerns planning a vacation abroad. According to the results of the t-test, shown in Table 3, 71% of Generation Z and 79% of Generation Y plan to vacation abroad during the pandemic.

Table 4. Testing for statistically significant differences in the answers of the respondents in relation to their level of income, as concerns the stated questions

Questions	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
I like to plan trips in advance.	4.256	2	2.128	2.041	0.132
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation to a place in Serbia in the near future.	4.633	2	2.317	1.178	0.310
During the pandemic, I am afraid to go on a trip to another country.	25.508	2	12.754	6.462	0.002*
During the pandemic, I plan to go on vacation abroad in the near future.	13.351	2	6.675	4.015	0.019*

* An asterisk indicates the existence of a statistically significant difference (where $p < 0.05$).

Source: Authors' research

According to the results of the ANOVA test (Table 4), there is no statistically significant difference in the responses of respondents of different income levels in relation to vacation planning in Serbia during the pandemic. In the near future, 64% of respondents with below average income, 62% of respondents with average income, and 75% of respondents with above average income plan to travel around Serbia. There is a statistically significant difference in the responses of respondents of different income levels in relation to the feeling of fear of going abroad – 38% of respondents with below average income, 35% of respondents with average income, and 14% of respondents with above average income agree with the statement that there is fear of travelling outside Serbia. Also, there is a statistically significant difference in the responses of respondents of different income levels in relation to travel planning abroad during the pandemic – 66% of respondents with below average income, 72% of respondents with average income, and 100% of respondents with earnings above average plan to travel abroad.

DISCUSSION

There is a statistically significant difference in the respondents' responses in relation to their gender, as concerns vacation planning in Serbia and abroad during the pandemic. In other words, a higher percentage of male respondents stated that they plan to vacation in Serbia (71%) and abroad (82%) compared to female respondents (56% plan to vacation in Serbia, and 67% plan to vacation abroad). *Hypothesis H₁ is only partially confirmed* – there is only a statistically significant difference in the responses of the respondents in relation to gender as concerns vacation planning in Serbia during the pandemic. *Hypothesis H₂ is mostly confirmed* – there is a statistically significant difference in the responses of the respondents in relation to gender and level of income as concerns plans to vacation abroad during the pandemic. The highest percentage of respondents with above average income (100%) and the lowest percentage of respondents with below average incomes (66%) plan to travel abroad during the pandemic.

Fear of uncertainty is one of the reasons why a part of the respondents opted not to go on vacation abroad. Fear of uncertainty exerts a certain influence on plans to vacation abroad during the pandemic. As there is a statistically significant negative correlation between these two variables, *hypothesis H₃ is confirmed*.

The results of this research refute hypothesis H₄. The assumption was that a negative motivation to travel during the pandemic would be observed, but the results of the research prove that a considerable percentage of Generation Y and Generation Z travelled during the pandemic, and that they plan to travel both within Serbia and abroad. Additionally, 47%

of respondents do not feel afraid to go on a trip to another country, and, where fear is present, it negatively and very moderately affects vacation planning abroad. The percentage of consumers who plan a vacation abroad has tripled in comparison with the number of trips made during the pandemic, prior to May 2021 (from 25% to 74%). The percentage of consumers who plan to vacation in Serbia is 64%, which marks an increase of 8% in relation to the realised trips during the pandemic, prior to May 2021. As it has been determined that a high percentage of consumers from Serbia belonging to both generations travel and plan to travel within Serbia and abroad, it cannot be said that a significant negative motivation to travel during the pandemic could be observed in the respondents' responses.

Travellers more often opted for domestic tourism during the pandemic (Abdelkawi & Giorgini, 2021; Lazarević & Veljković, 2021), and 31% of the respondents from Serbia plan to permanently replace international plans with local ones (EY, 2021). When the behaviours of Generation Y and Generation Z are taken into consideration and compared with older generations, it can be concluded that Generation Z and Y are more likely to risk. Additionally, although they displayed fear of the virus, Millennials and Generation Z are more willing to travel, primarily in their country (DCI, 2020). Drawing a parallel with the results of this empirical research, it can be stated that the respondents in Serbia felt fear of travelling to another country during the pandemic – 32% of the respondents belonging to Generations Z and Y said that they are afraid to go abroad. This fear negatively, but very moderately, affects plans to vacation abroad. In relation to their plans of travelling, members of these generations from Serbia are more willing to travel abroad (74%) than they are to travel within Serbia (64%) in the near future.

CONCLUSION

The tourism and hospitality industry has suffered grave losses due to the pandemic. Tourism receipts worldwide are not expected to return to their 2019 levels until 2023 (Behsudi, 2020), and McKinsey (2020) predicts that international air traffic will not return to its 2019 levels before 2024. The tourism industry has to adapt to the new reality produced by the pandemic. This also means that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry has to adapt to the altered consumer behaviour in travel planning.

