



## KUŞAKLAR ARASI DESTİNASYON SEÇİM ÖNCELİKLERİNİ ANLAMAK: X, Y VE Z KUŞAĞI ARASINDA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZ<sup>1</sup>

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### ÖZET

Destinasyon seçimi, turizm rekabet gücünün değerlendirilmesinde önemli bir bileşen olarak kabul edilmektedir. Destinasyon tercihlerini etkileyen çeşitli faktörler üzerine yapılan birçok araştırma bulunmakla birlikte, kuşak farklılıklarının destinasyon seçimi üzerindeki etkilerinin daha derinlemesine incelenmesi gerektiği gözlemlenmektedir. Bu araştırma, X, Y ve Z kuşakları arasında destinasyon seçimi üzerinde etkili olan faktörler bakımından herhangi bir farklılık olup olmadığını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, son bir yıl içerisinde tatil amacıyla seyahate çıkmış ve 18 yaşını geçmiş katılımcılar üzerinde bir anket uygulanmıştır. Kolayda örnekleme yöntemi ile gerçekleştirilen ankete 330 kişi katılmıştır. Verilerin analizi sonucunda, destinasyon seçiminde etkili olan altyapı olanakları, bilgi erişim olanakları ve destinasyonun turistik çekicilikleri açısından kuşaklar arasında anlamlı farklılıklar gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca, araştırmaya katılan bireylerin eğitim düzeyleri ile destinasyon seçim davranışları arasında da farklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Bu araştırmanın bulguları, destinasyon pazarlama organizasyonlarına etkili pazarlama stratejileri geliştirme konusunda fırsatlar sunacak ve farklı kuşakların satın alma davranış niyetlerinin daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Destinasyon, Destinasyon Seçimi, X, Y ve Z kuşağı

## UNDERSTANDING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN DESTINATION CHOICE PRIORITIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GEN X, Y, AND Z

### ABSTRACT

Destination choice is considered a key component in assessing the competitiveness of tourism destinations. While numerous studies have been conducted on the various factors influencing destination preferences, it has been observed that the impact of generational differences on destination choice requires deeper investigation. This study aims to determine whether there are any differences in the factors influencing destination choice among the X, Y, and Z generations. To this end, a survey was conducted among participants who had traveled for holiday purposes within the past year and were over 18 years old. The survey conducted using the convenience sampling method was participated in by 330 individuals. The analysis of the data revealed significant differences between the generations in terms of factors such as infrastructure facilities, access to information, and the tourist attractions of the

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destination. Furthermore, differences were found between the participants' education levels and their destination selection behaviors. The findings of this research provide opportunities for destination marketing organizations to develop effective marketing strategies and contribute to a deeper understanding of the purchasing behavior intentions of different generations.

**Key Words:** Destination, Destination Choice, Generation X, Y and Z.

## **INTRODUCTION**

People travel for a variety of purposes. Once the decision to take a vacation is made, the question of where to go becomes the next consideration. The destination must align with the purpose of the vacation. At this stage, the destination selection process begins. During this process, individuals' sociodemographic characteristics, alongside attractive factors, play a significant role. The topic of destination choice, which occupies the attention of tourists, has been extensively studied in the literature (Morley, 1994; Eşitti & Işık, 2015; Pan, Rasouli & Timmermans, 2021; Cooper & Buckley, 2022). Due to the intense competition among tourist destinations, understanding customer desires and needs, as well as identifying the factors influencing the decision-making process, is crucial for retaining existing customers and attracting potential ones (Davras & Uslu, 2019).

There are many factors that influence destination selection. For instance, how tourists obtain information about a destination (Eşitti & Işık, 2015), their experiences (Ahn et al., 2013), travel duration, attractive factors, and the number of tourist attractions can all play a role in the decision-making process (Wu et al., 2011). According to Demir (2010), accommodation and transportation options, recreational attractions, historical and natural sights, and socio-cultural values are influential in the destination selection process. Davras and Uslu (2019) state that information and adventure, transportation and activity opportunities, socio-cultural activities, natural attractions, travel prestige, entertainment, and relaxation factors also affect destination choice.

