

**Exploring Intergenerational Characteristics of Responsible Tourism Behavior:
The Case of Generation Y and Generation Z**

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Abstract

The present study aims to supply further information about the understanding of intergenerational travel characteristics, particularly regarding the responsible travel behaviors of Generation Z (1997-2010) and Generation Y (1981-1996). Responsible travel refers to the reduction or elimination of negative social, environmental, and cultural impacts of tourism on local communities and ecosystems while maximizing benefits for all stakeholders. The study employs semi-structured interviews with eight German members of Generations Z and Y to gain a deeper understanding of each generation's travel-based decision-making process and responsible travel behavior. The findings suggest that, while both Generations Y and Z have an adequate understanding of responsible travel, Generation Y is more engaged in adopting responsible travel behaviors than Generation Z. Therefore, the study's findings provide insights into the responsible travel characteristics of younger and adult generations, which can help shape tourism industry practices and policies for sustainable tourism development.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a key component of the world's economy and an important part of the lives of many individuals (Caruana et al., 2014). Generally, tourism has many interpretations but is formally defined as a cultural, social, and economic phenomenon that involves individuals traveling to countries or locations that go beyond their typical surroundings for either private or professional reasons (UNWTO, 2008). These individuals are known as tourists, where tourism refers to their activities, and spending at least one night at the chosen destination (Ibid). Nonetheless, just as in other economic sectors, the tourism sector results in positive and negative externalities for tourist destinations (Brandano et al., 2014). An externality occurs when the well-being of an actor (individual, firm) capabilities are directly influenced by the

acts of another economic player (Ibid). Such externalities may occur unintentionally when one party's consumption or production decision impacts the utility of another consumer or the final profits and revenue of another producer (Stabler et al., 2010). Examples of positive externalities include infrastructure development, the increase of cultural events, the recognition of historical events, etc. (Brandano et al., 2014). On the other hand, negative externalities encompass multiple kinds of pollution (e.g., noise, litter, CO2 emissions), overbuilding, a rise in crime rates, damage to cultural resources, etc. (Ibid). Despite all of these positive characteristics, the negative environmental and social externalities are dramatic and have to be taken more seriously.

The above-mentioned negative externalities, specifically any kinds of pollution and damage to cultural resources, introduce the element of responsible tourism and its importance. The following characteristics define responsible tourism: (1) minimizing negative effects; (2) creating economic welfare for local people; (3) including native people in decision-making; (4) maintaining cultural and natural treasures; (5) providing important connections among travelers and native people; and (6) being culturally aware (Caruana et al., 2014). Considering, it is critical to note that responsible tourism addresses not just environmental issues, such as the destruction of natural resources, but also social and cultural concerns, such as cultural unawareness and exclusion of local people. For instance, the United Nations suggests in their Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism report (1995) that, from an ethical perspective, tourism in some regions goes along with displacement of indigenous and local people, exploitative labor methods, corruption or contempt for culture, human rights violations, as well as environmental pollution.

Nevertheless, after considering all these concerns, it is important to highlight the global relevance of tourism. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, before the

pandemic, tourism and travel, in general, marked a quarter of all new job opportunities generated worldwide, 10.3% of total jobs (333 million), and 10.3% of world's GDP (US\$9.6 trillion). Meanwhile, global tourist expenditure in 2019 was US\$1.8 trillion (6.8% of total exports) (WTTC, 2022). Nonetheless, the global tourism industry is highly competitive and governed by multinational companies, the majority of which are headquartered in industrialized countries (Hall & Brown, 2006). These groups hold power over tourist product suppliers, possibly resulting in disparities in exchanges and power relationships (Barrett-Brown, 1993). Consequently, the overwhelming influence of the global economy emphasizes the need for a responsible and ethical approach to future travel. In addition to this, the World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation published the age ranges that play an essential role in the tourism sector. Ultimately, people born from in early 1980s to the early 2000s, namely Generations Y and Generation Z, seem to be the top tier actors (WYSE, 2015). Consequently, these generations are significant for the present research.

However, it is important to note that each intergenerational research topic employs a different set of ranges. Therefore, it is particularly important to set a definition for the term generation, which describes a collection of individuals with a shared identity that developed through experience and the collection and distribution of that experience over time (Ruspini,2022). These experiences shape multiple factors such as ideologies, attitudes, and behavior, whereas each generation has distinct qualities, desires, and standards that are directly connected to that particular generation (Ibid). Furthermore, generations are typically characterized by their lifespans. However, there is no universally accepted rule for determining how long that lifespan should be (Dimock, 2019). Considering each generation grew up in a distinct historical period, it may be argued that cultural norms (Kohut, 2011), technical developments (Hernandez, 2019), and political influences (Kohut, 2011) had various consequences and hence a varied effect on the time living generation. As a result, Generation

Z, people born between 1997 and 2010 (Ruspini, 2022), is characterized by their tendency for comfort and safety, as well as their technological proficiency regarding digital connectivity (Turner, 2015). Meaning, they grew up in a period of mobile devices and cellphones, as well as social media platforms (Corbisiero et al., 2022). An online study conducted by the European Travel Commission in 2020 on various countries, among them Germany, showed that compared to the Chinese Gen Zers, German Gen Zers were more willing to go offline, while traveling, for instance. This is important to consider as this research will be conducted with German citizens.

On the other hand, Generation Y, people born between 1981 and 1996 (Bialik & Fry, 2019), are characterized as being diverse, technologically competent, and adaptable and are considered to be the most culturally and ethnically diverse individuals throughout history (Benckendorff et al., 2010; Corbisiero et al., 2022). Given that the economic and financial crisis has had such an impact on Generation Y and its way of life, Millennials are becoming more price-aware and responsive to shared-economy activities (Ranzini et al., 2015). For instance, they are worried about economic prosperity and sustainable development (Deloitte, 2021). Besides these differences, both of these generations have one issue in common, which they are highly concerned about; climate change (Nadeem, 2021). Sharing climate change as a common concern creates a parallel that may be useful in the discussion of our research regarding responsible tourism.

It is critical to investigate how crucial players, in this case, Generations Y and Z from Germany, interact with responsible tourism. So, questioning the degree of awareness that these generations have regarding the previously identified consequences of tourism. Nevertheless, it is vital to recognize that, while the tourist industry is mostly held accountable for these concerns, consumers also play a part, so remaining not wholly innocent (Mahrouse, 2015).

