

## Perceptions of Generation Y on Social Aspects Involving Sustainable Tourism in Romanian Destinations

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**Abstract:** Sustainable tourism destination management requires the simultaneous and multi-directional pursuit of interactions. One of these are tourists, which are structured differently, based on socioeconomic and psycho-formative criteria. Taking into account the general features of Generation Y, the study aims at analyzing their perception regarding social aspects demanded in sustainable tourism destinations in the case of Romania. The research is focuses on the survey method, which relies on a semi-structured questionnaire applied online in 2020. The answers were modeled, using data analysis tools or graphics functions in IBM-SPSS v.28. Study findings highlight the interesting social perceptions of Y tourists in Romania (RGY), with an emphasis on their desire for conflict-free destinations, to spend time with friends or family, but also to make carefully chosen friends. The perceptions regarding the acceptance of interactions with hosts varies by their socio-demographic characteristics, depending especially on the issues that require their active involvement. These reveal a predominantly interest on professional services, largely excluding creative activities for the acquisition of local traditions. In conclusion, RGY considers that their social inputs as neutral in the tourist areas. However, more attention should be focused on the management of tourism products, in order to come up with specific offers for a highly skilled, but stressed generation, as well as on finding ways able to boost through motivating solutions the young people's interest for social dimension of the sustainable tourism development.

**Key words:** Perception, Active involvement, RGY, Social dimension, Sustainable tourism

### 1. Introduction

Sustainable tourism has emerged and developed as a dominant paradigm in the quarter of the century that followed the launch of the 1987 Brundtland Report (Ruhanen et al., 2015).

The United Nations (UN) approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on September 25, 2015, subsequently achieving the 2030 Agenda for Global Development Goals. Based on the 17 UN SDGs, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has developed its own strategic goals to be achieved globally and declared 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (OWTO, 2016).

Sustainability and development are not new concepts in tourism (Bramwell et al., 2017), so tourism actors become the pillars of the UN SDGs for the 2030 time horizon (Siakwah et al., 2020). UNWTO classifies the 17 objectives into 3 categories, namely: people, the planet and prosperity, and addresses all actors involved in tourism: tourists, locals, NGOs, public institutions, private companies and research institutes. However, the social dimension of sustainable tourism is not defined under this name, but it derives from gathering together all the intrinsic ideas of each goal regarding the following: human relations, mutual support, acceptance and promotion of good practices, tolerance, inclusion and peace, supporting entrepreneurship, agri-tourism, and education. Thus, the UNWTO urge for tourists is "Travel with caution!", meaning that every tourist through his decisions and actions during a trip, as

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