Although variables such as education, income, gender, occupation, social class, place of residence, and marital status have been suggested to influence tourists' perceptions and destination image, age is considered an important determinant of both image and travel behavior (Huang & Petrick, 2010). However, in order to properly understand the role of age in tourist preferences, marketing, promotion, and segmentation studies should be examined according to generational theory. The generational approach is suggested to provide richer information than age-based segmentation, as the time period in which a person lives has an impact on their consumption behavior (Huang & Petrick, 2010; Gardiner et al., 2014). Karacaoğlu (2021) emphasizes that the attractiveness factors of a destination should be organized in terms of the needs, desires, and expectations of different generations, and that tourism stakeholders should adopt a generational market segmentation approach. Recently, the impact of generational differences on destination selection has been addressed in many studies in the socio-demographic context (Zorlu & Candan, 2023; Vrhoci et al., 2021).

In this context, determining the level of perception regarding the factors influencing destination selection is important. The primary aim of this study is to identify whether the importance given to factors affecting destination selection varies across generations. Additionally, another objective of the research is to explore whether there are differences in destination selection based on gender, marital status, and educational background. In this framework, the study first addresses destination selection and generations, followed by the relationship between generations and destination choice, and hypotheses are developed in line with the relevant

literature. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will make significant contributions to destination stakeholders and the related literature.

## **1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1. Generational Differences and Destination Choice**

A generation refers to a group of individuals born in a specific period and shaped by the values, attitudes, and lifestyles influenced by that era, reflecting its characteristics. Different generations carry symbols and traits that bind them within the group and distinguish them from others. Members of a generation are connected through a shared network of perceptions, emotions, and desires. Generally, generations are categorized by age, as age serves as an indicator that simplifies understanding of society. This phenomenon is explained by generational theory, where each generation is shaped by the unique value judgments of the time in which it exists (Chen, 2010). Generations are not solely based on birth years, but are composed of individuals whose attitudes, values, and experiences are shaped by shared historical events. Individuals within a generation share a system of common values, beliefs, and expectations, formed by the historical or environmental events they experienced at a particular time (Leiter et al., 2010).

A human lifetime is divided into four stages: childhood, young adulthood, middle age, and old age. A social generation consists of individuals in similar age groups who are shaped by common historical events and tend to have similar experiences during the same life stage. These experiences shape the beliefs, behaviors, and social identities of the members of the generation (van Twist & Newcombe, 2021). There is no clear consensus on the exact birth years for each generation. However, common classifications include Generation X, which refers to those born between 1965 and 1980; Generation Y (Millennials), born between 1981 and 1995; and Generation Z, born between 1996 and 2010 (Kim et al., 2015). This study adopts this classification.

As a social phenomenon, tourism, which emerges as part of this dynamic social environment (Špindler, 2018), can influence customer preferences and enhance experiences by adopting generational changes and technological developments (Pricope Vancia et al., 2023). Among the key decisions tourists make are whether to travel, where to go, who to travel with, when to travel, the length of stay, and the budget to be spent. Although destination policymakers and planners are highly interested in how potential tourists make these decisions, the most determining factor is the select of destination, i.e., the destination choice (Alvarez & Brida, 2019). The "where to go" question is one of the most important aspects of vacation preferences (Oppewal et al., 2015). Tourism destinations are areas where tourism products and services are offered; they are complex to manage but critically important in terms of tourism marketing (Güneş, 2018). Destination choice in tourism is seen as a critical and complex decision-making process. This process is hierarchical, sequential, and multi-stage, and it varies according to psychological, demographic, and social profiles (Pandey & Joshi, 2021).

