

Understanding Asian Millennial Behavior In Using Social Media When Traveling

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Abstract. Purpose–The purpose of this paper is to understand the Asian millennial behavior regarding the use of social media when they are traveling based on a systematic literature review, and to suggest strategies for tourism business in dealing with the millennial generation, which differs from the previous segment. Design/method/approach- A volume of 25 peer-reviewed journal articles were collected from two major databases. The current study was designed using content analysis to explore the millennial behavior in pre, during, and post-travel. Finding-The characteristics of millennials using their social media drive some behavior based on before, during, and post-travel. These behaviors are re-shaping the tourism and hospitality industries. Originality/value-The study provides a new understanding of millennial travelers, their characteristics, and travel behaviors in the realm of social media.

Keywords: Millennials, Generation Y, social media, tourism, millennial travel.

1. Introduction

The millennial generation has captured the attention of practitioners and academicians all over the world [1], [2]. The number of names has been used to describe the millennial include generation Y [3], me generation [4], N-gen, or echo boomers [5]. Millennials are a group of consumers who grew up during the millennium, a time of rapid changes, with relatively peaceful and prosperous time [3], [6].

There are minor differences regarding the range of years in millennials' times born. According to [2], millennials born from 1982 to 2002. The other perspective is proposed by [7], setting the year from 1977 to 1994. The report of [8], almost combines the range, born between 1981 and 1995. Then, according to Skinner, most definitions mark the beginning year of the Millennial era as 1980, and for the end of the period, views as the mid or late 1990s [9]. As a result, there could be some cross over the between younger millennials and the older generation Z and between younger Generation X and the older of millennials. For this paper, millennials comprise those born between 1980 and late 1995.

Millennials generation is exposed by technology, the internet, and social media, which shaped their behavior [5]. They are likely to share and spread their opinions and information on their social media. With the emergence of social media and mobile technology, the habit of sharing the recommendation, opinion, and information on product and service changes the purchasing decision-making process. Their sharing habit in social media can be opportunities for the travel and tourism industry to promote their service.

Millennials generation is important in the travel and tourism industry globally, one of the most important economic sectors globally. They become one of the essential customer segments which grows faster than other segments [8]. Some research focused on the millennial generation in Western [2], [6] but little about Asians. The shortage of characteristic Asian millennial travelers becomes a gap of this paper. However, with increasing Asians traveling in domestic, regional, and international, the implication for new tourism strategies and academic research in the non-western world is potential [10]. Many literatures also limited in discussing the social media usage in a travel period such as before, during and after the trip. This paper elaborated from some literatures to understand the millennial's social media usage when traveling.

This study has two objectives. The first is to to develop an understanding between social media and millennials' lifestyles, interest, perceptions and values. The last is to to conceptualise the characteristics of millennials and usage of social media in tourism industry particularly the Asian millennial travelers.

2. Method

The uses of social media in tourist behavior and tourism business management and marketing have been widely elaborated in academic tourism research [11]. This study is preliminary as part of an ongoing research. It has only focused on millennial tourists in using social media. We design the current study based on journal articles, and the other published sources such as magazines, conference papers, books, and research degree theses were not taken into account. The systematic methods to collect academic and peer-reviewed journal articles were collected and identified from Scopus (<http://www.scopus.com>), and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com.hk>). Both sources are accessible in online databases and search engines [12]. The selection criteria applied to the content and the publication year from the year 2015 onward. The keywords of millennials, or generation Y, Asian, tourist or traveler, and each of the terms hotel, hospitality, travel, and tourism were used.

Then, we validate the relevance of the initial set of articles with a conventional literature review approach that examines the title, abstract, or the content of the articles by referring criteria: (1) empirical research, (2) examining the social media usage pre, during and post-travel. This method is consistent with [13]. This validation produced a total of 25 articles to be reviewed in this paper. We recorded this total data set on excel workbook with some attributes such as title, author/s, year of publication, journal. We consider some questions to guide the current study: (1) what research perspectives were studied? (2) What theories the researches implemented? (3) What were the research methods applied? (4) what were the crucial factors studied to understand millennial characteristics as tourists? These questions are consistent with earlier literature review studies [11].

3. Result And Discussion

3.1. The Travel and Tourism Characteristics of Millennial

Internet and mobile technology revolution affect the millennial generation, so they have differences of characteristics than the previous generation [6]. The mobile technology and the

alternative methods of communication using social media also changed millennial tourism consumer behavior. According to [10], Asian tourists differ from a Western tourist in terms of preference. Asian tourists prefer familiar food, structured experiences, and online reservation systems. There are six unique characteristics of Asian millennial tourists, such as connectivity, travel fascinated, autonomous, educated travelers, explorer, budget consciousness, and relaxation as seen in Table 1.

This Asian millennials' characteristics bring challenges to the tourism and travel industry to fulfill and satisfy their needs. For Indonesia, which mostly foreign tourist is from Asian, and millennial generation becomes growth segment, understanding their characteristics will support the strategies to increase the foreign tourist's arrival.