Additionally, research expresses a knowledge gap in the sustainable tourism literature concerning comparative studies of the environmental beliefs, behaviors, and awareness of different generations and their sustainability practices, specifically with regard to Gen Z (Caruana et al.,2014; Prayag et al.,2022). Given that context, the research will look at literature such as “Millennials, Generation Z and the Future of Tourism”, “Understanding Millennials’ Tourism Experience: Values and Meaning to Travel as a Key for Identifying Target Clusters for Youth (Sustainable) Tourism” in the literature review. Therefore, the objective of this research is to look into differences in travel characteristics between Generations Y and Z, with a focus on responsible travel. This happens by conducting semi-structured interviews with German citizens of Generation Y and Z.

2. Literature review

The literature review is divided into four different categories; Generations & Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Tourism Challenges, and Travel Behavior. First, it examines the interplay between Generation Y and Z and tourism, emphasizing their desire for gaining travel experiences, interaction with local communities, and the value of identifying their travel beliefs in order to have meaningful experiences. Furthermore, it looks into the notion of responsible tourism, covering the numerous concepts and activities aimed at minimizing negative consequences and promoting sustainability. Lastly, explores the challenges that the tourist sector has, examining issues such as environmental issues, socio-cultural implications, and economic considerations. Finally, goes into the investigation of travel behavior, exploring the elements influencing individuals' travel choices and decisions.

i. The role of Generation Y and Z in Tourism

The researcher Ruspini (2022) provided the definition of the term “generation” for this paper, which “refers to a group with a common and distinctive identity shaped by experience, and the stratification of this experience, through time” (pp. 3). After all, anthropologists have applied the term “generation” to describe a social shift across time due to the fact that it involves temporal connections (Lamb, 2015). Not to forget, these definitions come with some important limitations. For instance, the numerous cultures that arise in each generation make identifying one major intergenerational identity challenging (Gardiner et al., 2013). Despite this, Ruspini (2022) states that the universality of these labels is limited, which shows that the concept of millennials and Generation Z itself is largely a Western term for identifying generations and that most Generation Y’s and Z’s come from a small number of countries in the West, such as the US and parts of Western Europe. Therefore, she recommends that it is of major importance to focus on the different characteristics of each generation on a national level since they tend to be unique to a national setting instead of focusing on universal equivalence.

Furthermore, Turner (2015), Generation Z is distinguished by a preference for comfort and safety, as well as quality and, most significantly, technological competency. However, they are also overall described as centered on uncertainty and weakness in a global system that is marked by crises including political, economic, nuclear, environmental, terror, and humanitarian factors (Scholz, 2014). There appeared to be a division between the ideal lifestyle that presupposes the ultimate consumption of comfort and pleasure and mediated disasters, facilitated greatly by media and new technology (Wee, 2019). It is found that it is especially important considering relaxation and tourism have become vital aspects of the lives of numerous individuals in the developed world (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2014). Most researchers concluded that, regardless of their age and desire to travel to new locations,

Generation Z's priority is to collect extensive travel experience (Wee, 2019). Additionally, they prefer a more varied range of travel options, plan to evaluate a wide range of information before selecting, and place a high value on adventurous tourism (Wood, 2013). This also goes in line with the World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation, which highlighted Generation Z's and Generation Y's strong presence in the tourism sector.

There is growing evidence that Generation Z has significant environmental views and beliefs yet participates in limited environmental actions compared to older generations (Parzonko et al., 2021). These studies, however, are not concerned with general travel behaviors but instead deal with particular tourism goods or consumer decisions (Prayag et al., 2022). Also, Plaut (2005) concluded that the attitude and consciousness of tourists toward sustainable behaviors correspond with their age. For instance, a study by Booking.com (2020) showed that a significant part of Gen Z rather aims to integrate a positive influence on the local community of the location through volunteering. This introduces a noteworthy reason for traveling defined as "volunteer tourism," which will be further elaborated on in the motivation and sustainable behavior section of traveling and tourism concerns.

Just like literature describes Generation Z, Generation Y is growing up in a world where travel is less difficult and more affordable than for past generations (WYSE, 2015). Therefore, Gen Y are taking advantage of every opportunity to do so by traveling the world in search of new experiences (Ibid). Anyway, in terms of tourism, millennials are considerably more willing to spend money on life-enhancing activities than on material possessions (Corbisiero et al., 2022). Through the execution of surveys, the WYSE figured that their main motivations for traveling are the interaction with locals, experiencing everyday life, and, lastly, increasing knowledge. Considering that they worry the most about the present economic situation, societal inequalities, and educational opportunities (WYSE, 2015).

Similar to Gen Z, Gen Y belongs to the present and future travelers (Monaco, 2018), since they are gradually replacing the elder generation as they rise up the generational pyramid (Cavagnaro et al., 2018). Research shows that they are portrayed as rather natural travelers (Ovolo Hotels, 2013) and hold robust environmental views (Vermeersch et al., 2016). More than 60% of them consider travel a vital part of their lives, enjoying 4-5 trips annually, and are predicted to continue exploring tourism experiences as they get older (Barton et al., 2013). Furthermore, Cavagnaro et al. (2018) explain that the collected tourist experiences are made up of three major elements: the desire to travel, the completion of the experience, and its review. So, the way a tourist frames their experience is determined not only by the traveler's unique traits but also by the social structure from which they originate and the network of relationships that they have developed with others (Staffieri, 2016). Nevertheless, Cavagnaro et al. (2018) suggest that in order to develop travel experiences that contribute meaningfully to the traveler's quality of life, it is critical to understand their travel needs, including the purpose assigned to travel and their basic beliefs.

ii. Responsible Tourism.