#### **1.1.1. Generation X**

Generation X refers to individuals born between 1965 and 1980. This generation has been significantly influenced by events such as the 1973 Oil Crisis, the end of the Cold War, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, all of which have shaped their behavior (Li et al., 2013). Generation X is media-savvy and experienced; although television remains a major source of advertising, only advertisements tailored to their preferences are effective. They are sensitive to messages emphasizing security, safety, and independence, and seek products that promise reliability and ease of life. Premium quality and brand prestige play a significant role in their purchasing decisions. They generally prefer activities that offer comfort and relaxation. When choosing travel options, they prioritize economic benefits such as travel packages, price discounts, and coupons, and favor destinations like beaches, amusement/theme parks, and spectator sports (Huang & Petrick, 2010). Compared to other generations, this cohort is more likely to travel with children (Li et al., 2013), and budget is a determining factor in their travel decisions, with opportunities and special discounts playing a more prominent role in their holiday preferences (Špindler, 2018).

### **1.1.2. Generation Y**

Generation Y, also known as Millennials, includes individuals born between 1981 and 1995. This generation has been shaped by the effects of globalization. Globalization has led to the blurring of borders between countries, the merging of cultures, and greater access to products and services worldwide. Dual-income households have become the norm, providing better opportunities for children's development. The core values of this generation include independence, ambition, innovation, and growth, while ethical values, multiculturalism, social sensitivity, and digital communication technologies are also central. Generation Y is a highly mobile cohort, willing to travel and relocate, and has expanded its social networks not only within their own countries but also internationally (Hysa et al., 2021). This generation has lived through significant historical events such as the Collapse of the Soviet Union, the First Gulf War, the Rise of the Information Age, and the widespread use of the internet, all of which have influenced their behavior. Compared to older generations, they travel more frequently (Li et al., 2013) and are influenced by informational content from destinations and travel brands. They also tend to prefer non-touristy destinations, local recommendations, all-inclusive resorts, and cruises as part of their travel choices (Špindler, 2018). Having grown up with digital technologies, this generation has brought about significant changes in tourism marketing, transforming the demand and supply dynamics in the tourist market (Starcevic & Konjikusic, 2018).

### **1.1.3. Generation Z**

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1996 and 2010. This generation is typically characterized by an interest in interactive, personalized tourist experiences, which they share on their preferred social media platforms (Poruțiu et al., 2024). They have developed distinct behavioral habits in economic, social, cultural, and political domains. Born in a period of rapid technological advancement (Güneş et al., 2022). Generation Z lives in the era of Industry 4.0, heavily interacting with the internet and social media, and engaging with concepts like smart cities and smart tourism (Nguyen, 2021). They are not only open to technological innovations but also to discovering new places. This generation consists of multitaskers, and

social media serves as their primary means of communication. Members of Generation Z are highly open to the world and eager to engage in various tourist activities, although they often lack financial resources due to not yet being fully employed or being dependent on their parents. As a result, family or friends' local holidays are more common among them (Hysa et al., 2021). Members of Generation Z are more inclined to save money on their travels, often opting for budget flights, accommodation, and low-cost spending. Due to their lower incomes, they generally prefer nearby and accessible destinations, which offers them more affordable and practical travel experiences. This preference reflects both their financial situation and their desire to explore diverse experiences around them (Poruțiu et al., 2024).

This generation, which represents today's youth, has been deeply affected by global events such as globalization, terrorism, the 2008 financial crisis, technological developments, and the Covid-19 pandemic, all of which have shaped their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Understanding this generation is crucial, as by 2020, they accounted for 32% of the global population, making them a significant demographic force worldwide (Pinho & Gomes, 2023). Their habits, including travel preferences, have the potential to influence future generations (Puiu et al., 2022).