Table 1. The characteristic of Asian Millennial tourists

No	Characteristic	Explanation	Authors
1.	Connectivity	Millennials always connected with others via mobile technology. The desire to connect with peers, acquaintances, and family is essential because connectivity becomes a lifestyle and signal of social status. They are always looking for fast replies and easy-access services.	[14],[15],[16],[17] [18],[19]
2.	Travel Fascinated	Traveling becomes a top priority need for millennials, which related to their identity. When their incomes and financial increase, they will choose more traveling. Millennials give more value to the investment in travel than other purchases.	[18],[20], [21]
3.	Autonomous	Millennials prefer to control their travel experience by themselves and personalize their travel activities. They customize their itineraries and reservation independently using their smartphone, without package holidays.	[15], [21], [22] [18]
4.	Educated travelers	Millennials are better travelers than in the previous generation. They were gathering much information from various sources and processing the information, both online and offline.	[10], [19]
5.	Explorer	Millennials are open-minded travelers, who aspire for freedom and flexibility to discover the world. They like to explore something new, adventurous, local, and personal, such as sightseeing, cultural activities, festivities, sports, nature-based activities, backpacking. For culinary, millennials prefer to visit the local restaurants which famous among local people.	[6], [15], [17], [20], [22]–[25]
6.	Budget consciousness	Mostly Asian millennial travelers are price sensitive and budget consciousness. They prefer to choose low budget accommodation such as motels, apartments, youth hostels, Airbnb to save their budget, to spend more on unique experiences. An inexpensive short-haul destination attracts them. They spent more on food and beverage and shopping, recreation, and entertainment. Then, Asian millennials more insistent on bargaining than western tourists.	[6], [10], [20], [23], [24], [26], [27]

No	Characteristic	Explanation	Authors
7.	Relaxation	Mostly, the motivation of Asian travelers is more on relaxing in mental and physical and exploring and getting knowledge about other cultures. For the professionals' millennials, they combine leisure with work to get relaxation in their busy work.	[19], [28]

3.2. The Usage of Social Media at Pre-travel

Based on systematic literature review, we divided the usage of social media by millennial travelers, into three types, pre-travel, during travel, and post-travel, which presented in table 2.

Table 2. The Usage Of Social Media by millennials travelers

No	Period	Activity	Authors
1.	Pre Travel	a. Gathering information for travel planning; b. Shaping the expectation; c. Learning from the previous travellers experiences to evaluate the travel destination alternatives; d. Getting trust recommendation from friends' in social media	[15], [23], [24], [26], [29]–[32]
2.	During Travel	a. Getting a recommendation to make better decisions or adjust to unexpected circumstances during the journey; b. Documentating and sharing travel experience; c. Promoting their holiday to other potential consumers; d. Building the personal identity.	[6], [15], [18], [23], [29], [30], [32]–[35]
3.	After Travel	a. Posting their experiences b. Evaluating the travel experiences c. Comparing the experiences with others peers, acquittance, friends and family.	[15], [30], [32], [35]

In pre travel stage, social media are used to gathering information before millennials decide the traveling. Social media gives varied choices as sources to collect better information. They shape the destination expectation based on previous travelers' experiences. They also communicate with other members in social media to get trust recommendation, especially about destination, restaurant, attraction, accommodations, flight, deals/coupons, and activities.

During travel stage, social media becomes part of experiences in tourism. It used to build a personal identity through their posting and sharing. They share their journey in terms of photo, videos, and words. This sharing can be positive which promote the destination or negative as evaluation. They also used social media as a solution to adapt their unexpected circumstances during the journey and making a better decision. Millennials are excited with offers like promotions/ last-minute deals, so planning and decision- making are more near to this phase or even at this stage.

Then in post travel stage, millennials travelers also posting their experiences in terms of photographs and written evaluation. They also compare their experiences with others.

4. Conclusion

This research exposes in understanding characteristics of millennial as travelers and their usage of social media in three stages pre-travel, during travel, and post-travel. Based on their six characteristics, the tourism industry should adapt their strategies to fulfill the needs of Asian millennials. First innovate the service and product, which fast replies and easy to access using a smart phone. Second gives many choices travel experiences to make personalize travel solution and explore the destination more. Third, reduce the tourism cost, so that the tourists save more in their accommodation. Raising the sharing economy, since it is popularly used by Millennials to satisfy their budget conscious travel need. The last gives choices of relaxation activities for professional millennials to combine their work with leisure.

Then, regarding the travel stage, interestingly tourists searched the information not only before their trip but also during their trip. The strategies to give excitedly with offers like promotions/ last-minute deals during their trip are useful to increase the selling and promoting the destination. Recommendation from social media influencers also important as part of gathering information in travel planning and valued as trusted information than the advertisement.

For the infrastructure, government must attempt a better internet connection in every tourists destination. Millennials needs internet to share and post their travel as part of their experiences and build their personal identity. The last, in post travel stage, the tourism industry management can appreciate the real travelers who post their positive comments and share their impression on social media. To sum up, there are enormous opportunities for tourism management to integrate the social media pages with their consumers and create actual travelers in social media communities to promote the tourism in low budget.

This research contributes to the current millennials travelers literature, particularly in the Asian context. The limitation of this research should be admitted, which may provide guidance for future research. This research is subject to the pool of journal articles that meet our selection criteria. The collected empirical studies is not included the conference proceedings and only use two search engines which may limit the collection of literature. Therefore, adding more search engine and keyword to search the articles is needed to make a better understanding of Asian millennial travelers.

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