Research on responsible tourism goes back more than 30 years. Back then, the researcher Krippendorf (1987) realized that visitors' needs were getting more challenging, due to the start of rising environmental-consciousness, so the sector would need to integrate more "environmentally oriented and socially responsible" practices (p.174). This was due to the fact that by the late 1970s, the world began to experience the consequences of environmental and societal challenges such as resource depletion, pollution, human and animal misery, and a variety of other difficulties (Ehrlich, 1968). Recognizing the rise of the environmental crisis came the realization that the tourism industry plays a major part in it (Ibid). So, with worldwide

mass tourism still in its infancy, experts critiqued the unrestrained rise of tourism and its environmental implications and urged for restrictions in its development (Young, 1973; Smith, 1989). This era introduced the concept of sustainability and, thus, responsible tourism (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015). However, there appears to be a knowledge gap in travelers' awareness and knowledge of responsible tourism (Caruana et al., 2014). Considering that visitors are not estimated to be as conscious of the consequences of their behavior as consumers in other circumstances (Krippendorf, 1987). Consequently, "responsible consumers" have been recognized as having greater awareness of a variety of environmental, social, and ethical concerns, giving rise to phrases such as environmentally/socially responsible consumers (Minton & Rose, 1997). This will be further elaborated on in the Travel Behavior section.

To cope with the significant consequences of irresponsible tourism, Sunlu (2003) suggests measures the tourism industry could implement to contribute to at least more environmentally-friendly conservation, however, with little to no focus on social and cultural aspects. For instance, financial incentives, improved environmental management, increased environmental awareness, preservation, and regulatory measures all contribute to reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment (Ibid). However, these recommendations mainly focus on environmental harms and do not include normative breaches such as human rights violations. Generally speaking, to achieve responsible tourism, it necessitates commercial development and product and capacity development, which must be fully integrated while maintaining a responsible and ethical attitude (Koscak & O'Rourke, 2021).

A dramatic example of irresponsible tourism that highlights the necessity of responsible tourism is Drummond's (1998) report on human rights violations at the Padaung "human zoo," where a Thai businessman displayed an entire Burmese tribe. The people were rewarded with rice and oil, and if they tried to flee, they were beaten by guards. Although the NGO Steering

Committee's Tourist Caucus (1999) addressed these concerns in a study on tourist ethics, it is alarming that individuals would encourage such acts. Such violations not only have a direct impact on local individuals, but they also illustrate the detrimental effects of globalization. Consequently, the values of visitors from Western cultures are quickly integrated and accepted in developing countries, to the point where native residents' connection to a location may disappear (Hall & Brown, 2006). Unfortunately, such incidents are not one-time cases and thus need their own section for further explanation. This and the other issues mentioned above, which will be further discussed in the next section, are the ultimate aftermath of mass tourism (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015).

iii. Tourism Challenges

The above-mentioned example of Paduang's "human zoo" is only one of many violations happening in the tourism industry. These concerns are so deeply embedded that even acts of sympathy, such as volunteer tourism, turn out to be, to some extent, questionable when looking at the following examples. Volunteer tourism occurs when visitors engage in arranged volunteer work in order to enjoy a holiday experience and, at the same time, support local communities (Wearing, 2001). For reference, voluntary travel is often undertaken by generally naive and ambitious young individuals from Western countries (Hindle et al., 2003). On the one hand, it has positive impacts, such as the money spent on local restaurants and stores, but it also imposes an issue resulting in the social and economic dependency of these communities (Hernandez-Maskivker et al., 2018). In addition, its recognition was fueled by its ability to provide high-quality experiences that enhance the well-being of local communities, expand the horizons of volunteers, and bring meaningful social progress (Zahra, 2011).

Furthermore, using effective approaches, usually in collaboration with local organizations and initiatives, voluntourism has the potential to promote altruism, personal growth, community service, commitment to global and local development, and intercultural understanding (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Nonetheless, one may not forget the negative effects, for instance, the abuse of local people, the environment and volunteers; dependence on risk groups and continued neo-colonialism; poor management of human, social, physical, and financial resources; low-quality project work done by volunteers; higher unemployment of host residents; and the absence of communication between stakeholders (Palacios, 2010). Overall these findings contribute to Krippendorff's (1987) assumption that visitors are unaware of the consequences their consumption behavior results in.

Voluntourism is not the only concern that grew with the rise of the tourism industry. Also, non-human actors, such as animals, are overwhelmed with the consequences of tourism. The tourism sector primarily views "wildlife" as a resource for maintaining business, with the goal of giving tourists the experience they want through a variety of animal-focused activities like observing, feeding, petting, trophy hunting, and taking photographs of them (Fennell, 2012). There are many examples of the misuse of animals in the tourism industry. For instance, the capture of millions of animals in zoos and aquariums, holding powerful animals like elephants, lions, and dolphins (Hall & Brown, 2006). In many developing countries, snakes and bears are forced to perform as street entertainers, monkeys are often used as entertainment for beach attractions, and humans are offered a ride on elephants (Ibid). While horses and dogs are used for competitions, bulls are provoked to fight, and fish are held in restaurants for the enjoyment of tourists (Fennell, 2012). Such strategies take animal welfare into account purely in the context of maintaining the attraction's profitability (Hall & Brown, 2006). Ironically, the use of animals in tourism has become fundamental to the environmentally friendly image of the industry via the use of unclear terminology such as "wildlife tourism" and "ecotourism" to

advertise its business and lead customers to believe underlying environmental values (Ibid). Their business mostly focuses on activities such as whale watching, tropical wildlife safaris, and visits to recreational safari parks (Hall & Brown, 2006). Nonetheless, to avoid the further rise of animal tourism, it is necessary to raise awareness, especially among younger generations, as research shows that they have poor environmental understanding (Dillon et al., 2003).

The consequences highlighted by Young (1973) and Smith (1989) recognize unawareness and can be explained by Butler's life cycle model. This model defines a tourism destination's development, stagnation, and decline stages (Aguiló et al., 2005). Basically, Butler (1980) argues that tourist attractions are neither limitless nor eternal but rather should be considered and managed as scarce and ultimately non-renewable resources. The exact levels of development can be seen in Figure 1, which displays the cycle of evolution of a tourism area. Butler's (1980) framework presented here is based on the notion of the product cycle. Due to restricted access and resources, visitor numbers were initially modest (Ibid). Soon, visitor numbers will be continuously increasing as facilities improve and publicity develops (Butler, 1980). However, once the location reaches its carrying capacity, the speed of expansion decreases (Ibid). This can be caused by many factors, such as environmental limits, infrastructure barriers, and societal difficulties (Butler 1980). Consequently, overuse and negative effects may eventually make the place less appealing, resulting in a drop-in visitors (Ibid).