## **1.2. Development of Research Hypotheses**

An important objective of tourism demand analysis is to understand the societal behavior towards a destination across different generations. In this context, it is crucial to examine how tourists from different generations choose their destinations and what factors influence these decisions (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). Therefore, it is beneficial to explore tourist behaviors, particularly consumption habits, from an intergenerational analytical perspective (Li et al., 2013). Specifically, age is highlighted as one of the fundamental factors influencing behaviors (Octaviana & Mardiyana, 2024). Individuals planning trips based on age have different expectations, needs, and preferences regarding how they spend their vacations, which leads to diversity in vacation purposes, destination choices, and timing (Hysa et al., 2021). In a study by Poruțiu et al. (2024), a significant shift in travel preferences was observed between the Generation Z and Generation Y, particularly concerning domestic travel. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z shows more interest in exploring domestic destinations rather than traveling abroad. A study by Akşit Aşık (2020) revealed significant differences between Generation Y and Generation Z in terms of factors influencing destination choices. Li et al. (2013) also noted that tourists from different generations exhibit differing preferences regarding travel destinations and future destination choices. In another study, participants from Generation Z identified entertainment and sports facilities as the most important factors when choosing a vacation destination, while Generation Y participants prioritized the natural environment and entertainment opportunities. Generation X participants, on the other hand, ranked the natural environment and safety as the most significant factors. Generation Z places more emphasis on sports facilities, Generation Y on the natural environment, and Generation X on safety, while all generations shared historical and cultural attractions as a common priority (Özaltaş Serçek & Serçek, 2017). Based on this information, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: The factors influencing destination choice differ by generation.



Demographics are a key determinant of international tourism supply and demand trends (Gidebo, 2021). Specifically, vacation habits and destination choice behaviors are strongly correlated with demographic and lifestyle characteristics. Understanding how different market segments assess various tourism destinations can increase opportunities for highlighting the right destinations and optimizing marketing strategies (Buhalis & Law, 2008). This underscores the importance of understanding the psychological and demographic factors that shape tourist behavior (Octaviany & Mardiyana, 2024). Several studies in the literature have identified the impact of sociodemographic variables on destination selection and attractiveness. In a study by Almeida (2020) examining the role and relationship of sociodemographic variables in destination selection, it was found that the most significant sociodemographic factors influencing tourist behavior were country of origin, age, gender, and income level. Uslu et al. (2020) found that marital status plays a moderating role in the relationship between destination interest and loyalty. Woyo et al. (2019) concluded that there are significant differences between the perceived attractiveness of a destination and variables such as education level and the continent of residence. Another study found significant differences between domestic and international tourism destination choices based on variables such as gender, age, income, and education level (Slak Valek et al., 2014). Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H<sub>2</sub>: The factors influencing destination choice differ by gender.

H<sub>3</sub>: The factors influencing destination choice differ by marital status.

H<sub>4</sub>: The factors influencing destination choice differ by education level.

## **2. METHOD**

Intense competition in the tourism and destination markets, along with the many factors influencing tourists' destination choices, constantly encourages destination planners, marketers, and managers to conduct research (Ünal & Çakır, 2020). In order for destinations to maintain their competitive advantage in the tourism market, it is essential to closely monitor industry developments, accurately analyze tourists' demands, and develop strategies accordingly, as these are key elements of a successful destination selection (Apak, 2023). One of the most important aspects of the tourism purchase decision process is destination choice. Making the optimal choice among alternatives is crucial. Many people pay attention to various factors when selecting a destination for their vacation. In this context, the tourist infrastructure of destinations, such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, the local population's behavior toward tourists, information facilities, and attractions, play a significant role in making the tourism purchase decision. It is believed that individual characteristics influence the destination choice process. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether the birth period has an impact on the purchase decision. In this context, it is suggested that there might be differences in destination preferences among tourists from different generations. The main objective of the study is to determine whether there are differences in the factors influencing destination choice across generations. Additionally, identifying differences based on other demographic variables is also one of the research goals.

A quantitative research method has been used in this study. A two-part questionnaire has been developed to assess sociodemographic characteristics and factors influencing destination selection. The questionnaire includes questions on gender, marital status, education, occupation, year of birth, frequency of travel, travel companions, and sources of information about destinations, as well as 20 items related to factors affecting destination choice. The scale for factors influencing destination choice was developed by Tomić and Bozic (2015) and adapted to Turkish by Ünal (2020). The scale consists of 20 items across three factors: Destination Infrastructure Facilities (DINFR) with eight items, Destination Information Facilities (DINFO) with six items, and Destination Tourist Attractions (DTA) with six items. The validity and reliability of the scale have been confirmed by Ünal (2020). Participants rated the statements on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

The population of the study consists of individuals who have traveled at least once for tourism in the past year. A total of 330 individuals participated in the online survey conducted between February 15 and March 25, 2024, using a convenience sampling method. The sample size was determined by referencing the total number of items in the questionnaire, with a sample size 5 to 10 times the number of items (Bryman & Cramer, 2001).