During the pandemic, prior to May 2021 (when this research was conducted), 25% of Generation Z and Generation Y travelled outside Serbia, 56% travelled within Serbia, and 19% did not travel anywhere. During that period, the highest percentage of respondents with above average income (64%) travelled abroad, and the highest percentage of respondents with average income (65%) travelled within Serbia.

More Millennials prefer to plan trips in advance compared to members of Generation Z – 77% of Generation Y and 63% of Generation Z like to plan their trips in advance. The results of this research prove that a considerable percentage of these generations travelled during the pandemic, and that they plan to travel both within Serbia and abroad. A larger percentage of Generation Y and Generation Z plan to vacation abroad (74%) compared to the percentage planning to vacation in Serbia (64%). The percentage of consumers who plan to vacation abroad has tripled in comparison with the trips made during the pandemic, prior to May 2021 (from 25% to 74%). The percentage of consumers who plan to vacation in Serbia marked an 8% increase in comparison with the realised trips prior to May 2021.

Previous research shows that consumers around the world, including the members of Generation Y and Generation Z, preferred domestic travel during the pandemic. The results of this empirical research prove that a high percentage of the members of these generations plan to vacation abroad in the near future, even though they had travelled around Serbia to a greater extent during the pandemic.

Fear exerts a certain influence on plans to travel abroad during the pandemic (32% of the respondents stated that they are afraid to travel abroad). A high percentage of respondents with below average income (38%) feel afraid to travel abroad, unlike the respondents with above average income (14%).

Based on these conclusions, Serbian organisations within the tourism and hospitality industry are recommended to focus on members of Generations Z and Y, so as to ‘animate’ them to ‘invest’ their money into travelling around Serbia. As many as 69% of respondents expressed care for Serbia’s economy (EY, 2021), and the aforementioned recommendation can be easily implemented. Also, organisations and facilities within the tourism and hospitality industry are expected to improve their sustainability. As the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the processes of innovation and digital transformation (Mamula Nikolić, Perčić & Nećak, 2022), offering online services, based on a good plan and a sound digital marketing strategy, would be one of the optimal solutions.

The limitation of this paper lies in the fact that the paper considers only one factor which affects travel planning and organising in Serbia during the pandemic, and that is the fear of travelling to another country. Therefore, future research on this topic could consider more factors, only some of which are loss of work due to the pandemic, fear of losing one’s job, reduced income, and tendency towards saving due to the uncertainty of the future.

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ПОНАШАЊЕ ПОТРОШАЧА У ТУРИЗМУ ТОКОМ COVID-19 ПАНДЕМИЈЕ

Каролина Перчић, Нада Спасић

Висока школа модерног бизниса, Београд, Србија

Резиме

Предмет рада је понашање потрошача приликом планирања путовања током COVID-19 пандемије. Циљ рада је да се разуме понашање путника током пандемије. Рад се теоријски ослања на резултате досадашњих истраживања о утицају здравствених криза на туризам и понашање потрошача. У емпиријском истраживању је испитана генерација Y (миленијалци) и генерација Z. Прецизније, рад испитује њихове намере у планирању путовања на одмор током пандемије, као и колико страх утиче на планирање путовања ван Србије. Емпиријско истраживање, спроведено у Републици Србији маја 2021. године, доказује да је прили-

чан проценат генерација Y и Z путовао током пандемије, све до маја 2021. године (25% у иностранство, 56% по Србији), и да обе генерације у блиској будућности планирају путовања у иностранство (74%) у већој мери него што је то случај са путовањима унутар Србије (64%). Процент потрошача који у блиској будућности планира одмор у иностранству утростручио се у односу на путовања током пандемије, реализована пре маја 2021. године (са 25% на 74%), а проценат потрошача који планирају одмор у Србији повећан је за 8% у односу на реализована путовања у истом периоду. Досадашња истраживања показују да се потрошачи широм света, укључујући припаднике генерација Y и Z, током пандемије радије опредељују за путовања у земљи. Ово емпиријско истраживање показује да су ове генерације током пандемије у већој мери путовале по Србији, али да у блиској будућности већи проценат потрошача планира одмор у иностранству. Страх у одређеној мери утиче на реализацију путовања у иностранство током пандемије – 32% испитаника је изјавило да се плаши путовања ван Србије. Дакле, постоји статистички значајна негативна корелација, умерена по јачини, између две варијабле: страха и путовања у иностранство. Највећи проценат испитаника са исподпросечним примањима (38%) осећа ту врсту страха, за разлику од оних са изнадпросечним примањима (14%). На основу резултата истраживања, не може се рећи да постоји значајна негативна мотивација у односу на путовања током пандемије. Туристичким и угоститељским организацијама у Србији се препоручује да се оријентишу ка генерацијама Z и Y, не би ли се припадници генерација „анимирани“ да „уложе“ свој новац у путовања по Србији. Такође, од туристичких и угоститељских објеката се очекује побољшање активности одрживости.