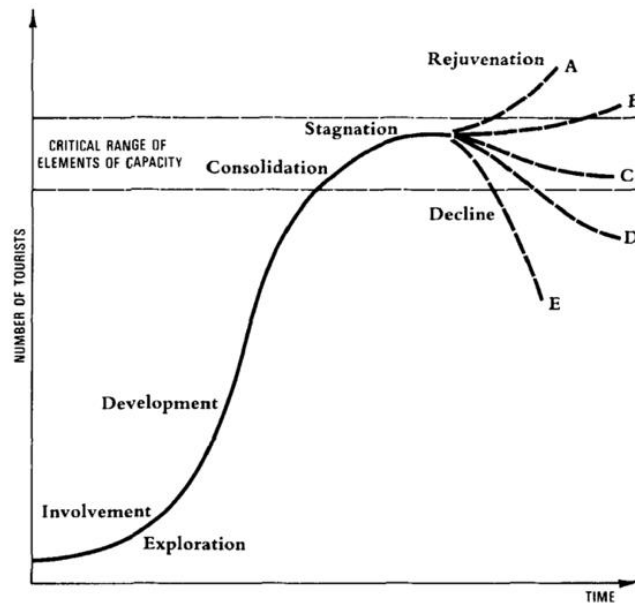


Figure 1 Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution

iv. Motivations & Sustainable Travel Behavior

Considering the concepts of responsible tourism and the general challenges created by tourism, it is essential to understand humans' motivations for their behavior. Generally, with the rise of climate change and environmental issues, awareness increased among humans, and with that came the urge to maintain ecology and cultures, resulting in the development of the concept of responsible tourism (Chiu et al., 2014). Specifically, environmentally responsible behavior is stated to be eco-friendly or green behavior (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2017).

A study by Hedlund et al., (2012) shows that travelers' environmental concerns are characterized by the perceived relevance of environmental sustainability in holiday selections altered by various demographics such as sex, age, education, etc. While awareness of the environment is increasing, tourist locations such as nature reserves remain popular choices, yet this does not guarantee that they will display responsible environmental behavior (Chiu et al., 2014), which goes hand in hand with the previous animal tourism advertising by Hall and Brown (2006). Typically, travel sites, such as natural areas, make visitors feel good, and this

psychological openness leaves them with favorable memories (Lew, 2011). In terms of responsible travel, the tourists' environmental concern, commitment, and ecological knowledge are indicators of environmentally responsible actions (Cottrell & Graefe, 1997). Therefore, responsible behavior is demonstrated when visitors respect the location's guidelines and are aware of how their actions affect the environment (Puhakka, 2011). Furthermore, responsible travel behavior is also reflected in preparing for travel by learning about the destination and conforming to cultural norms (Kang & Moscardo, 2006).

Nonetheless, it is important to mention that literature shows that responsible travel behavior is more difficult to measure than assumed, as responsible consumers demonstrate inconsistent and unpredictable behavior (Gabriel & Lang 1995). In the study conducted by Caruana and Crane (2014) they asked consumers how they would define responsible tourism, and it showed that they placed focus on various parts of their own behavior, encounters with local communities in tourist locations, types or qualities of locations, the consequences of their activities, or their implications for residents. This is an interesting result, which enables us to compare the result of this study with the results of Caruana and Crane (2014).

To explain why businesses built on animal activities in the tourism sector are as profitable as they are, literature shows that the interaction between humans and nature is significantly beneficial for humans physical and psychological health (Rowan & Beck, 1994). The researchers Pine and Gilmore (1998) state that such interactions with animals sum up to four main outcomes: education, aesthetics, amusement, and escapism. Furthermore, the environmental closeness the animals provide leads users to believe in underlying environmental values (Hall & Brown, 2006). Generally, negative tourist behavior partially has negative environmental impacts; therefore, more sustainable behaviors would be critical for the environmental protection of the destination (Qiu et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

i. Approach & Ethical Considerations

This research collects its data via a qualitative research method, interviewing eight German citizens from Generations Y and Z. First, the participants will be asked for permission via the provided information and consent form. No participants under the age of 18 will be allowed due to ethical constraints. Apart from the constraints, it is important to mention that most underage children do not yet have full control over their travel behavior, activities, or destinations. It is essential that each interviewee is kept anonymous, and therefore, no sensitive information of the participants will be exposed in the research paper. Each of the participants will be invited to an individual, either face-to-face or online, semi-structured interview, which will be audio recorded. The interview consists mainly of five open questions to understand and explore the travel decision-making process and behavior of Generations Y and Z. Before the interviews officially start, a pilot interview is conducted to check the interpretation of the questions and their feasibility. The five open questions can be seen here.

Open Interview Questions:

1. How often do you travel, and where do you usually travel to?
2. What factors do you typically consider when planning a trip, such as destination, cost, and duration?
3. Looking back to the holidays you remember; can you think of anything that could have been concerning and you would rethink your decision?
4. Have you ever heard of responsible tourism? What Do You Think It Means?

5. In your opinion, what are some of the biggest environmental and social issues facing the world today?

Most of the questions have sub questions like “Tell me about your last holiday. What did you like and dislike about it?”, “What do you do when you're on holiday, so that your needs and expectations are satisfied?”, “Based on your definition, what are some of the benefits of practicing responsible tourism behavior, even if you are not traveling?”, and “Have you ever thought about the impact that your travel choices can have on the places you visit?”. In the Appendix the whole interview can be found.

Furthermore, the interviewees were selected via the researcher’s social network, are particularly asked to look back at their past holiday experiences, and are asked about the concept and their interpretation of responsible travel. However, as the participants are not chosen at random, a bias is created in the sample selection. Nonetheless, since the participants are connected to the researcher, a safe and secure environment is created for honest answers. After the interviews, the participants' responses will be transcribed to increase the quality of analysis and organization.

- ii. Research Objectives.

The study intends to investigate characteristics in travel practices between Generations Y and Z, with an emphasis on responsible travel. Particularly, current research reveals a significant knowledge gap not only in consumer elements of the tourism sector but also in intergenerational attitudes (particularly among Gen Z) toward responsible tourism (Mahrouse, 2015; Prayag et al., 2022). This research paper seeks to address this gap and explore the travel

behavior of Generations Y and Z in terms of responsible travel. The following questions are used as a foundation for the research.

- What motivation and understanding does Generation Y and Generation Z have of responsible tourism practices?
- To what degree does the travel behavior of Gen Y and Z tourists, aged 18-42 years old, align with the characteristics and practices of responsible tourism?

iii. Sample & Data collection.