Before conducting the data analysis, the normality assumption of the scale was evaluated. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the items were found to be consistent with a normal distribution (Kline, 2016). The reliability of the scale was assessed, and the overall reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.878$ ) was found to be satisfactory. For the subscales, DINFR ( $\alpha = 0.812$ ), DINFO ( $\alpha = 0.712$ ), and DTA ( $\alpha = 0.731$ ) were also found to be reliable, indicating that the scale and its factors meet the reliability conditions (Kayış, 2010). For data analysis and hypothesis testing, frequency analysis, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Demographic Findings

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants. According to this, 52.4% of the participants are male, while 47.6% are female. When examining the distribution of participants across generations, 15.5% belong to Generation X, 56.4% to Generation Y, and 28.2% to Generation Z. Regarding vacation frequency, 72.1% of the participants take a vacation at least once a year.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	157	47,6	High School and Below	43	13,1
Male	173	52,4	University	178	53,9
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	Postgraduate	109	33
Married	186	56,4	<b>Information Source</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Single	144	43,6	Friends	60	18,2
<b>Vocation Frequency</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	Internet ve Social Media	215	65,2
At least once a year	238	72,1	Travel Agency	11	3,3
Twice a year	60	18,2	Other	44	13,3



Three or more times	32	9,7	<b>Travel Companion</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Generation</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	Alone	36	10,9
Generation X	51	15,5	With Friends	59	17,9
Generation Y	186	56,4	With Relatives	50	15,2
Generation Z	93	28,2	With Family	185	56,1
<b>Total</b>				<b>330</b>	<b>100</b>

It can be inferred that more than half of the participants travel on vacation with their families. The majority of participants gather information about their travel destination through the internet and social media before embarking on a trip.

### 3.2. Findings Regarding the Factors Affecting Destination Choice

Table 2 presents the participation averages for the statements regarding the factors influencing the participants' destination choice. Initially, when considering infrastructure opportunities, the overall participation average is found to be ( $\bar{x} = 4.28$ ). Among the statements related to this factor, the aspect most emphasized by the participants is the availability of high-quality and reasonably priced accommodation options ( $\bar{x} = 4.51$ ). Additionally, transportation and accessibility to the destination are also among the most prioritized infrastructure opportunities.

**Table 2.** Participation Averages Regarding the Factors Affecting Destination Choice

<b>Factor</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s.d.</b>
Destination Infrastructure Facilities	4,28	0,49
Destination Information Facilities	4,10	0,51
Destination Tourist Attractions	4,12	0,50

When examining the information accessibility of the destination, the most emphasized factors are the accessibility of information ( $\bar{x} = 4.4$ ) and the presence of photos and videos about the destination ( $\bar{x} = 4.35$ ). The overall average of this factor is high ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ). Lastly, the factor of tourist attractions at the destination has been evaluated. The overall average of this factor is high ( $\bar{x} = 4.12$ ). Within this factor, natural attractions ( $\bar{x} = 4.34$ ), climatic characteristics ( $\bar{x} = 4.18$ ), and the cultural heritage of the destination ( $\bar{x} = 4.14$ ) were assigned a high level of importance.

### 3.3. Hypothesis Testing

This study aims to determine whether the importance of factors affecting destination choice differs according to demographic variables. In this context, the results of the variance analysis conducted to examine whether the factors influencing destination selection vary by generation are presented in Table 3. According to this analysis, the participation levels in DINFR, DINFO, and DTA factors differ according to the generation in which the participants were born. Participants from Generation Y assign a higher level of importance to the factors influencing destination selection compared to other participants. On the other hand, Generation Z participants, except for DINFO, have placed lower importance on the factors influencing destination selection compared to Generation X and Y. Based on this result,  $H_1$  is accepted.