The target group will be found through the researcher's social network consisting of students, family, and friends. Participants will be selected through purposive sampling, which will involve reaching out to prospective participants through personal networks and social media platforms that are believed to have already collected a sufficient amount of travel experience (Bhandari et al., 2022). A minimum of eight participants from each group, aged 18 to 42, will be included in the study. The organization of the members will look like Table 1 and enable a better overview of the interviewees.

Participants	Year of Birth	Generation	Gender
Participant A	1985	Y	Male
Participant B	1991	Y	Female
Participant C	1995	Y	Female
Participant D	1999	Z	Male
Participant E	2001	Z	Male
Participant F	2002	Z	Female
Participant G	2003	Z	Male
Participant H	2004	Z	Female

Table 1. Organization of Participants

Each of the participants are invited to an individual, either face-to-face or online, semi-structured interview, which is audio recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The audio recording is done with the audio app from iPhone while the transcription is done with the help of a transcription program named “Transkriptor” which, via AI, recognizes the different voices and content being said in the uploaded audio recordings. It converts the audio recordings into a Word document, which is then used for further steps.

Furthermore, the interview consists mainly of five open questions to understand and explore the travel decision-making process and behavior of Generations Y and Z. Before the interviews officially start, a pilot interview is conducted to check the interpretation of the questions and their feasibility. More importantly, given all participants are German and have different levels of English skills, they are offered the choice of doing the interviews in either German or English to guarantee comfort and successful communication. When analyzing the literature, semi-structured interviews were the most popular qualitative research method due to

their own selection of participants and in-depth data collection (Caruana et al.,2014). Additionally, interviews enable the use of anonymous quotes from the interviewees in the results and discussion sections (Camilleri, 2015). Further literature shows that it is most efficient to focus the research on these two generations, as they seem to have collected a suitable amount of experience (WYSE, 2015). Given the comparison of the literature, a minimum of eight participants seems to be a sufficient number of interviewees for the amount of time available for this research. They will be questioned about their general travel behavior, including a focus on their understanding of responsible tourism and awareness of holiday activities (Prayag et al.,2022). Some inspiration for the development of the structure of the interview will be taken from Prayag et al. (2022), but also from Camilleri (2015).

iv. Data Analysis

After the interviews are conducted, they will be transcribed and, if needed, translated to prepare them for the data analysis phase. Then, the transcripts are checked for grammar, spelling, and technical errors. After, each transcript is coded to achieve a more structured analysis. For this, a deductive coding approach is applied (Yasarata et al., 2010), where the codes are the different focus points of the literature review: generational characteristics, responsible tourism, tourism challenges, and travel behavior. Additionally, while analyzing each transcript, key words are written down that were often mentioned by the participants, such as “weather”, “climate change”, and “mass tourism,” to get a first insight on what the majority shares. During the analysis of the transcripts, each code is compared not only to the other transcripts but also to the theory and findings of the literature it contributes to. This allows to divide, for example, each participant's characteristics and travel behavior and compare them to generational characteristics and travel behavior provided by researchers such as Turner (2015) and Corbisiero et al. (2022), as well as behavioral aspects provided by Cottrell & Graefe (1997).

4. Results & Discussion

This section investigates Generations Y and Z's level of awareness and behavior regarding responsible travel. It investigates how these two generations operate in their estimates of the influence of their travel decisions and their preferences for travel experiences. Moreover, it emphasizes fundamental worries and preferences shared by both generations, such as security, relaxation, integration in culture, economic boundaries, and technology.

i. Results

Code	Generation Z	Generation Y	Both
Role of Generation Y and Z in Tourism	<p>Travel 2-7 times a year (all participants)</p> <p>Moderately aware of environmental and social problems which are not necessarily related to tourism (Participant D, Participant E, Participant F, Participant G)</p> <p>Mostly do not research</p> <p>Money not big factor when planning as still financially dependent on parents (Participant D, Participant G, Participant H)</p> <p>Have the feeling to be one of many and have no impact (Participant D, Participant F)</p> <p>Occasionally use Social Media to look at destination and activities (Participant E, Participant G)</p>	<p>Travel 2-5 times a year (all participants)</p> <p>The purpose of a vacation is to unwind (Participants A, Participant B, Participant C)</p> <p>Research before traveling is very important (Participant A, Participant C) <i>“a bit more intensively also in terms of research, of course, also made us a little smarter there”</i></p> <p>Very high awareness of environmental and social problems (Participant A, Participant C)</p> <p>By chance use travel agency to plan trips (Participant A, Participant C)</p>	<p>Mostly use Google do to research (all participants)</p> <p>Travel preferably with friends or family (all participants)</p> <p>Most important factor is weather</p> <p>Travel high and low budget</p> <p>Like variations in purpose of traveling (relax or explore)</p> <p>Most of them (except one) say that traveling is a very important factor in their life <i>“Traveling is very important to me, I think actually traveling is almost the most important thing in my life”</i> (Participant G)</p>

Table 2. Results of coding analysis “Role of Generation Y and Z in Tourism”

Code	Generation Z	Generation Y	Both
Responsible Tourism	<p>When circumstances allow prefer traveling with train (Participant F, Participant G) <i>“I now take the train or the car if possible. But the train is often cheaper”</i></p> <p>To some extent do not really find it realistic that responsible travel lowers some social and environmental issues (Participant D, Participant E)</p> <p>Specifically watch out to not let any waste behind (Participant E, Participant F)</p>	<p>When confronted with Irresponsible holiday activities or events tend to never go there again or not do this activity (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C)</p> <p>Specifically try to travel more responsible (Participant A, Participant C)</p> <p>Supported measures against mass tourism to protect nature <i>“the Galapagos Islands, for example, only allow a limited number of tourists per year, also because of the nature that is to be protected there”</i> (Participant A)</p> <p>Want to have lowest possible negative impact specifically towards animals (Participant A, Participant C)</p>	<p>Most of them had an idea of what Responsible Tourism is but not everyone heard of it</p> <p>Specifically avoid cruise ships <i>“for example cruise ships are a huge problem”</i> (Participant A, Participant C, Participant D, Participant F, Participant G, Participant H)</p> <p>To achieve responsible tourism plane use has to be reduced</p> <p>Would pay more for a more sustainable approach of the activity (Participant A, Participant C, Participant D)</p>

Table 3. Results of coding analysis “Responsible Tourism”

Code	Generation Z	GenerationY	Both
Tourism Challenges	<p>Majority not that concerned or unaware about challenges imposed by tourism <i>“Global warming and I don't know, people using too much transport people”</i> (Participant F, Participant H)</p> <p>Businesses having a major negative impact on tourism (Participant D, Participant F, Participant G)</p>	<p>Specifically mentioned waste pollution and strong social issues (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C)</p>	<p>Experienced life and on Social Media pollution, mass tourism, and animal tourism -> when directly approach felt bad and uncomfortable having the feeling it negatively impacted the experience (Participant A, Participant C, Participant D, Participant G, Participant H)</p> <p>Experienced mass tourism and the externalities it has <i>“The city wasn't as clean as before because it was completely overcrowded with people”</i> (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D, Participant G, Participant H)</p> <p>Pointed out dependency of locals on tourism <i>“They are very dependent on the financial situation of the tourists”</i> (Participant A, Participant C, Participant D, Participant G)</p>

Table 4. Results of coding analysis “Tourism Challenges”

Code	Generation Z	Generation Y	Both
Travel Behavior	<p>Do not enjoy typical tourism activities (e.g. sightseeing with bus)</p> <p>Tendency to have a more spontaneous trip (Participant D, Participant G)</p> <p>Do not always need hotel/hostel/Airbnb -> stay at friends/family's house or sleep in the car "<i>where we just sleep in the car, so to speak, and then pay no accommodation at all</i>" (Participant D, Participant E, Participant F)</p> <p>Would do activities against their moral standards depending on the desperateness (Participant F, Participant G)</p>	<p>Hiking popular holiday activity (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C)</p> <p>Although high awareness never really considered the impacts their travel choices might have (Participant A, Participant B)</p> <p>Travel a lot within Germany (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C)</p> <p>Like to go in local museums as travel activity (Participant B, Participant C)</p> <p>Exploring the culture is essential when traveling (Participant A, Participant C)</p> <p>Aim on traveling more responsible in future (Participant A, Participant C)</p> <p>Plan activities extensively (Participant A, Participant C)</p>	<p>Have imbalanced moral boundaries (Participant C, Participant D)</p> <p>Spend more money when traveling (Participant C, Participant D, Participant G)</p> <p>Aim on having an authentic experience (Participant A, Participant C, Participant D, Participant G)</p> <p>Do not think about the impact their travel choices have (Participant A, Participant B, Participant E, Participant F, Participant G, Participant H)</p>

Table 5. Results of coding analysis "Travel Behavior"

In Table 2-5, shown above, the results of the interviews are displayed, divided into their code of analysis. Both Generations Y and Z show differences and similarities in their levels of awareness, understanding of responsible travel, and general travel behavior. In the following paragraph, the overall results of Generation Z's travel characteristics are summarized.

To begin with, Generation Z's financial dependency on their parents sometimes leads them to rely on parental finance for their vacations, allowing them to spend more when traveling (Participant D, Participant G, Participant H). Some Generation Z members valued experiences above standard hotels and were open to non-traditional possibilities such as sleeping at a cousin's house (Participant E), staying at a friend's house (Participant F), or even sleeping in the car (Participant D). However, there were individuals who were willing to travel on a limited budget but would have preferred to stay in a luxury hotel in near the city's hotspots saying *“I prefer relatively luxurious hotels, because I want to feel good for one or two weeks”* (Participant G). A number of participants (Participant F, Participant G, Participant H) stated a preference for traveling by train rather than plane as a way of practicing responsible travel. Their motivation for making this choice, however, differed stating that *“I'm scared of flying”* (Participant H) and *“I just opt for the cheapest option”* (Participant G)

Generation Z displayed understanding of the global system's problems (Participant D, Participant E, Participant F, Participant G, Participant H). Nonetheless, some participants were willing to travel to locations with political regimes with which they disapproved stating that *“even countries that house like regimes which I expressly politically disagree with. I wouldn't necessarily be opposed to visiting them.”* (Participant E), while others acknowledged the influence of concerns such as climate change and wars on individual economic well-being saying that *“for example, Ukraine war influences the world not only on a social level but also on an economic ... companies suffer, people, ... who may not live in prosperity”* (Participant G).

Nonetheless, some participants pointed out some specific global issues such as; “*big problem is capitalism*” (Participant D), “*global inequality is probably the biggest issue*” (Participant E). When confronted with tourism issues or responsible travel practices, they feel rather insignificant, struggling to see how their choices and behaviors can make a difference (Participant D, Participant F) saying that “*this insignificance of the individual, that I wasn't important*” as justification for “*Every individual is perceived to become more selfish from day to day, and that for many people, everything revolves around themselves*” (Participant D). However, when the circumstances allow it, they tend to rather travel by train than plane (Participant F, Participant G, Participant H). Furthermore, when planning a holiday, some people use social media platforms such as Instagram and Reddit to collect information about possible holiday activities (Participant E, Participant G).

Generally, when Generation Z is asked about responsible tourism, they have mixed beliefs among those who acknowledge the concept but do not fully believe in its effectiveness in having a positive impact on the environment or social issues when practiced by stating “*That is not achievable because...irreversible point... no way back since you influenced the countries, the nature*” (Participant D). Nonetheless, few pointed out that they are particularly concerned about waste being left behind as a negative impact of tourism, yet are not aware of the broader challenges imposed by tourism (Participant D, Participant F). Lastly, most of the participants belonging to Generation Z pointed out moral flexibility when engaging in holiday activities against their moral standards and responsible travel practices saying, for instance, “*depends how I see it personally and also kind of how strongly I really want to do that activity... questioning if I really care that much about the experience? I probably won't do it. If it's something I really wanted to do, I might still do it.*” (Participant F, Participant G, Participant H).