**Table 3.** Factors Influencing Destination Choice According to Generations

Factor	Gen	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	F	p	Difference
DINFR	X	51	4,34	0,62	6,343	0,002*	3<2** 3<1**
	Y	186	4,34	0,46			
	Z	93	4,13	0,43			
DINFO	X	51	3,98	0,65	5,284	0,006*	3<2** 2>1**
	Y	186	4,18	0,50			
	Z	93	4,01	0,40			
DTA	X	51	4,08	0,68	3,632	0,028*	3<2**
	Y	186	4,18	0,47			
	Z	93	4,02	0,41			

\*p<0.05

The results of the t-test conducted to examine whether the factors influencing destination choice differ according to gender and marital status are presented in Table 4. According to this analysis, no significant differences were found between the groups. Therefore, H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> are not accepted.

**Table 4.** Factors Influencing Destination Choice According to Gender and Marital Status

Variables	DINFR			DINFO		DTA	
	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	$\bar{x}$	s.d.
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	157	4,32	0,41	4,14	0,46	4,16	0,45
Male	173	4,24	0,55	4,07	0,54	4,08	0,53
<b>t-test</b>	<b>t</b>	1,339		1,397		1,413	
	<b>p</b>	0,181		0,163		0,159	
<b>Marital Status</b>							
Married	186	4,32	0,52	4,11	0,54	4,14	0,53
Single	144	4,23	0,44	4,09	0,45	4,10	0,45
<b>t-test</b>	<b>t</b>	1,624		0,454		0,715	
	<b>p</b>	0,105		0,650		0,475	

\*p<0.05

The results of the variance analysis conducted to determine whether the factors influencing destination choice vary according to the participants' educational level are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Factors Influencing Destination Choice According to Educational Level

Factor	Educational level	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	F	p	Difference
DINFR	High School and Below	43	4,28	0,59	5,488	0,005*	2<3**
	University	178	4,20	0,49			
	Postgraduate	109	4,40	0,41			
DINFO	High School and Below	43	4,02	0,51	5,833	0,003*	2<3**
	University	178	4,04	0,49			
	Postgraduate	109	4,24	0,51			
DTA	High School and Below	43	4,10	0,38	5,249	0,006*	2<3**
	University	178	4,05	0,50			
	Postgraduate	109	4,24	0,51			

\*p<0.05

According to Table 5, it is observed that participants with postgraduate-level education place a higher level of importance on the factors influencing destination choice compared to other participants. Therefore, H<sub>4</sub> is accepted.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study presents the results of an investigation into the most important factors influencing destination selection during the participants' most recent and planned holidays. The sample consists of individuals from Generations X, Y, and Z who have previously visited a holiday destination. The research examines whether there are significant differences in the importance levels of destination attributes across these three generations.

Motivations, goals, and expectations of travelers vary. People born in the same period are likely to share similar perspectives shaped by the conditions and influences of that time. It is expected that individuals born in different periods will have different preferences (Yılmaz, 2023). Understanding the various attitudes associated with the travel preferences of different generations is of significant importance to both researchers and practitioners. For example, answering questions such as how each generation accesses travel information and what activities they enjoy during their leisure time helps in understanding the factors that a destination must possess to attract customers, contributing to the development of effective marketing strategies by tourism stakeholders (Huang & Petrick, 2010).

The study reveals that all factors influencing destination choice are considered highly important. The highest priority is given to destination infrastructure, while opportunities for destination information are regarded as the least important. Participants place the highest importance on "quality and affordable accommodation options." Therefore, quality and affordable accommodation infrastructure emerges as a crucial factor in destination choice. The least importance is attributed to "nightlife and entertainment options." Destination infrastructure has also been identified as a significant factor influencing preferences in similar studies (Ünal, 2020). Another study conducted on a tourism destination found that "accommodation and transportation options" and "historical and natural attractions" were the key factors (Demir, 2010). In a similar study, the primary factors for Generation Y tourists were affordable prices and ease of transportation (Albayrak & Özkul, 2013).