In contrast, Generation Y rather saves their money for larger travels outside of Europe (Participant A, Participant C) or selecting for more expensive hotels while traveling outside of Europe (Participant B, Participant C) were two examples. Furthermore, the ability to interact with people and immerse oneself in diverse cultures was important to Generation Y tourists. They (Participants A and C) cherished interacting with locals, experiencing authentic local food, and were specifically looking forward to learning about the local language and traditions stating that *“I always like to go to local restaurants, which still cook in the classic Spanish way, and which don't really speak German at all. It's pleasant, then you can... speak Spanish, ...culture is just interesting... you always deal with these local customs”* (Participant A). Moreover, Generation Y, as holiday activities, they picked hiking or walking in national parks (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C) and particularly avoided activities or places with a negative environmental effect (Participants A, Participant B) and if they notice their chosen activity goes against their moral standards they would *“either skip the trip activity, or address the topic”* (Participant A). The most noteworthy factors are the importance of research and planning before traveling to a destination and the high level of awareness regarding environmental and social issues, for instance, *“Researching Madagascar made us smarter and also news broadcasts, but also Internet we found out that things are not really going well for the people there ... so we cancelled that completely”* (Participant A, Participant C). However, despite their high awareness, they may not always consider the impacts their travel choices have on the (local) environment and society. Nonetheless, they aim to travel more responsibly in the future (Participant A, Participant B).

On the other hand, a participant from Generation Z (Participant D) did not do a sufficient amount of research before visiting a monkey island in Thailand, resulting in them feeling uncomfortable with the amount of people on the island justifying *“with these monkeys, for*

example, I never really thought about that in beforehand” and “you see pictures of these islands on the internet and then yes, I didn't really question it anymore”. Whereas Participant A after observing horses' apparent health concerns upon arrival to the horse-riding activity. Their ethical concern for the animals' well-being caused them to instantly refuse participation in the activity.

Moreover, it is important to mention that five of the eight participants of both generations experienced over tourism partially at places they travel to for more than ten years. Participant G said *“When we were in Egypt, we were very surprised that there were so many tourists and the whole city was overcrowded. There were no tables in the restaurant free and sometimes there was a very strange audience that wasn't usually there, behaved badly, didn't respect the culture, didn't respect the people and it wasn't so nice to look at. The city wasn't as clean as before because it was completely overcrowded.”* However, another Participant did not see over tourism in Switzerland as a negative impact stating *“for the ski lift, not so nice, but it's nice to meet new people”* (Participant H).

a. Discussion

To move forward, it is interesting to examine the findings with respect to the literature. In terms of Generation Z values comprehensive travel experiences (Wee, 2019), the findings of this study show that they are also ready to choose experience over comfort (Turner, 2015). Some participants choose alternative accommodation options, such as staying at a friend's house or even sleeping in their car, especially if they are financially independent and on a limited budget. Surprisingly, Generation Z's moral decisions in seeking these travel experiences are can be considered as problematic. Since, despite their moderate understanding of the need of responsible travel, several participants admitted that they would be open to engage, or have

already engaged in behaviors that violated their moral standards. They explain their decisions by highlighting their intense desire to participate in certain activities, even if these activities conflict with their beliefs and responsible travel standards. The complexity of Generation Z's travel preferences and decision-making processes is shown by these findings. While they appreciate comprehensive travel experiences and emphasize comfort and safety, they are nevertheless prepared to make sacrifices and undertake ethically questionable decisions in order to accomplish their travel goals.

This study's findings confirm Scholz's (2014) categorization of Generation Z, demonstrating a strong focus on global uncertainties and crises across various sectors. Participants expressed anxiety about climate change and conflicts such as the Ukraine War, acknowledging the economic and social implications of these challenges. Surprisingly, however, these features do not appear to impact their vacation planning activities. In contrast to the expectations outlined by Wood (2013) and Kang & Moscardo (2006), who argue that responsible travel behavior includes thorough preparation and research, the findings show that Generation Z does not prioritize planning or extensive research when choosing their vacation destinations. According to Wood (2013), Generation Z's tendencies to examine a wide range of information is due to their frequent usage of the internet. It should be emphasized, however, that this habit may not immediately convert into utilizing the internet for holiday planning reasons, which is why the current study findings contradict Wood's (2013) findings.

Similar to the findings of Parzonko et al. (2021), the findings of this study show that Generation Z is aware and, to some extent, conscious of the possible implications of climate change. The data, however, show that their environmental initiatives are fairly limited. This

disparity might be linked to their belief in their insignificance in making a difference. Participants from Generation Y, on the other hand, engaged in practices aimed at reducing their environmental effect. This supports Plaut's (2005) conclusion that sustainable conduct corresponds to age-related attitudes and awareness.

Furthermore, this study's findings support the theory advanced by Corbisiero et al. (2022) that Generation Y is more inclined to invest their money in travel-related activities. Participants acknowledged saving money for a long period of time, 1-2 years, in order to finance a more extensive vacation outside of Europe. Their travel objectives go beyond simply traveling distance, as they actively seek opportunities to interact with people, enjoy authentic food, and expand their cultural and linguistic skills. It is worth noting that these individuals continue their travel goals despite their understanding and worries about critical environmental and societal challenges, as both the participants and the WYSE (2015) study suggest. However, it is critical to distinguish between Generation Y, who strives to minimize the impact of extensive travel while keeping societal and environmental concerns in mind, and Generation Z, who, despite their awareness of present issues, are willing to compromise their moral standards and responsible travel behavior in order to achieve a more enjoyable travel experience.

In accordance with Ovolo Hotels (2013), the participants in the study from Generation Y had a strong interest in nature-based activities such as hiking in natural reserves. This is supported by Lew's (2011) finding that interacting with nature when traveling stimulates favorable feelings and generates lasting memories. Generation Z, on the other hand, mostly dislikes typical tourism activities such as sightseeing and do not enjoy nature-related activities, they rather look forward to partying, socializing, food, and only the most important landmarks.

According to Krippendorfs (1987) context, the findings of this study show that, while both generations are aware of environmental and social issues, they lack a comprehensive understanding of the potential consequences of their tourism-related behavior. Furthermore, it might be claimed that they are not responsible consumers according to Minton and Rose's (1997) definition since they are unaware of the consequences of their own travel decisions. Consequently, this is an important insight for this study enabling a better standpoint on where both generations have their level of awareness in regards to responsible travel behavior.

The participants in this study had "wildlife tourism" experiences (Hall & Brown, 2006), however their attitudes and views differed between the two generations. When Generation Y discovered that animals were being exploited for tourism and that the animals were in terrible health, they decided not to participate in the horse-riding activity. They also took proactive actions to correct the problem by approaching the business owner. In contrast, a member of Generation Z visited a monkey island in Thailand without thinking of the consequence it might. However, after landing to the island and seeing the vast number of people, they felt uncomfortable with their decision. These opposite reactions show Generation Y and Generation Z's unique attitudes to wildlife tourist encounters. However, Generation Y's reaction to "wildlife tourism" contradicts Krippendorfs (1987) claim that tourists are unaware of the effects of their travel decisions to some extent. Since the participants intentionally chose to refrain from participating in activities that supported such practices. This shows a level of awareness and concern for the ethical consequences of their travel choices. While not all tourists may demonstrate the same level of consciousness, the activities of Generation Y participants in this

study suggest that at least some people are aware of the possible implications and attempt to make ethical choices when it comes to wildlife tourism.

One major conclusion from the present study is that almost every participant recognizes mass tourism, with many noting the destination's pollution and a lack of respect for local culture and citizens. This discovery is consistent with Butler's (1980) concept of the evolution of a tourism destination. It is clear that some stated destinations have achieved or are approaching capacity, implying that the rate of development will slow, if it has not already. However, further research is needed on the specific destination to acquire a better understanding of the dynamics and their implications. Overall, Young (1973), Smith (1989), and Butler (1980) shed light on the detrimental effects of tourism development and the necessity for sustainable management approaches to maintain tourist destinations' long-term survival and attractiveness.

Both Generations Y and Z indicated a moderate amount of concern and knowledge, some more some less. Generation Y shows a larger tendency for ecologically responsible behavior, while Generation Z engaged in such activity indirectly by, for instance, choosing train travel. However, their decision to travel by train was motivated mostly by cost and convenience, rather than a conscious effort to be more ecologically friendly. Therefore, it can be argued to what extent this decision is responsible behavior, so if only the action itself counts or also the actual intention. Despite this, when the data is compared to Puhakka's (2011) description of responsible behavior, it is worth noting that the majority of participants, regardless of generation, displayed respect for the standards and cultural norms of the places they visited. They were, however, frequently less conscious of the environmental effects of their actions.

Measuring responsible travel behavior has always been difficult owing to its irregularity and unexpected nature, as observed by Gabriel and Lang (1995). This is compatible with the current study's findings, particularly when looking at Generation Z's travel preferences. Their decisions may not be directly related to responsible travel behavior, but rather a result in it. Participants in the current study were asked to define responsible travel in the same way as Caruana and Crane (2014) did. Surprisingly, a large number of participants, particularly those from Generation Z, underlined factors such as their carbon footprint from air travel, while both generations pointed out the necessity of respecting the environment and local communities. These findings are somewhat consistent with the findings of Caruana and Crane's (2014) study.

i. Conclusion

Overall, responsible travel behavior is essential for promoting environmental sustainability, cultural sensitivity, and supporting local communities. The discussions revealed diverse perspectives and behaviors, ranging from extensive research and conscious decision-making to more spontaneous approaches. Despite challenges in measurement and definition, responsible travel practices play a vital role in preserving the environment and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry. It requires collective efforts from tourists, businesses, and governments to promote awareness, education, and sustainable policies. Overall, fostering responsible travel is crucial for the well-being of destinations and the overall sustainability of the tourism industry. Both participants of Generation Y and Z displayed a certain amount of awareness of global issues, yet Generation Y indicates more responsible travel behavior.

Consequently, the identified knowledge gap among travelers regarding responsible tourism, as highlighted by Caruana et al. (2014), emphasizes the importance of educating younger

generations, particularly Generation Z, on environmental and social issues and their consequences. The research conducted by Parzonko et al. (2021) provides insights into the level of environmental knowledge expected from Generation Z. This underscores the need for targeted education initiatives in this field. The study also addresses a gap in the sustainable tourism literature, as identified by Caruana et al. (2014) and Prayag et al. (2022), pertaining to comparative studies on environmental beliefs, behaviors, and awareness among different generations, with a specific focus on Generation Z and their sustainability practices. In terms of practical implications, the present research provides elements to be taken in consideration by policy makers, destination organization management, and tourism and hospitality industry.

ii. Limitations & Recommendations for future research

This research comes with a few limitations. Starting with the sampling of the research firstly, concentrated on German citizens and secondly from the researcher's social network. Furthermore, I want to acknowledge your positionality as a researcher belonging to one of this two generation, as part of the social network of the research participants and as a representation of a western cultural background and lifestyle. Additionally, there was a certain time constraint of approximately two months, therefore, when choosing a bigger sample size, it is essential to take more time into account to also not influence the quality of the research. Additionally, a limitation identified by (Staffieri, 2016), which is also accurate for the present research as it does not represent the entire complexity of how social influences may impact travel experiences and views.

Therefore, future study might go further into the social dynamics to give a more complete knowledge of how social structures impact visitor behavior and attitudes. Moreover, for further research, it is recommended to have an increased sample size. Consequently, for a

bigger sample size another methodological approach might be more efficient as well as qualitative but also a quantitative approach, for instance, by using a survey. Also, as this research had a focus on German citizens, it is advisable to explore other geographical contexts and cultural backgrounds.

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8. Appendix

Interview Questions:

1. How often do you travel, and where do you usually travel to?
 - a. Tell me about your last holiday. What did you like and dislike about it?
 - b. What is the most important factor when planning your holidays?
 - c. Do you conduct any research about your travel destination and/or activities before traveling to the chosen destination? If yes, which sources do you use? If no, why not?
2. What factors do you typically consider when planning a trip, such as destination, cost, and duration?
 - a. What do you do when you're on holiday, so that your needs and expectations are satisfied?
3. Looking back to the holidays you remember; can you think of anything that could have been concerning and you would rethink your decision?
4. Have you ever heard of responsible tourism? What do you think it means?
 - a. Based on your definition, what are some of the benefits of practicing responsible tourism behavior, even if you are not traveling?
 - b. How would you handle a scenario in which the holiday activity you wanted to do conflicted with responsible tourism practices or your general moral standards?
 - c. Can you share a moment when you saw tourism have a negative impact on a destination and how you reacted or responded to the situation?
5. In your opinion, what are some of the biggest environmental and social issues facing the world today?
 - a. How do you think responsible travel can help address these issues?
 - b. Have you ever thought about the impact that your travel choices can have on the places you visit?