When evaluating the research hypotheses, it was found that the perception of factors influencing destination preference varied according to generation, in line with the study's main objective. When examining intergenerational differences, X and Y generations placed more importance on destination infrastructure, including affordable food and beverage establishments, accommodation facilities, transportation options, and the hospitality of the local population, compared to Generation Z. The Y generation, however, placed greater emphasis on destination information access than the other generations. This factor includes the availability of information about the destination, nightlife, and entertainment options. In terms of destination tourist attractions, the Y generation participants attached more importance to climatic features, adventure opportunities, cultural heritage, shopping facilities, and natural attractions than the X and Z generations.

Age is known to be a significant variable influencing a tourist's destination choice (Hysa et al., 2021; Octaviany & Mardiyana, 2024). Understanding tourist behaviors and habits from an intergenerational perspective can be beneficial (Li et al., 2013). Consumer behavior is significantly influenced by demographic factors, and in this context, the concept of generation serves as an effective indicator in understanding a traveler's behavior. This has led to the rise of generational studies as a key area of research (Vrhoci et al., 2021).

Regarding the perception of factors influencing the preferences of Generations X, Y, and Z, the highest participation average is attributed to Generation Y. Destination infrastructure, information access, and tourist attractions are more important for this generation. When examining the research results as a whole, the differences between Generations X and Y become increasingly indistinct. While more similarities are found between Generations X and Y, Generation Z differs significantly from the other generations. The findings of this study are consistent with similar research. For example, in one study, Generation Y participants were found to prioritize scenic views, cultural (art, history) assets, the popularity of the travel destination, and the development of communication services when selecting a destination. In general, significant differences in destination selection emerged between the Baby Boomer, X, and Y generations (Karacaoğlu, 2021). Another study revealed that the consumer perception and purchase intention effects of promotional content featuring social media influencers varied across Generations X, Y, and Z (Kara, 2021).

When evaluating the results of other hypotheses proposed in the study, it is found that the perception of factors influencing destination preference does not significantly differ based on gender and marital status. However, there is a difference in the perception of factors influencing destination preference based on educational level. Participants with postgraduate education attribute a higher level of importance to these factors compared to other groups. Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made for destination stakeholders, managers, and planners:

- Competition among destinations in the tourism sector is increasing, and different generations are traveling together. Therefore, it is crucial to understand potential tourists well and design tourism products that align with the target market.
- In the future, generational differences will continue to influence destination choice, along with all purchasing behaviors.
- In today's rapidly changing tourist demand and expectations, it is necessary to reassess tourist profiles and conduct marketing activities accordingly.
- Due to the varying purchasing priorities across generations, tourism businesses and destination managers should focus on targeted marketing, promotional activities, and the development of destination image-building strategies.

Tourist behavior is an area of increasing interest, paralleling the rapid development of the tourism sector. In recent years, changes in tourist behaviors have become more dynamic due to the effects of various factors such as technology, globalization, and cultural transformations. Additionally, tourist behavior is a complex phenomenon influenced by demographic characteristics, affecting factors such as travel goals, motivations, destination attributes, activities undertaken, satisfaction levels, perceptions, and interactions during the travel process.

A deep understanding of these factors is of critical importance for effectively conducting market segmentation (Octaviany & Mardiyana, 2024).

### Limitations and Future Research

Like any study, this research has several limitations. It is limited in terms of research methodology and sample. Additionally, the number of participants within each group, in terms of sample diversity, affects the evaluation of results in the variance analysis. The sociocultural and demographic differences between the groups result in a differentiated evaluation process. Research conducted on participants from different generations with similar resources may yield different results. Another limitation is that the study population consists solely of domestic tourists, is made up of Generations X, Y, and Z, and data were collected through a survey. Future research is recommended to include tourists of different nationalities and employ mixed methods.

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